

Converging Perspectives

Writings on Performance Art

EDITOR ANNETTE ARLANDER

3

EPISODI

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Preface

The book at hand is the third one in a series called *Episodi* (episode), which publishes writings by students of performance art and Live Art. The first episode was published in Finnish in 2003 and was called something like *Towards Performance Art – Experiences, Thoughts and Views*. Writers were the six first MA-students of performance art and theory fortified with two students of dramaturgy. The second episode in 2009 was a bilingual publication with the English title *Essays in Live Art and Performance Art*. The writers were students of performance art and theory between the years 2003–2009. Some of the essays were written in Finnish with English abstracts, others were written in English, with abstracts in Finnish. This third episode in 2011, *Converging Perspectives – Writings on Performance Art* is in English only. The contributors are participants of the first international MA degree programme in Live Art and Performance Studies, which took place in the years 2009–2011. Besides them, two doctoral students of performance art and theory and a guest from Aalto University have contributed with essays.

The title *Converging Perspectives* refers perhaps to the aim of the MA program to be a meeting point for graduate students from different fields of art, with some experience of Live Art and performance art, who are interested in performance studies and want to develop their research skills alongside with their artistic practice. Despite the name of the program the focus in this publication, structured in three parts, is on performance art rather than performance studies. By way of an introduction my text on perform-

ance art and self-portraiture provides one perspective among others, rather than an overview of the topics discussed. Various language idioms used by the writers are left more or less intact; the system of referencing is unified only to some extent.

The first part, Essays on performance artists, consist of texts written by Suvadeep Das, Christina Georgiou, Sari Kivinen, Katarina Mylläri, Ilka Theurich and Tuuli Tubin in response to the assignment to write an essay on a performance artist, which according to the degree requirements has the following goals: "The student learns how to contextualize his/her own artistic work within contemporary art, the tradition of performance art and its living practices. The student develops his/her writing approach and style by writing a publishable essay on a performance artist that interests him/her, which also serves as material for his/her thesis work." Some of the essays discuss prominent performance artists; others take up specific perspectives to performance art.

The second part, Critical reviews of colleagues' work, includes reviews written by the same writers as responses to an assignment with the following goal: "The student will write a critical review of a colleague's work, apply his/her knowledge of performance analysis and criticism, demonstrate a command of contextually focused writing and participate in a discussion on performance art and performances. In reviewing performances the student will develop his/her own relationship to writing." Some of the reviews describe specific performances; others present a colleague's practice in more general terms.

The third part, Other essays, consists of three texts by doctoral students. Lisa Erdman from Aalto University writes about satirical art and artistic practices related to her own; Pilvi Porkola writes about her own artistic performance practice and problematizes issues related to artistic research. Tero Nauha describes his experiences as a performance artist in contemporary society and provides an artistic context for his practice based research project. Unlike the texts in the first two parts, which are responses to assignments and might or might not relate to actual thesis work, these essays are directly linked to current research projects and present current perspectives to artistic and practice based research within performance art.

I would like to express my gratitude to all the writers, their teachers and to the administrators at Theatre Academy for their commitment and patience. In describing and discussing the performance work of predecessors, contemporaries, colleagues as well as their own performance practices the contributors in this anthology participate with their respective perspectives in the development of performance art and in the on-going discussions around it. Hopefully this publication will find interested readers among the artists, scholars and activists within this expanding and evolving field as well as on many neighbouring meadows.

Helsinki 18.5.2011

Annette Arlander

Is performance art self-portraiture?

— *Me or other people as medium*

ANNETTE ARLANDER

It would be nice to begin with a self-portrait, a painting by Alice Neel¹, which Julia Watson and Sidonie Smith mention in their *Interfaces* (2002) focusing on the visual textual interface in autobiographical works by women artists. They use her painting, where she is performing both the painter and the nude model, to demonstrate how the question of self-portraiture is complicated when the artist is a woman. One way of thinking about performance art could actually be to see it as a situation where the model posing for a painter decides to present her pose as an artwork in itself, without the mediation of the painting. Or perhaps she invites a photographer to take a picture (or places the camera on tripod, as I do) and claims the authorship of the image, pose or performance. Thus we can ask: Is performance art self-portraiture?²

Yes, often, or almost always, and almost inevitably, performance art is self-portraiture, since in traditional performance art the artist performs and acts in the art work or as the artwork herself. She is on display and thus a portrait or image of herself. Even when the artist thinks that she is focusing on, or bringing attention to some important issues, (as I try to do when I focus on the environment and the changes in the landscape or the passing of time), she produces a kind of a self-portrait as a side effect, sometimes almost an autobiography, especially in works that are temporal processes.

Many performance artists use their own body efficiently and create different types of images with their body, including self-portraits of various kinds. A classical historical example could be the artist couple and living sculpture (or singing sculpture) Gilbert and George. Other performance artists use autobiographical data as material for their work, in a more or less transformed condition, as did the early feminist performance artists, with Carolee Schneeman as one of the most well-known examples. In my own practice, by video filming myself in the same place once a week for a year, I produce a kind of self-portrait and autobiography, even when I choose to sit with my back to the camera or to hide almost invisible in the landscape.

And no, not necessarily, not always; performance art is not self-portraiture. Probably most performance artists do not primarily create self-portraits or autobiographical works, but use their self as material to create performances of their experiences or the phenomena they encounter in the world, as other artists do. Many performance artists utilize the events of their lives and their experiences as a starting point for their performances, but do not present those works as autobiographical works or as self-portraits. Rather they approach general or shared issues from their private and personal starting points. As an example we could use almost any performance art work discussed in this publication.

