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Artification of Sport: The Case of Distance Running

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Abstract

This article deals with the possibilities of artification in sport, using distance running as an example. Sport is viewed as one phenomenon in the history of physical cultures, with both predecessors and also the possibility of developing into something new. Sport was first defined primarily as a competitive activity but, by the end of the twentieth century, it had developed as part of the athletic trend towards exploring experience-seeking fitness sports. Through the developments of contemporary visual art, sport has also become a possible medium of art. These developments, both in sport and art, provide an opportunity to look for signs of artification in sport.

Key Words

art, artification, distance running, parkour, physical cultures, sport

1. Introduction

I did a run in Lisbon, and I ran Lisboa. During a conference in Lisbon, one morning I woke up early, put on my running gear, slipped a GPS-logger into the pocket of my running shorts and, with a map of Lisbon in my hand, started running a preplanned route that, in the end, would be a depiction of the word 'Lisboa.' (Illustration 1) This was going to be the fourth work in my series, "An Attempt to Run..."^[1] My act is art, and it is running. Although it looks like regular running for fitness, there is a difference. Does the artistic intention make my running artified running, or is it just a combination of art and running? If my running represents the full integration of art and running, what kind of art-related practices can be tracked down in contemporary distance running practices?



Illustration 1. The GPS-track of my run.

I will approach the question of artification in running by comparing my viewpoints as a professional artist and a recreational distance runner. I will look closely at my artistic process and contrast it with the practice of contemporary running, seen through my own and other runners' perspectives. I will treat contemporary running practice as a transitory outcome of the historical development of modern sport that allows me to see running, and the whole field of sport, as one temporary physical culture among others, those preceding it and those co-existing with it. This thinking enables a look forward in time and an imagining of the possible transformation of sport practices towards the artification of sport and its effect on sport, including distance running.

Because of the expanded field of today's sport, a deliberately narrow conception of sport is used in this article. Sport is understood here mainly as Olympic sports, which constitute the (conceptual) core of modern sport. The selection of running as the focus for this article was made for several reasons. My own running practice is personally quite significant as I wish to parallel the process of making art and the practice of running. Running also has the popularity and history that are essential when looking for historical transformations and contemporary mutations of the practice. Finally, the technical and strategic simplicity of distance running is an advantage when locating the means and the effects of artification in running. In addition to distance running and art, I will examine parkour, a recently developed post-sport physical culture^[2] that has various intersections with running and is presumably a more artified practice than distance running.

2. Running as sport

Like many others today, the Japanese writer Haruki Murakami is a devoted distance runner. He has been running regularly, for long periods, nearly daily, since 1982, his early days as a writer. Running has never been a competitive practice for Murakami, even though he has regularly participated in marathons, triathlon competitions, and other running events. He describes himself as a mediocre runner whose main contestants have always been himself and the clock. The personal records set in competitions have little meaning for him; more important is running as the backbone of his daily practice. For Murakami, his daily run is nearly comparable to his daily hours of writing,^[3] and is a typical example of how a running habit can form a central element in one's daily life, not only a way of keeping fit.

Murakami's running practice sounds quite normal to a middle-class person in the early twenty-first century Western world, and very familiar to the average contemporary recreational runner. However, if we think back to the middle of the nineteenth century, just about 150 years ago, running as either a sport or a hobby did not exist. In those days, at least in European culture, it was not appropriate for an adult to run voluntarily except in the case of a real emergency. The exceptions were professional runners, such as military messengers.^[4] Before the idea of modern sport emerged in the middle of the nineteenth century, organized running without a distinct purpose was practiced as a special show, almost as a circus act. The specialized professional show runners performed extreme feats for a paying audience or for a bet. The other known forms of running were the whimsical stunts in peasant culture. These pre-sport feats were not standardized, and fair play was just a budding concept.^[5]

When modern sports came into existence in England during the nineteenth century, running was gradually transformed into a sport and its standardization began. Competitive running on a track became a more ordinary practice. The substance of running was limited to the new idea of sport, where the standardization of events and the recording of records were central aspects, along with new ideas of fairness and amateur sports. In his writing on different ways of running, John Bale reduced the purposes of achievement running to speed and time. A greater speed makes it possible to break records, and in a standardized environment time is the universal yardstick for the records made.^[6] These developments and standardization changed the carnival of pre-sport running happenings into more serious events where the athletes pushed their limits while trying to break records. The experience of pain took over the enjoyment of the physical activity.