When I swirl as a weather vane on the hill, drip water from a jar back into the sea or walk in circles tied with a metal chain to a ring in the rock, I am not primarily creating self-portraits or producing an autobiographical documentation in performing for the camera. Of course I do disclose my identity and in some sense even my intimate experiences to the viewer. I do not do it as a self-portrait; rather I use myself as a performer, with whose help I can show the

passing of time and the changes in the landscape. So in a sense I divide myself in two, into the author and the performer.

Thus we could say that performance art is and is not self-portraiture. The question is somewhat misleading, however, since in some sense all art is self-portraiture and even autobiographical, perhaps all writing and all research is that, too. All art reflects and reproduces the artist's view of the world, which is created by her biography and life experience. Her way of understanding, seeing, experiencing, thinking and acting are products of her autobiography and self-development. Every art work or text exposes and reveals the mode of seeing, thinking and acting of the author, in one way or another, in a more or less open, distorted, transformed or invented way. The most fictional creation and the bluntest confession are self-portraits in this sense.

We could argue that art in general and performance art in particular is self-portraiture and autobiographical also in a magical sense. Through making art or with the help of artistic processes the artist or author creates and constructs a self, not only reproduces and reflects her past but actively creates the future. In my own work I am recreating and transforming my everyday life in the disguise of art, or as a side effect; I produce time for myself, generate moments of peace and possibilities to be in contact with the living environment, which feel like regeneration, even resuscitation.

Another way of looking at the dimension of self-portraiture or the autobiographical aspect in performance art is to relate it to the question of authorship. What does it mean to use oneself as a performer, or rather not to use other people as performers? In visual art and film and in performing arts like theatre and dance it is often considered strange if the author and the performer is the same person. Here performance art, body art or action art are exceptions.

Colleagues were confused when I created a mode of working where I did not need a separate performer, where I could use sound - and video technology to utilize my own voice or my body as a human figure to explore shifting emphasis from the performer to the environment. Soon people assumed I was interested in performing as such. But no, I do not consider myself as primarily a performer – though I usually perform for a camera at least once a week.

An artist can function as a performer or use performing as her medium without being a performer. Could a performer function as an author with equal ease? Although more than half a century has passed since Roland Barthes proclaimed “the death of the author”, the question of authorship cannot be bypassed when discussing performance art. Visual artists, choreographers, directors and Live Artists often create “concepts”, which somebody else (a performer, spectator, viewer, participant) then realizes, and thus they use other people as their material (though many prefer to speak of shared authorship). A performance artist might well work in collaboration with her audience or with participants, but traditionally a performance artist realizes a work by herself, using her own self, body and identity as material. We could argue that performance art is the art of identity par excellence. Though over time and with shifting eras that identity, self or subjectivity has been understood and anchored in different ways.

PRESENTATION, REPRESENTATION AND RELATIONS

In the following I try to use Miwon Kwon’s analysis of the genealogy of site-specific art as an aid when thinking of the various dimensions of the use of self in performance art. I suggest that three perspectives or points of emphasis can be discerned, namely focus on presentation, representation or relations.

Kwon (2002, 29–30) observes that the understanding of the site has changed in site-specific art during the past thirty years. Initially, site-specific art was based in a phenomenological or experiential understanding of the site as defined by the actual physical attributes of a particular location. Later on, materialist investigations and institutional critique reconfigured the site as a network of interrelated spaces and economies, not only as a physical arena but one constituted through social, economic and political processes. In recent site-oriented and project-based art, the site has been further redefined and extended into non-art realms and into broader cultural, social and discursive fields. (Kwon 2002, 3) These three paradigms of site specificity – phenomenological, social/institutional, and discursive – are not to be understood as stages in a linear historical development but, as Kwon correctly observes, rather as “competing definitions, overlapping with one another and operating simultaneously in various cultural practices today (or even within a single artist’s single project).” (Kwon 2002, 20)

Performance art developing in the 1960’s and 70’s in the wake of minimalism understood the artist (and also the viewer) as an embodied, sensing, corporeal and almost universal bodily being. And we could say that the performance or action, like the art object or event “was to be singularly experienced in the here-and-now through the bodily presence of each viewing subject, in a sensorial immediacy of spatial extension and temporal duration.” (Kwon 2002, 11) Exceeding the limitations of traditional media and their institutional setting, relocating meaning from within the art object to its context, restructuring the subject from a Cartesian model to a phenomenological one of lived bodily experience, resisting the market economy, which circulates artworks as commodity goods

– all these strivings came together in the attachment of the work to the site (Ibid) – and in transforming the artwork into a performance, an action, a happening or a shared event, I would add.

In 1980's and the 1990's various forms of institutional critique and conceptual art developed a different model. The site was increasingly conceived "not only in physical and spatial terms but also as a cultural framework defined by the institutions of art." (Kwon 2002, 12) The site now encompassed several interrelated spaces and economies, like the studio, the gallery, the museum, art criticism, art history, the art market and was seen as a system of practices, open to social, economic and political pressures. While "minimalism returned to the viewing subject a physical corporeal body, institutional critique insisted on the social matrix of class, race, gender and sexuality of the viewing subject" (Kwon 2002, 13) and adopted strategies that were anti-visual (informational, textual, expository, didactic) or immaterial (gestures, events or performances). Instead of being a noun, an object, the artwork sought to be a verb, a process, "provoking the viewer's critical (not just physical) acuity regarding the ideological conditions of their viewing." (Kwon 2002, 24) The specific relationship between an artwork and its site was not based on the physical permanence of that relationship but "on the recognition of its unfixed impermanence, to be experienced as an unrepeatable and fleeting situation." (Kwon 2002, 24) Thus actions, interventions and performances were increasingly popular strategies.

In performance art identity was more and more in focus. Instead of a universal, sculptural and corporeal body the performance artists, with radical feminists at the forefront, focused on the gendered, ethnically and racially defined body, identified by and committed to class or sexual orientation. They were foregrounding

the private experiences of the artist and their political dimensions, and understanding the artist as a representative of their specific communities. In performance art, too, the interest shifted with identity politics from presentation to representation, with the representational understood in political terms.

For Kwon, the “dominant drive of site-oriented practices today is the pursuit of a more intense engagement with the outside world and everyday life – a critique of culture that is inclusive of non-art spaces, non-art institutions, and non-art issues. (Kwon 2002, 26) Besides this expansion of art into culture, which diversifies the types of sites that are used, a broader range of disciplines and popular discourses inform site-oriented art. Site and content may overlap, and “the art work’s relationship to the actuality of the location (as site) and the social conditions of the institutional frame (as site) are both subordinate to a *discursively* determined site that is delineated as a field of knowledge, intellectual exchange, or cultural debate.” (Kwon 2002, 26)

Similar developments are visible in performance art as well. More than a discursive development (though this text could be seen as an example of exactly that) an emphasis on relationality and the everyday has been prominent. After the 1990’s and especially during the decade since 2000, with the ever increasing importance of media and web-culture on one hand and the influence of community oriented, socially engaged or relational forms of art on the other, many performance artists have increasingly emphasized interaction and engagement with the audience, with the viewers or participants present. This has brought to the fore an understanding of the subject as interlinked in various relationships, interdependencies and connections, a self as material moulded by various encounters, experiences and interactions with others.

These aspects or dimensions – what Kwon calls phenomenological, social-institutional and discursive with regard to site-specific art and which I would compare with emphasis on presentation or representation of the self or on relations between self and others in performance art – are clearly not only (perhaps not even mainly) historical. If we think of a sculptural corporeal flesh-body, a culturally, socially and performatively constructed identity and a subjectivity continually transformed by encounters, relations and interaction – all these aspects or dimensions are present in almost any performance art work, though with different emphasis.

If I use my own work as an example, I could probably find all three dimensions in it, although (in my own opinion) it is fairly evident that the dimension of presentation, showing a “universal” human figure is the dominant one. When I sit wrapped in a whitish scarf with my back to the camera on a rock whitewashed with bird droppings, I am first and foremost a sculptural shape that merges with the base due to its colour. But, at the same time I am of course also a woman hiding her body with a scarf and turning her back to the viewer, or, if you wish, inviting the viewer to look at the landscape. Is this a self-portrait? Yes, of course, in some sense. But is that relevant for the work? The human figure is crucial, not my identity or subjectivity, though they have some relevance, too, inevitably. Any idea of a human being “in general” is necessarily misleading.

SELF OR OTHER PEOPLE AS MEDIUM

From the point of view of visual art we could formulate a scale or continuum between the use of other people as medium vs. the artist’s body as a medium. Art critic and curator Susan Kelly has pointed out that the so called research turn in art allows artists to have meaningful collaborations with researchers from other fields.

"However, the artist's authority is often smuggled back in through an extended use of the term 'medium'. There is a difference between the artist who 'uses' photography and the photographer and the artist who 'uses' performance, but wouldn't define herself as a performer." (Kelly 2009, 142) In various forms of art projects that try to deconstruct the position of the individual artist, authorship is re-constituted with the help of the notion "medium". The conventional use of the term "medium" allows "other people" to become a silent and passive raw material, another medium, like wood for example, to be exploited, in an ever-expanding list of media at the artist's free disposal. (Ibid) However, we can think of the issue the other way round, too. Whose body is on display? Whose body, story or self is at stake? In contemporary art where community-oriented and relational interests are dominating in most discussions it might seem anachronistic to contemplate a scale between author and performer. In various forms of performing arts authorship is often related to a script, sometimes to the overall concept, or to several co-authors. In performance art the author is the performer, mostly.

Performance studies scholar and theatre director Richard Schechner looks at performance processes as the collaboration of four different types of players: sourcers, producers, performers and the partakers (including the audience). It is not difficult to see that the starting point for the model is in traditional theatre; it presupposes a division of labour between these four functions, even though the categories can be combined in various ways, and the same person can function in several roles or even in all four of them. (Schechner 2007, 225) In performance art the sourcer or author, the producer and the performer coincide in the same person; only the viewers have a separate role. (In my own work I

function as the primary audience, too, since I use camera on tripod.) Without exaggerating too much we could say that a performance artist conceives, plans, realizes, performs, documents and markets her or his performance.