Embedding the newly born sports culture into the existing society created effects that would seem peculiar to present-day athletes. Although sports were accepted, athletes could not perform their exercises in populated areas, as public running was "somewhat bohemian and subject to ridicule;"^[7] athletes usually walked outside of town and exercised on country roads. Essentially, practicing sport was restricted to a special area of culture, away from everyday life.

The social restrictions concerning sport loosened during the next decades, and eventually sport became an important means for expressing nationalism, especially with the rise of the Olympic movement. Following sports news and watching sporting events became a common pastime; however, the majority of sports training remained restricted to the sport fields and tracks.^[8]

My view is that with respect to both competitive elite running and the greater part of competitive amateur running, the objectives, the ideals, the core of the practice, and the relationship to surrounding society have remained very similar, from the introduction of modern sports to the present time, even though material conditions and general sports culture have changed. The new, more recent, views on running have developed hand-in-hand with new ways of running.

It took several decades from the development of competitive running before running was established as an exercise for everyone. It was not until the 1960s that running began to change into mainstream exercise. The popularization of running was started in New Zealand by athletics coach Arthur Lydiard in the early 1960s. His insight was that jogging at a slow pace forms a perfect foundation for all athletes. The book, *Jogging* (1967), by Bill Bowerman and Waldo Harris, brought the idea of jogging to international awareness.^[9] By the 1980s, the second, more sportified wave of recreational running arrived and made marathons extremely popular around the world. For instance, participation in the New York Marathon grew from 55 entries in 1970 to 29,327 in 2000.^[10] Women's distance running had been objected to within the field of achievement running, but the rise of jogging started the development towards today's situation, where women run competitive marathons.^[11] Today, recreational running is heterogeneous and practiced globally. The popularity of running as exercise has frayed the single competitive running culture into numerous types of runnings, with room for all kinds of approaches.

With this background, Murakami's and other recreational athletes' running practices as part of a middle-class lifestyle can be seen as both normal and extraordinary. The modern sport of running emerged and developed in just a few decades, but took more than a century to develop into a central part of our fitness culture.

3. The contents of contemporary running

When running forms a significant part of one's daily life, it is likely to have a broader meaning than just being a way to keep fit. What kinds of running practices support these meanings, and what aspects might these meanings hold?

Bale used Henning Eichberg's division of running into playful, fitness, and achievement running. His view is that playful running consists only of children's free frolicking; achievement running is serious result-oriented running; and fitness running fills the rest of the field.^[12] Children's playful running cannot really be counted

as a coherent sport and, as shown in the previous section, competitive running has only a narrow existence outside the world of organized competitions. This leaves fitness running as the single truly free field where running can develop wider meanings.

Timo Klemola categorized physical exercise into four projects according to the intent of the exercise. The projects are: winning, health, expression, and (the project regarding) self.^[13] Klemola used these projects to describe the essence of different physical activities, but it is possible to apply them to different attitudes within one sport, like running. The projects of winning and health are clearly associated with Bale's categories of achievement and fitness running. Although Klemola connected the project of expression to disciplines like dance, it is possible to connect the project of expression to playful running; however, in my opinion, there is also some room for expressing oneself in fitness running. The project of self is the most unclear of Klemola's projects. Originally, Klemola associated it with yoga and other similar physical traditions, where the philosophical quest for self is explicit. In this article, the project of self is applied to purely Western sports as an implicit potential within them.

By combining the categorizations of Bale and Klemola, the result is three potential orientations for a running practice. These are competition, health, and experience-oriented versions of running. These orientations overlap, but my view is that there are extremes in all orientations that transform the interest into other orientations. For example, it appears that the orientation towards special/particular experiences that is related to Klemola's projects of expression and self, combined with moderate fitness running, forms the most potent combination of running interests that might develop new meanings for running practice.

The global and diverse field of contemporary running for exercise makes it almost impossible to deal with its exact significance, especially because there is no easy way to obtain evidence about the meaning and significance of individual runners' practices. Fortunately, some runners have written about their practice, and these accounts shed some light on the significance of running today.

Haruki Murakami described how running forms a regular rhythm in his solitary author's life. The running practice is not visible in his novels but, according to Murakami, it has affected him strongly as an author. In his book, *What I Talk About When I Talk About Running* (2008), Murakami described how his running habit formed simultaneously with his writing career, and how the habit exists during the time he is writing a book.