In film the director and photographer stay behind the camera, the actors and performers in front of the camera, and there is rarely any confusion (at least not in feature film) who is the author/creator and who is not. However, within documentary film questions of authorship have produced heated debates – whose story are we hearing when a person narrates or performs her or his life in front of the camera. Dance scholar Christopher Bannerman and film maker Chantal McLaughlin (2009, 72) suggest that questions of copyright and authorship play a crucial role in live performances, too. How to recognize and give credit to all the members' work in the production of a collaboratively working team? They propose that the principles that have informed documentary film and community arts practices could well be adapted to concern live performances as well. (Bannerman & McLaughlin 2009, 80)

In the tradition of visual art, as in literature, the independence of the artist and the signature of the author are self-evident, and the author's right to claim her ownership to her work regardless of the possible use of assistants during the working process is so obvious, that it affects the relationship to performers and other partners as well. As an extreme example we could mention Santiago Sierra's way of hiring people in subordinate or victimized positions to perform humiliating tasks in his performances, which have often been interpreted as provocations against the hypocrisy of the art world. In a work he created for the Venice biennale in 2001 he paid two hundred African shoeshine boys and street ven-

dors to have their hair dyed blond and to show up on the streets and in photographs that way. He demonstrates in a cynical way that everything (and everybody) has a price and also how big the price differences between people can be. (Bishop 2005, 120)

Paradoxically, using other people as material or assistants is amplified in various forms of community projects as well, where the purpose is to work to the enjoyment and benefit of the participants. The projects nevertheless become the artworks of the artist, regardless of how many people helped realize them. As an example we could take Anthony Gormley's collective clay sculpture in Helsinki in 2009 created from a huge lump of clay by countless voluntary citizens.

In the wake of relational aesthetics and art that strives to generate social interaction, perhaps partly as a counter reaction to them as well, a genre "other people as medium" has developed. This could be juxtaposed with early performance art's use of "the artist's body as medium". There has even been talk of the "outsourcing of authenticity".³ At one end of the continuum (other people as medium) we thus find an anonymous and exchangeable performer or participant, who by her actions realizes the work. At the other end of the scale (me or self as medium) there is a named author, who positions herself within the work, creates a work out of herself, or performs as a work (like Chris Burden, Bruce Nauman, Vito Acconci, Carolee Schneeman, Valie Export and others in their time and later Stelarc, Orlan, Marina Abramovic, Roi Vaara, and so on.) On this continuum, between these extremes, we can place various kinds of performers, performing artists, performing authors and performance artists. We could think of this scale or continuum as moving from "the performer as author" towards "the author as performer".

If we begin with 1) "other people as medium" or the performer acting on the directives of an author (including social sculptures created by participants) the second step could be 2) the performer as an interpreter for or of the author, elaborating on an author's work (like a classical actor or musician). The third step could be 3) the productive performer, who is creating material for the author, like the contemporary dancer who produces material for the choreographer and participates in creating the work. The next step 4) could be collective authorship, or performer-authors working as a team. Closer to the other end we find 5) the performing artist who is an author as well, or one who is responsible for the production, though primarily a performer (like say Madonna) and lastly 6) an author who functions as a performer occasionally or an artist who uses her own body as medium. Probably Orlan could be the best example of an artist and performer claiming authorship of her body. Though of course every performer, every human being, actually, is using her or his body as a medium, material and tool in some sense.

Other people as medium – the performer executing instructions

In some sense "other people" are always the medium of an artist, since any kind of work presupposes, assumes and demands a receiver, a viewer, spectator, participant or witness who goes along with the proposition of the artist and realizes it, in her mind or in reality. The participants in performances based on audience participation are one kind of performers following the author's instructions, too, although the instructions can be extremely detailed or open and free. A performer, however, who would only execute the instructions of the author and nothing else, might be a rare phenomenon in contemporary performances.

The performer as interpreter

A performer can also function as the interpreter of an author (like an actor, dancer, musician) and perform a more or less original or personal interpretation of an artwork created by the author, more or less influenced by the manipulation or support of a director, choreographer or conductor. This kind of interpreter role is often what is traditionally expected of a performer.

The performer as producer of material

The next step from performer towards author is a performer who is actively engaged in creating material for a performance, a member of the working group who generates material and brings in her own experiences that the author (director, choreographer, facilitating artist) can choose and construct the work from. Performers working in this way are rarely mentioned as co-authors in the credits, since creative engagement is assumed to be part of a performer's work. This category is very broad; ways of working and collaborating differ greatly. Many ethical problems related to performances generated collaboratively from private material can be linked to this performer position.

Collective authorship

The next step on the scale could be a performer who is functioning as a member of a group of authors, a collective or a team with shared authorship. In many cases these are permanent groups with or without an explicit leader who work as collectives and share the authorship. Many legendary groups in the area between contemporary performance and Live Art have basically functioned in this mode. (Forced Entertainment, Coat Island, Gob Squad, She She Pop, Rimini Protokoll, Desperate Optimists,

Blast Theory, Baktruppen and so on). With rock bands as models ever new generations of performers have tried to challenge and change the division of labour and the hierarchies in traditional institutions. At worst the result is only a slightly blurred power structure, which is thus even harder to recognize and remedy. At best a self-organizing collective based on mutual friendship will work for a while.

The performing artist

When we move towards authorship on the continuum we find the performing artist, who can be an author and producer responsible for her show, but still be mainly known as a performer – like stand-up comedians and entertainers, with the legendary Madonna as a case in point. Perhaps the clearest examples of performing authors are writer-actors and creators of autobiographical performances like the late Spalding Gray, or writer-performers like the creator of documentary monologues based on extensive interviews, Anna Deavare Smith. In this category we find many musicians who perform their own compositions, too. And perhaps also those performance artists, like Karen Finley and Guillermo Gomez-Peña, who use performances based on spoken words presented to a live audience as their main medium. Gomez-Peña deals ironically with multiculturalism and imagery from popular culture while working as a theoretician and an activist, though he is known primarily as a performer. Karen Finley's provocative performances exemplified in their time the hypocrisy of patriarchy. The police who interrupted her performance told her she could either strip or talk politics, but not do both in the same performance, the story goes.