Murakami does not really specify what kinds of experiences running brings to him, but his feelings can be read through detailed descriptions about the places and routes he runs, music he listens to while running, and the people, runners and other passers-by he encounters during his daily runs. He observes the running styles he sees and compares them with his own performance. Sometimes he goes back in his personal history to explain why some piece of music is especially effective during a morning run. He writes about his personal experiences through the factual aspects of his running: how he suspects the condition of his bad knee and how he gets a massage. The details of his training—running pace, personal records, future plans—reveal a serious runner.

Nevertheless, the manner in which Murakami's running intertwines with his everyday life reveals a different attitude towards the sport. The races and setting records are not the reason for running, as Murakami confessed that his best days were over years ago. Despite knowing that he cannot make personal records, Murakami still finds running compelling. Most importantly, he thinks physical exercise works as an antidote to the hazards of the writer's profession, the solitary labor of creating narratives leading too easily to literary burnout. Murakami sees that he needs a way to restore the energies used in writing. For him, running has been the way, the tool for clearing the thoughts and concentrating on something other than writing. Secondly, he sees running as way for living life to the fullest with the potential he has.^[14]

Other recreational runners with an inclination towards extra-sport elements in their running write about their practice in a similar tone; only the difference in emphasis reveals the variation in the personal preferences. For instance, J.P. Roos starts his account by emphasizing the work-like nature of running exercise, but later in the text puts more weight on the pleasures of running rather than on the suffering. Even though both Murakami and Roos see running as an integral part of their lives, Roos seems to be more flexible in combining running with other elements of his life, while Murakami likes to stick to his daily schedule. Running and work may not disturb each other but can be mixed fruitfully. For Roos, it seems important to find a combination of running and other elements of family and professional life, even though it requires adjusting the timing and intensity of the running practice. For instance, he gives examples of how running is combined in a natural way with traveling and parties. When traveling, running outside tourist areas is a good way to observe local life from a different angle. According to Roos, visiting art galleries, museums, and even cafés is also possible if one is having a light run.^[15] Roos' general advice about running is that even if you are obsessed about distance running, your life does not have to be filled only with running.

Tapio Koski approaches running from a philosophical vantage point. Although his running practice includes participating in organized races and generally has a great similarity with normal running for fitness, the most important element for Koski seems to be physically challenging himself in looking for a good life. In fact, he was very explicit about the spiritual elements of running. According to Koski, running long distances regularly opens up experiences that are not usual or even possible without physical effort. These experiences range from an emptiness of mind to a heightened sensitivity of the present moment and the rare occurrences of "runner's high."^[16]

While Murakami incorporates running practice as a fundamental part of his timetable, and Roos combines other activities with his exercises, Koski consciously looks to deepen his running experiences. Though all three writers look at running from different standpoints, all of their approaches aim to concentrate on the experience and the emotions of routine running, thus widening the scope of running experiences. These approaches overlap in several ways. Running is a routine, everyday practice for all of them; Koski is competing like the two others; Murakami and Roos have converted from result-oriented to more experience-seeking running; and Murakami mentioned the special experiences, like the blank state of mind he reached during an ultra-marathon that he described as stepping into a different place.

4. The aesthetics of contemporary running

Although the few accounts used as examples come from runners who articulate and conceptualize their experiences well, they point out some of the directions towards which contemporary running practice is heading. These contemporary recreational runners, while doing their exercises, obviously notice and search for various kinds of experiences outside the traditional scope of sport, and think about them as an important part of the running practice, even though the foremost reasons to exercise might be fitness and health.

The scope of experiences associated with contemporary recreational running stand apart from modern achievement running. In recreational running, they seem to form the substantial stimulus to exercising; the success measured by the clock or in kilometers takes a second place. The experiences noticed are mainly aesthetic in nature and the interest lies in the bodily, even somaesthetic,^[17] and environmental experience. The bodily experience has a connection with efficiency, but it seems that aesthetic experience is always present. Efficient running is felt as aesthetically positive, but it does not necessarily need to look beautiful. The bodily experience comes first. Work still forms the basis for the positive bodily experience, as in success in competitive running. One has to run the tedious and boring runs to be able to enjoy the bodily feelings of running during the best running season.^[18] The reasons driving this hard work have changed after running itself was transformed from a purely competitive activity to a recreational one; one practices for the experience, not for the position in the competition. Participation in competitions does not change this inclination towards experience. Running an organized marathon is not just an achievement; participating motivates experimenting with unusually strenuous experiences that are not comfortably possible in solitary running or a free-form running event.

The environmental aspect of running comes out in the search for aesthetically attractive routes or in traveling to find new landscapes to run through.^[19] For a competitive runner, the fluency and safety of the route seem to be the primary concern, but for the experience-seeking hobbyist runner, the exercise can be a way to explore the public artworks in a city, like Pauli Jokinen has done in Helsinki.^[20] Although running is always challenging oneself against natural forces, a hobbyist runner does not have to fight against nature in order to exercise successfully. One can listen to one's body and the environment and adjust one's running more to one's experience and the environment.^[21]

The attitude relating to the experiences and aesthetics of running has changed since the early days of distance running. For instance, the 1920's Olympic champion Paavo Nurmi, though better known as a machine-like runner, was interested in the aesthetics of his running in the context of running style and the efficiency of the most natural style.^[22] Today's hobbyist runners have more interest in the experiential aesthetics of their performance than their style's relation to performance. As a result there is not (always) a need to drive oneself to better performances at any cost. Certainly one tries to do one's best, but passing beyond the time when one can exceed personal records does not stop one from running; the inspiration for running comes from other sources than placing in competitions. However, the attitude towards the environment has stayed more or less the same despite these changes. When training takes place outside official tracks, running through a pleasant and varying landscape is always preferred, as it has been since the early days of modern running, although environmental preference has shifted from the terrain suitable for effective training to training for a certain route.^[23] The experience-oriented runner tolerates the boring and monotonous training runs in order to be able to run an exceptional route.

These new kinds of attitudes towards the bodily scope of sport have been described by Joseph H. Kupfer and Wolfgang Welsch. When Kupfer analyzed the aesthetics of quantitative or linear sports like running, he connected the aesthetic experience of the sport performance to everyday situations, like sprinting for the bus or leaping over a puddle that, for an ordinary person, can remind one of the bodily experience of excellence in sport or provide a moment of mastering the physical world.^[24] Welsch, on the other hand, claimed that a change of bodily scope is also present in elite sports, and sees it as a result of a shift from the mind's command over the body to the body as the origin of pleasure. Welsch's interest is in high-level sports but, as I have illustrated, the change has been even greater in hobbyist sports than in today's professional competitive sports. In Welsch's analysis of sport, the most important transformation for the consideration of artistic elements in sport is the sport's shifting framework from ethics to aesthetics. The former ethical framework of sport, where the mind was the commander and the body the compliant servant, has changed to focus on an admiration for the body. Sporting bodies are viewed as aesthetic objects, and athletes are allowed to celebrate their perfectly functioning bodies. Also, according to Welsch, the previous habit of disregarding the body in the interest of achievement has been displaced by listening to bodily feelings and adjusting the training intensity according to them.^[25] I see this as a change from a competitive attitude to one seeking enjoyment and experiences.

Although most changes in running practices are intangible in nature, material examples of new attitudes

towards running exist. On the one end there is the growing interest in the appearance of running gear, and on the other end are special running-related objects, like the ceremonial necklace made of toenails lost during ultra-marathon activities.[\[26\]](#)

These cases of runners' experiences present possible models for the creative use of sport in making an individual's life more meaningful, and also suggest how the shift in the contents of the practice applies to more than just the bodily scope of running. Evolved running practices start to form wider conceptual and emotional entities than those to which sport is usually related. Sport is no longer isolated from other parts of culture. I see the new conceptual and emotional entities forming a realm where the artistic aspects of running or any sport can and will develop. The new aesthetic understanding about sport encourages this development.

5. Sport and physical cultures

Sport is the dominant physical culture today, but there are organized physical cultures outside sport that are more-or-less related to it. The border between sport and other physical cultures is not closed; other physical cultures have been sportified,[\[27\]](#) that is, transformed to comply with the international orders of sport. A recent example is snowboarding, an activity that was transformed into an Olympic sport over a few years during the 1990s. Very closely related to snowboarding is skateboarding, which has remained as an unofficial sport by not following the rules and organizations of sport, even though skateboarding is globally organized and the structure of the organization and the competitions resembles those of official sport.

The reverse action, a conscious moving away from sport, is also possible. Bodybuilding, for instance, was once an official sport, but it has moved away from sport because of its attitude towards the use of chemical substances.[\[28\]](#) Other physical cultures, like yoga, situate themselves further away from the ideas of sport. These physical cultures reject the typical practices of sport, such as official competitions and records. Instead of concentrating on the measurable or externally assessable aspects of practice, they consciously combine the bodily and mental exercise.