The artist's body as medium

As a last category (or why not first) we could think of an artist who uses herself as a performer, her or his own body as material, but is nevertheless not mainly a performer, like for example Joseph Beuys, or a contemporary artist like Marina Abramovic. Her production consists mainly of performance art works. However, she is usually not considered a performer but an artist whose art works are performances. Performance artists who use their own body as a medium even more explicitly include Stelarc, with his combinations of robotic technology and the body and Orlan, with her public performances of plastic surgery, where she transformed her face according to features of women in classical paintings, an extreme attempt of using her body as medium, and of self-portraiture.

AUTHORSHIP AND AGENCY

We can ask: where does authorship begin? What is the smallest single aspect that authorship is comprised of? These questions are debated when copyright issues are discussed. Perhaps it is more important to ask, referring to Michel Foucault's famous text "What is an author?" why authorship is still so important? Was the author not supposed to be dead already? Our society is grounded on the idea of private property, but that is not the only reason. More importantly, with the author function fiction can be kept at bay, accredited to somebody. Likewise, if the work of art dissolves and disintegrates, becomes a process, turns invisible or comes to be shared, as in much contemporary art, an author is needed to stand for the work in art institutions. Within visual arts the return of the author has been discussed by Marja Sakari (2004), who asks crisply, whether the artist has replaced the artwork. And we can continue the question: if the performer first did stand in for the

author and then replaced the art work in performance art, has the activity of the viewer-participant replaced both of them today?

Based on what has been said above we can assume that the choice whether to use one's self or other people as a medium is an aesthetic choice and also an ethical decision. Using another human being as material, and seeing in her instrumental rather than intrinsic value, has been considered unethical since Immanuel Kant. However, stressing autonomy and independence are regarded as anti-social and thus un-ethical too, besides being a disastrous misconception (with implications for the future of the planet). We know by now that we are all interdependent.

Performance art has often been understood as an art form who gives the individual artist or the human being who feels herself to be subordinated or victimized a chance to state her case, a possibility to express her ideas and at least to some extent define herself, to utter her discontent and resistance or to exercise her agency in defying the machinery of society and the art world. On the other hand we could argue that performance art in particular provides a possibility and a kind of free zone where you can binge on those taboos and that primary narcissism which have been cleaned away from other areas in life. As a third aspect we have to note, however, that in our global world of un-equality performance art is one of the few fields where you can act and be seen and even succeed without hardly any economic resources. This global situation, which produces activity using "other people as medium" in the style of both Santiago Sierra and Alex Gormley (beginning from negative or positive assumptions, we could say), is naturally also the context where each of us try to use and produce our own "self as material" or medium.

And certainly we have to remember the performative dimension of performance art – the performative being an utterance or act

which has real consequences, at least for its author and performer. Historically this has often been understood in a heroic way, emphasizing the aspect of risk or hazard. For my part, based on my own experiences, I would prefer to stress that many big changes in life are realized by repeating very small acts. If we believe theorist Theresa Brennan (2000, 191) and take seriously the indissolubility of the individual and the environment, then every action and every thought will have an effect.



Year of the Tiger, video still, Annette Arlander 2010

NOTES

- 1 The image is available on the web, for instance at http://www.artchive.com/artchive/N/neel/neel_self.jpg.html
- 2 This text is based on a lecture at the performance art and criticism –seminar at Kiasma theatre, Museum of Contemporary art, Helsinki in October 2010 and a talk at the Performance seminar related to the festival Never or Now 28–30.1.2011 in Bergen, Norway <http://nonfestival.wordpress.com/seminar/> A shorter version of the text has been published in the magazine Esitys [Performance] 1/2011.
- 3 Claire Bishop organized a panel with that title in PSi 14 in Copenhagen 2008.

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PART I

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ESSAYS ON PERFORMANCE ARTISTS

Researching space – An essay about some works of Ann Hamilton and Red Earth

TUULI TUBIN

What is a space? Is it something that simply surrounds me? Is it something tangible, can I touch it, can I feel it without touching it? Am I a part of it or is it a part of me? Am I myself a space? How to activate a space? How can a space be researched? How might a work process in the case of a research, with the aim of producing an artwork, consist of?

I have often been confused about the word "space", about how it is defined, especially in comparison with "place", about the differences, similarities and overlappings in their meanings. Therefore I will bring out some definitions here that I have found helpful and that I will base on in this essay also. "Place is perceived as in some sense 'bounded', particularly in relation to the seemingly endless extension of space." (Dean and Millar 2005, 18) "Place is something known to us, somewhere that belongs to us in a spiritual, if not possessive, sense and to which we too belong. [---] Place is thus space in which the process of remembrance continues to activate the past" (Ibid, 14). Nick Kaye quotes and refers a lot to Michel de Certeau, and writes for example that de Certeau suggests, while talking about place and space, that space "occurs as the effect produced by the operations that orient it, situate it, temporalize it" (de Certeau quoted in Kaye 2000, 5). Kaye adds that "de Certeau does not read place as *an order*, but as *an order-*

ing system, while spatial practices do not reproduce fragments of a given order, but operate as *ordering activities*, whether that activity be walking, reading, listening or viewing” (Ibid). “Space is not there for the eye only: it is not a picture; one wants to live in it” (El Lissitzky quoted in Bishop 2005, 48). I would bring out one more similar word – “environment”, which, for me, is also closely related to and partly overlapping with the meanings of the words space and place. Richard Schechner says that “an environment is what surrounds, sustains, envelops, contains, nests. But it is also participatory and active, a concatenation of living systems” (Schechner 1994, x).