These contemporary physical cultures emerged during the past few decades and are often labeled as lifestyle sports in that they have a different approach to physical activity than modern sports. Belinda Wheaton, in her essay on lifestyle sports, listed key elements of these practices. The important aspects are sub-cultural identity; the emphasis on "grass roots" participation; the consumption of new objects; a participatory ideology where fun, hedonism, involvement are important; and an individualistic attitude. Contemporary physical cultures have a non-aggressive nature for the most part, and their "spaces of consumption" differ from the clearly defined spaces of sport. The preferred spaces are usually suitable but not specially planned outdoor spaces. In the case of urban physical cultures, the use of public spaces redefines the use of urban space.[\[29\]](#)

This fluidity of borders and the dominance of sport are visible in the terminology used. Recent sport-like physical practices are described as post-sports, unofficial sports, extreme sports, alternative sports, lifestyle sports, new sports, or new games, while the opposite is called modern sports or mainstream sports. Naturally, calling these activities "sports" illustrates certain values, but all the names have different connotations that refer to certain aspects of the practices. For example, extreme sports are used in the context of the commercialization and commodification of a practice, and alternative sports is understood as a more neutral term for the opposite of mainstream or modern sports.[\[30\]](#)

6. Parkour: averted vision on running

In visual astronomy, averted vision is a technique that is used for viewing very faint celestial objects. If an object is almost invisible, it can actually be seen more clearly if it's not looked at directly; instead, the observer looks slightly past the object. In this way, the observer tries to get more light to his or her eyes' rod cells, which are more sensitive to light. If done right, the faint object becomes much more visible for a short time. I will use averted vision as a metaphor, when looking at parkour in order to see running more clearly

Parkour is probably the contemporary physical culture closest to running. It is situated in the same sector of urban youth culture as snow- and skateboarding, but is less organized and completely rejects the idea of competing; in this way it keeps distance from sport. Parkour is not (yet) linked to any particular music or clothing style like skate- and snowboarding, so there is less outside pressure to adopt certain types of parkour.[\[31\]](#)

The central idea of parkour is to travel from spot A to spot B in a straight line while negotiating oncoming obstacles, using special techniques and trying to keep the movement as fluent as possible throughout the course.[\[32\]](#) Practicing parkour requires curiosity towards the environment and perseverance in developing the physical skills of a traceur (a practitioner of parkour).[\[33\]](#) One has to learn how to see new possibilities when encountering an urban space and to turn the environment into a playground, employing it differently from its planned usage, while also learning to sense the environment in a new bodily way and control one's body in co-operation with the environment.[\[34\]](#) The general attitude towards the environment and one's body is playful, with "creative/artistic sensibility."[\[35\]](#) The traceur has to be aware of the environmental possibilities and must at all times be ready to learn about them and adjust to new circumstances.

In parkour there is a strong tendency to seek one's own way within it. Not everyone has the physical abilities for or interest in big jumps, so one can concentrate on balancing acts or climbing up walls and fences. This possibility and motivation for discovering one's own style in parkour opens up potentials for creativity or even artistry. If tested against the categorizations of sport used by Bale and the projects of Klemola, parkour

situates itself primarily in the category of playfulness and emphasizes the projects of expression and self.

What does parkour have to do with distance running? Not being a sport, parkour is not subject to the limitations imposed by strict rules. As a result, both the practice and the (self) understanding of parkour and the traceurs can change swiftly. In the context of artification, the alternative attitude inherent in parkour leaves more room for the development of artistic aspects, and, at the same time, the residual elements of sport make it possible to see features in common with running. Placing parkour and running in parallel reveals both contrasts and similarities, and also alludes to possible directions for the future of running. One possible direction for recreational running is a shift towards more contemporary lifestyles or alternative sports. For instance, ultra-marathons are already seen as alternative sports.^[36] More generally speaking, new directions in running do not necessarily require a real shift towards alternative sport, but could involve a playful attitude, in general, and especially towards the (urban) environment, such as Jokinen's running routes through public artworks.

The second likely direction is a quest for its own way or the formation of niche-type subcultures within running; ultra-marathons are one possibility in this direction. Another newly formed niche that I think is likely to grow in the near future is the reaction to more and more technical paraphernalia associated with running. The extreme in this direction could be barefoot running or, paradoxically, using shoes that imitate barefoot running. The development of new, autonomous groups, with their own running practices, will increase the fraying of the running cultures. Even now, practices within recreational distance running emphasize a personal approach. Although one identifies oneself as a part of an existing running culture, one looks for the right individual way for oneself. This is something I would see as an extension to Koski's running as a quest for self (knowledge).

The difference between running and parkour in relation to artification today is that those involved in parkour are conscious about the creative attitude connected with their practice, while most of the running community, even when pursuing the new directions described, do not detect the creative/artistic sensibility in their practice. The creative/artistic sensibility in running does not produce artwork in a customary sense, but it affects the processes of running practice. Usually, an external interpreter is needed to discover these artistic aspects, with the resulting artification of running. From an outsider's point of view, the playful and creative aspects that are present in artified running but missing in traditional serious/competitive running show themselves clearly, not (yet) in the practice itself but in the accounts and stories reflecting hobbyist running practices. As running practice is not yet openly artified, I like to call the artification of running "silent artification."

7. Art, artistic acts, and running

How do running as sport, the artification of running, and the use of running in contemporary artworks relate to each other? In an attempt to clarify the facets of these relationships, I will use "The Attempt to Run Lisboa" as an example.

When I was running through Lisbon, my approach was to turn the idea into an artwork, displaying the commonplace act from a new angle and, in that way, add new connotations to it. The project followed Sol LeWitt's description of making art: "The idea becomes a machine that makes the art."^[37] The physical effort of running was needed to make the artwork real. By taking a normal act and using it to reach for a new kind of target, I turned the act into an artistic one and the result into an artwork.

In this project, I chose not to emphasize running as a visual element but to juxtapose different views of running and use the effect to transform an ordinary practice into an artistic one. First, running is just running. From a street-level standpoint, there is no evident difference in artistic running and recreational running. Second, there is the result of running, the tracing of the route that can be presented as a work of art. (Illustration 2) The route is visible only in the data documented by me during the run and translated into visual form afterwards.



Illustration 2. An Attempt to Run Lisboa (2009).

The process is finalized by presenting it in public, but this is not essential for the process of turning the action into art. From the conventional spectators' perspective, a public presentation of the finished project may be an important step in its becoming art. However, when focusing on an artist's act of transforming the raw material into art, the art emerges during the process and does not need formal completion.

How important was the actual running through the streets of Lisbon for the work of art to come into existence? From an artist's point of view in thinking about the work as a whole, art did not emerge from the running alone or from any other individual part of the process but through the whole course of the process. Though I am unwilling to define the moment of turning the process into art, I consider the contribution of running the most important part of the process. If I had not run the course, the work would have remained at the stage of a proposal or it would have a totally different conceptual structure. Paradoxically, running through the streets of Lisbon did not feel like artistic work; it felt just that I was having a run in an unfamiliar city. A passer-by would not have seen the difference between regular recreational running and artfied running practice, and even for me, despite knowing that the run would result in an artwork, the experience was not totally different. The route was excessively complicated, which forbade the usual moments of flow while running; otherwise, the run was normal. However, because of the intention of making art, my running in Lisboa can be labeled as artistic running.

Artfied running can be very similar to my artistic running. One can plan and run routes of different shapes just for fun and variety. Yet there are differences in making art by running and the artfification of a running practice. In my artistic running, there is a predefined end, the artwork, with certain artistic intentions. Moreover, the public nature of artistic work makes it open for evaluation and criticism. These are features lacking in artfied running, and they inflict the possibility of failure of my artistic runs. For example, when I started to run Lisboa I knew that I had only one chance. The risks of exhaustion and being unable to continue or getting too badly lost were genuine causes of uneasiness during the run. In my opinion, there is not a similar risk for failure present in artfied running. If the practice is artfied, one imperfect run will not ruin it, similar to regular fitness running practice, where if one fails to finish a marathon, there is usually another chance. Artfied running is a continuous process, not a project. In this way, artfied running is more forgiving to the runner than my running for art. Actually the latter can be compared at least partly with competitive running. The possibility of failure inherent in my artistic running is not present in all art, but artworks' openness for interpretation, evaluation, and criticism makes its success less stable than the artfied, personal, and playful approach to recreational running practice.

Much of contemporary art has an inclination towards everyday life. This tendency strives both to bring the art out of galleries and museums and to bring everyday acts and objects to art-spaces. The conceptual modes of operation that attempt to fulfill this objective usually operate by merely changing the context of an everyday act. Examples of this kind of approach are Rirkrit Tiravanija's installation art, based on offering noodle-soup to exhibition visitors,[\[38\]](#) or new types of public artworks where the art resembles social activism or intervention, like Superflex's free shop project in Helsinki (2010-2011).[\[39\]](#) If giving out food in an exhibition or surprising people with free shopping or running a literally meaningful route is art, then a playful attitude towards running, planning special routes, or making toenail necklaces can be tokens of artfification in running. The difference between artistic and artfied running cannot be found in the practice itself but in the intentionality of the artistic aspects and institutional connections of the practice. In most cases, the artists have a predetermined intention for the project, and they identify themselves with a certain tradition and

network within the contemporary art world.