I am not definitely seeking for fixed answers to the questions enumerated in the beginning of this essay; they are just themes that interest me a lot and come often forth in my own works. Therefore my attention is caught also by works done by other artists that deal with the same themes or arise questions motivated by them. Here, in this essay, I am writing about some works done by a visual artist Ann Hamilton and an environmental arts group Red Earth. Both of them work mainly with installations and performances, and the themes of space and work process are important components in many of their works.

Ann Hamilton is an American visual artist who has studied textile design and sculpture, and whose works are mainly in the form of installations, performances and objects. Besides visual language she is interested in verbal and written language, in books, and uses therefore a lot of voice and text in her works. Red Earth is an international Britain-based group led by artists Caitlin Easterby and Simon Pascoe, working with live performances; site-specific sculpture installations; public art/environmental sculpture commissions; lectures, workshops and residencies; participatory arts projects, and

interdisciplinary collaborations with non-arts professionals like geologists, architects, farmers, archaeologists, historians, ecologists, astronomers, land managers, animals and communities.⁴

Spaces into which both Hamilton and Red Earth place themselves, their works, and by which their works are inspired of, constitute and determine a big part of the works themselves. Hamilton and Red Earth work in spaces that are in a way opposites. Most of Hamilton's works have been placed in galleries and museums, in architecturally fixed spaces, buildings that are bounded with concrete tangible walls, whereas Red Earth's ones have been placed and created mainly in the nature. Although Hamilton uses mainly architecturally fixed and bounded spaces, she is good at making these boundaries, at least partly, almost invisible, turning an ordinary space with four walls, a floor and a ceiling into something totally different, that in many works resembles for example a landscape. For that she uses often big amounts of some sort of material. For example in "Tropos" she covered the floor of a big room in the Dia Center for the Arts in New York with horsehair, so that the floor became like a wavy sea; in "Corpus", at Mass MoCA (Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, situated in an old factory), paper-dropping machines dropped millions of sheets of white paper from the ceiling of a big old factory room to the floor, creating an illusion of snow or leaves or empty pages of books falling to the ground and covering it totally; or in "Mantle" in the Miami Art Museum, where she covered a long steel table with fresh-cut flowers that formed like a huge grave. In all these three works there are important the relations between the materials, things, space, and the body of the artist or another performer or audience members performing inside the installation. These relations activate the space. She herself has said that "I'm interested in the rela-

tionships between things in space. And more important than the things themselves is the way they come into relation” (Hamilton quoted in Simon and Hamilton 2006, 8). She also poses a question “how can I make something that demonstrates the thinking or demonstrates a relation instead of making a picture of a relation?” (Ibid, 9).

One of Hamilton’s works, “Ann Hamilton Tower”, made in collaboration with Jensen Architects, is placed outside in the nature too. The aim of that work is not to blend in with the surroundings, but to cut the people inside it totally away from it. From the outside, this tower looks like a foreign body in the surrounding landscape. It is a several stories tall concrete tower designed by her as a performance space. Inside the tower, in the bottom of it, there is a pool reflecting the sky above, as there is no ceiling or roof in the other end of the tower. Between these two ends, the floor and the missing ceiling, there is a double-helix spiral staircase. Hamilton describes this sculpture as an “un-tower”, because inside it there open up no panoramic views of the landscape as there are no windows; instead of that, the project “promises to take the visitors’ mobile eye and its corporal housing on a spiritual journey toward the light, moving progressively and incrementally away from the details of the observed world”. (Hamilton quoted in Hamilton and Jensen Architects 2008) This is one of the works that illustrates how Hamilton, through a tangible and familiar surrounding space, guides the viewers to an unknown, intangible one, often to the space inside ourselves, to our unconscious. Such paths can be experienced also in her works where she uses a totally different kind of space, a space that is attached to herself, that is in fact inside herself – the mouth, an opening to the whole inner space of a body. In the video works “Linings”,

"Aleph", "Salic", and photo series "Commute I" and "Commute II" her mouth is filled with something (water, stone marbles, a ball of yarn, horsehair), creating an image of this something, the matter, either entering or exiting her inner space through the mouth. In the photo series "Portal 1 – 20" and "Face to Face 1 – 67" she has a self-made pinhole-camera in her mouth that takes photographs when she opens her mouth, facing either her own reflection on a mirror held in front of her face, other people or landscapes. In the music-theatre piece "Mercy", done in collaboration with Meredith Monk, a tiny video camera was fixed on the teeth of the singer (M. Monk) and the video filmed by it was projected on the screen on the wall. In these works there is a shift between the functions of a mouth and an eye as the mouth with a camera inside it becomes as an eye. As Hamilton herself describes it: "the site of language becoming a place of image". (Hamilton quoted in Simon and Hamilton 2006, 195) During the installation "Malediction" Hamilton produced amounts of imprinted molds of her mouth by pressing bread dough into the cavity of her mouth. By doing this, she made the opening, the mouth, the starting point of a passage into her inner space more visible, giving it a form existing outside herself.

Most of the Red Earth's works have been placed outside, in natural environments, in different landscapes, in spaces that are ever changing due to natural forces. These enormous, seemingly endless spaces, landscapes, have been activated by Red Earth for example by site-specific installations, performances, journeys and rituals. All these can be regarded as what Nick Kaye, quoted also earlier in this essay, referring to Michel de Certeau, calls for "ordering activities".⁵ For example the project "Long Shore Drift" took place along the Suffolk coast in England and explored the themes of coastal transformation and climate change. This was a space that is partly

disappearing, partly reappearing. A strip of land by the ocean, sometimes seen, during the low tide, sometimes hidden under the water, during the high tide. Red Earth activated that space by time- and tide-based installations and live performances on the beach.

In their other projects they have worked also with the themes of humans and animals shaping and being shaped by the land. As for example in "Horse Nation", which was "an exploration of the physical, ecological and mythical landscape experienced through our relationship with the horse [---] inspired by the uninterrupted history of the Mongolian horse as sacred animal, and by its place in the dialogue between nomad and landscape".⁶

Red Earth uses nature as a space where to place their works in and get inspiration from, and also as a sculptable material. As for example in "Long Shore Drift" where the installations were built of greenwood, or in "Bread" where earth was used for ploughing, sowing and harvesting of corn for baking bread, and where earth together with clay, chalk and lime was used for building an outdoor oven for baking bread.

Red Earth's every project is closely connected with research. As they themselves say: "We view our work as a continuous program of research: a dialogue often on an international basis between art, science and nature exploring our relationship with the landscape through interaction with the environment".⁷ The work "Breath" is a good example of their work process. "Breath" was inspired by the ancient Japanese Shinto culture and contemporary Butoh. In order to investigate Japanese culture and art within the context of Breath, and to find possible collaborators, Red Earth organized a research trip to Japan. The main themes of Japanese culture and art that became to influence and inspire the whole work, were respect for space, Zen Gardens, traditional architecture, colours,

landscape features, rituals in Shinto shrines, and Butoh which is much about becoming space, about becoming a part of the nature of place.⁸ What I find interesting to follow in this work process, is how the ideas were developed from the starting point till the end, till the 4 performances combining sculptural installation and physical performance. First, there was written down the concept for the whole project, then concepts for images and installation, and then performance outline, a script. Here is an excerpt from the image concepts:

Hisako/ladder/screens

*Soul/humanity/creation/birth/consciousness/breath life/skin/
wax/white & gold/moon/translucence/veiling/subconscious/
dream world*

Atsushi/bamboo grove

*Spirit/nature/animal/instinct/wild/life energy/forest & tree/
natural world*

Mushimaru

*Back space: mineral/stone/mountain/strata time/earth/eternity/
death the process of manifestation/transformation.⁹*

Red Earth's research can to some extent and in some parts be regarded as ethnographic research. They do kind of fieldwork and participant observation, although their aim is not so much in producing new knowledge, but more in making visible and reminding us of our relationships with nature by exploring this in different countries and cultures. One example of such ethnographic approach is "Breath", but maybe the best example is "Horse Nation" which was inspired by the Red Earth's lead artist Simon Pascoe's

journey with American academicians in Mongolia studying the Bronze Age burial sites and archaeological and contemporary evidence of the horse as a sacred totem. The focus was on the Mongolian people who stand at a crossroads between traditional nomadic life and modern urbanisation. As a result of this research there were planned installations, performances and journeys on the ancient routes across the land in Mongolia, southwest America, Britain and Europe.¹⁰

The results of such researches can be seen in the artworks created in the end of each project. These results are not shown to the audience as one-to-one re-enactments of actions or behaviours observed, for example in the form of performing ethnography that Victor and Edie Turner write about, where strips of behaviour from either one's own or another culture are made into play scripts and performed according to that. (Turner and Turner in Bial 2007, 265–276) In Red Earth's case I see the use of this kind of partly ethnographic approach as a method for gathering information and material to work on, and also in order to reveal the main issues in the themes they are interested in. But all this is not done in a form of only taking from another culture; it is an exchange of ways of looking at things, of sharing thoughts, experiences, etc. This is an approach that is close to Eugenio Barba's concept of barter, where different cultures and the representatives of these cultures are regarded as equal and where a group from one culture gives something to another and vice versa. (Unt 1999, 19) When Red Earth has worked on international projects, they have always engaged either artists or other professionals from the cultures they are interested in, in the whole work process and final artworks.

Ann Hamilton's way of working differs from the Red Earth's one. She does not use research in the same way as Red Earth; she

does not usually go out to do fieldwork, instead, she reads a lot. As Joan Simon writes about her: "She reads spaces for her site-responsive installations; she reads for the specifics of her installation's component parts and as background and inspiration, digging into volumes of history, socioeconomic theory, anthropology, and urban and agricultural studies". (Simon and Hamilton 2006, 2) And she reads dictionaries, for example for searching possible titles for her works in them. She also reads literary criticism and poetry. Some of the poets whose writings she has used as inspiration and even parts of her artworks are Walt Whitman, Charles Reznikoff, Susan Howe, A. R. Ammons, Ann Lauterbach, Susan Stewart (Ibid, 3).

I started this essay by proposing open-ended questions and I will end it with an open-ended list of words that are circling on my mind after writing about the themes of space and work process while producing an artwork. These words can be regarded as some possible answers to some of the questions proposed:

tangible, intangible; architecturally bounded, ever changing under the influence of the natural forces; appearing, disappearing; outside, inside; location, material; research; ethnography; sharing; exchanging; travelling; speaking; showing; experiencing; reading; performing ...