8. Conclusion

Although there are several examples of using distance running as a tool or subject in contemporary art in a similar way,^[40] as Tiravanija's or Superflex's works use other kinds of everyday actions, the corresponding activity in the sport of running, the artification of running practices, still seems rare, although it does exist. If asked directly, none of the runners I have used as examples would be likely to call their practice artified or even containing any artistic aspects. However, from an external viewpoint, when one compares these running practices with contemporary art practices, the situation changes.

Today's art does not require a special form or certain mediums for realizing an artwork. Rather, the art is made by giving a new point of view to something, and, in that way, changing its connotations. The process of artification works in a similar way by changing the connotations of the practice, but there is no end product, art object, exhibition, or documentation as there is when making art. The artification of running does not bear these hallmarks of art but is realized in new attitudes towards the aspects of running practice, such as deriving the major enjoyment of running through features not connected to sporting success, like fun or variety, or generally having a light-hearted, playful attitude towards physical activity. These new kinds of attitudes involve new scopes of experience close to those outlined during the evolution of modern sport.

These artified practices are more discernible in recreational running than in competitive running, where the confines of modern sport and the professional sports-world prohibit new kinds of practices. There may be artified practices in competitive running, but they are even more private than in hobbyist running. The practices or occurrences of artistic spirit in competitive sports are also more likely to be rebellious in nature than constructive, or work by creating positive experiences, like the artified practices in fitness or lifestyle sports.

Today there is no homogenous sport of running; it has frayed into the numerous runnings that form today's running culture. Some of these runnings are somewhat artified or include seeds of artification, like the sporadic and private process-like games that turn running practice from sport to play. The transformation of running practice into post-sport physical culture or lifestyle sport is a major factor in the artification of sport, alongside the developments within established practices. The artification of running is usually not a consciously created project, and it is usually not noticed by the runners, themselves. An external perceiver can nevertheless notice these seeds and the beginnings of the artification at least when comparing running with the other, more artified sport-related practices and the practices of contemporary art

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Endnotes

[1] The other parts are "An Attempt to Run Helsinki" (2008), "An Attempt to Run Turku" (2008), "An Attempt to Run Vaasa" (2008).

[2] Michael Atkinson, "Parkour, Anarcho-Environmentalism, and Poiesis," *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 2009; 33; 169-194, ref. 179. Brian Pronger, "Post-sport: Transgressing Boundaries in Physical Culture" in *Sport and Postmodern Times*, ed. Genevieve Rail (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), pp. 277-300.

[3] Haruki Murakami, *What I Talk About When I Talk About Running* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008), pp. 9-10, 81-82.

[4] John Bale, *Running Cultures, Racing Space and Time* (London: Routledge, 2004), pp.34-35.

[5] Erkki Vettenniemi, *Joutavan juoksun jäljillä, kestävyysjuoksun varhaisvaiheet Suomessa* (Helsinki, SKS, 2005), pp. 58, 79, 97; Bale 2004, p. 40; Richard D. Mandell, *Sport, A Cultural History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), p. 145.

[6] Bale, p. 19; Mandell, pp. 130-132.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 16.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 49.

[9] Wikipedia, "Jogging." <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jogging> (accessed 13 January 2011).

- [10] Bale, p. 70.
- [11] Wikipedia "Marathon: Inclusion of women", http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marathon#Inclusion_of_women (accessed 7 March 2011), http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Athletics_at_the_1984_Summer_Olympics_%E2%80%93_Women%27s_marathon (accessed 7 March 2011).
- [12] Bale, pp. 9-10.
- [13] Timo Klemola, "Sport, a Way to the Authentic Self?" in *Ruumis liikkuu – liikkuko henki? Fenomenologinen tutkimus liikunnan projekteista* (Tampere: Tampere University, 1998), p. 143.
- [14] Murakami, for example, pp. 3-6, 48-49, 81-82, 83, 93-95, 96-99, 128.
- [15] J.P. Roos, *Liikunta ja elämäntapa* (Jyväskylä, Jyväskylän yliopisto – Nykykulttuurin tutkimusyksikön julkaisuja 14, 1989), pp. 21, 23; J.P. Roos, *Maratonmiehen elämä*, 1995, <http://www.valt.helsinki.fi/staff/jproos/mar1.htm> (accessed February 11, 2011), chapters 1, 10, 19.
- [16] Tapio Koski, *Juoksemisen filosofia* (Tampere: Tampere University Press, 2005), pp. 104-106, 241-242.
- [17] Richard Shusterman, "Somaesthetics: A Disciplinary Proposal," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 57, No. 3, Summer 1999, 299-313.
- [18] Roos, 1995, chapter 3. Also Murakami, pp. 45-46.
- [19] Murakami, pp. 90-91; Roos, 1995, chapter 10.
- [20] John Hockey and Jacquelyn Allen Collison, "Seeing the Way: Visual Sociology and the Distance Runner's Perspective," *Visual Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 1, April 2006, 77. "Viisaan hiiren kävelylenkillä," *Helsingin Sanomat* (16 May 2010).
- [21] Koski, pp. 152-154. Joseph H. Kupfer, "Engaging Nature Aesthetically," *The Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 2003, 37, 1, 77-89. Kupfer deals with the experiential relationship with nature, but my opinion is that a similar point of view can be taken in the case of athlete's relationship with her total experience, including both bodily and environmental experience.
- [22] Paavo Nurmi, "Juoksutyylisiä" (1923) in *Täpärin voittoni ja muita kirjoituksia*, ed. Erkki Vettenniemi (Helsinki: Teos, 2010), pp. 45-49; Bale, 2004, pp. 88-89.
- [23] Bale, pp. 61-62, 65.
- [24] Joseph H. Kupfer, *Experience as Art, Aesthetics in Everyday Life* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983), p. 116.
- [25] Wolfgang Welsch, "Sport Viewed Aesthetically, and Even as Art?" in *Aesthetics of Everyday Life*, ed. Andrew Light and Jonathan Smith (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), pp. 136-137, 139.
- [26] Scott Dunlap, "Making Your Own Toenail Necklace," *A Trail Runner's Blog*, entry posted 5 March 2007, <http://runtrails.blogspot.com/2007/03/making-your-own-toenail-necklace.html> (accessed 18 March 2011).
- [27] Sometimes sportified.
- [28] Taina Kinnunen, *Pyhät bodarit, yhteisöllisyys ja onni täydellisessä ruumiissa* (Helsinki: Gaudeamus, 2001), pp. 48, 95.
- [29] Belinda Wheaton, "Introduction: Mapping the Lifestyle Sport-scape" in *Understanding Lifestyle Sports: Consumption, Identity, and Difference*, ed. Belinda Wheaton (New York: Routledge, 2004), pp. 12-13.
- [30] *Ibid.*, pp. 2-4.
- [31] There are lifestyle magazines concerning parkour, for instance *Jump* by Urban Freeflow (<http://www.urbanfreeflow.com>). Parkour has also been used as an extreme element in film industry, for example in the James Bond movie *Casino Royale*. Both magazines and appearances in film have had very little effect in the parkour practice at the basic level.
- [32] More about the history of parkour: Atkinson, pp. 169-194.
- [33] A parkour enthusiast.
- [34] Maria Daskalaki, Alexandra Stara and Miguel Imas, "The 'Parkour Organisation': Inhabitation of Corporate Spaces," *Culture and Organization*, Vol. 14, No. 1, March 2008, 49-64, refs. 52, 56.
- [35] Wheaton, p. 14.
- [36] *Ibid.*, p. 3.

[37] Sol LeWitt, "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art" in *Art in Theory 1900-2000*, ed. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), p. 846. Originally published in *Artforum*, New York, vol 5, no 10, Summer 1967, 79-83.

[38] Nicholas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics* (Dijon: Les presses du réel, 2002) trans. Simon Pleasance & Fronza Woods with the participation of Mathieu Copeland. Originally published Originally published as *Esthétique relationnelle* (Dijon: Les presses du réel, 1998), p. 25.

[39] IHME Edition 2010 – Free Shop, <http://www.ihmeproductions.fi/en.php?k=16243> (accessed 17 March 2011).

[40] For example: Per Hüttner, "Jogging in Exotic Cities" (2000-2005), <http://www.perhuttner.com/images/jogging/index.php> (accessed 17 March 2011); Marnix De Nijs, "Run Motherfucker Run" (2001/2004), www.marnixdenijs.nl/rmr.htm (accessed 17 March 2011); Kanarinka, "It takes 154,000 breaths to evacuate Boston" (2007), <http://www.ikatun.org/evacuateboston/> (accessed 17 March 2011).