NOTES

- 1 <http://redearth.co.uk/home2.html>, accessed 13. 3. 2010
- 2 Kaye writes that de Certeau regards space as an ordering system, and spatial practices, like walking, reading, listening and viewing, as ordering activities. Kaye 2000, 5
- 3 <http://www.redearth.co.uk/horsenation2.html>, accessed 29. 3. 2010
- 4 <http://www.redearth.co.uk/athanor2.htm>, accessed 14. 3. 2010
- 5 <http://www.redearth.co.uk/breathresearch.html>, accessed 29. 3. 2010
- 6 <http://www.redearth.co.uk/breathoutline.html>, accessed 29. 3. 2010
- 7 <http://www.redearth.co.uk/horsenation2.html>, accessed 29. 3. 2010

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Assemblages of Multiple Selves: Artists Performing Through Persona

SARI TM KIVINEN

"In acting, or playing a character, you want to impersonate the personality of a person that is not yourself. A persona, however, is an artefact, a fabrication, that corresponds to what you want to project from yourself." (Rosenthal according to Lampe 2002, 297.)

"He strides through the swing doors and into the foyer. Heads turn. His doesn't. It remains fixed on the purpose at hand." (Renny Kodgers 2007.)

A tall man dressed impeccably in a pristine white suit and cowboy hat strides through the circulating lobby doors of the hotel demanding the immediate attention of the concierge, the dwindling tourists, and the slowly gathering audience. The man's faux American accent asserts itself through its authoritative tone, a questionable combination of words, and with the accompanying body gestures that illuminate an air of celebrity. The location is Hilton Hotel on George Street Sydney and the year is 2006. The diversified audience range from the chance onlookers to those in the knowhow who have gathered in the hotels capacious lobby and café lounge. The man expertly positions himself within the space, concierge following his every head turn.

I am witness to the performing power of Mark Shorter (aka Renny Kodgers), an artist who illuminates the performing male

subject through constructed persona. The highlight of Shorter's performances is that they often occur in public spaces, away from the artificial bright lights of the theatrical stage. Focus is on relational positions of power. After witnessing Renny Kodgers in action I hear a young woman, who is obviously affected by his performance, ask him 'where does this all come from?' Still in character Kodgers laughs patronisingly. 'Little lady I don't know what you're asking me, but I have here the keys to the master suite.' As one of many (too many) female spectators present at the performance I observe the deflation of energy in the room as Kodgers exits via the elevator to the master suite accompanied by one lucky fan.

FICTION

Renny Kodgers is an entity conceived by artist Mark Shorter who has often staged these types of scenarios, however, in the above description I have attempted to reposition Kodgers within a framing of my choice. I conceive that in June 2006 Kodgers performed at the Hilton Hotel on George Street Sydney. I believe that an element of fiction is often a necessary tactic when attempting to locate reality. In actual fact, in June 2006, I sat on my own in the café lounge of the lobby in the Hilton Hotel, merely envisaging that Renny Kodgers would stride in at any moment and dominate the space. I sat and I wrote the outline of a script onto the white paper napkins that accompanied my soy latte, the script eventually developed into a movie length story detailing the history between my alter-ego Jessee-Liina and her relationship to Renny Kodgers, combined in the script was a third character; Jessee-Liina's best friend My-Name-Is-Sue. The script that was subsequently written whilst in the Hilton café lounge combined the entwined fictional histories of Jessee-Liina, Renny Kodgers and My-Name-Is-Sue

in an epic tale about masculinity, amnesia, hysteria (female), and subversion through a narrative of multiple perspectives and fictionalised persona.

This essay *Assemblages of Multiple Selves: Artists Performing Through Persona* aims to blur the various realities and approaches of artists exploring multiplicities of the performing self. Although I will not particularly delve into detail about the fictions that I devise through my own alter-egos, I mention them now as background information for the reader to keep in mind whilst reading this text. The focus of this essay is to consider a small sampling of artists who work purposely with constructing persona. I will discuss variable aspects about: performativity of everyday behaviour; multiplicity of self; and parodies of popular culture. Each aspect being an important element of performing through persona.

PERFORMING AN EVERYDAY ACTION

In the 1980s Allan Kaprow spent two weeks brushing his teeth attentively, documenting aspects of his behaviour and subsequently framing it as an everyday art action. Kaprow believes that "Ordinary life performed as art/ not art can charge the everyday with metaphoric power." (Kaprow 1986, 222.) Eelka Lampe considers the action of brushing one's teeth as an example of the self who is *not* performing, the unobserved self, undertaking an action that is not meant to be precisely repeatable by the non-conscious performer of the action. Lampe has devised a scale depicting levels of control over performative display; the scale attempts to measure the levels of performing and not performing and is based on the multiple selves of pioneer performance artist Rachel Rosenthal. Brushing one's teeth is considered by Lampe as the action with the least control of performative display.

For the previous decade I have often observed myself feeling overly conscious about the way that I brush my teeth. Ever since sharing the nightly bathroom ritual of brushing my teeth in the company of my ex-husband and being teased for brushing my teeth in the 'wrong way.' The point being that brushing my teeth causes me performance anxiety. Similarly many everyday actions highlight, for me, the expectation to perform in a particular way, my own everyday performance being the one I have always found the most difficult to master. Creating a persona, on the other hand, a caricature to perform through, an exaggerated version of the self, who can interact on behalf of the socially awkward self, is my preferred method of presenting myself to the world.

PERFORMING MANY SELVES

Lampe believes that "through personae a woman can speak as a subject from the perspective of multiple selves, moving beyond the limiting object position of the female gender in theatrical representation." (Lampe 2002, 298.) Rachel Rosenthal has many selves that she performs on stage, alas Lampe's reason for attempting to measure the levels of Rosenthal's performative display in the 2002 article *Rachel Rosenthal Creating Her Selves*. It is in this article that Rosenthal discusses her multiple personas as corresponding to her own psyche, being as she describes, "What you want to project from yourself, from within. [...] You and yet not you – a part of you but not the whole." (Rosenthal according to Lampe 2002, 297.) Multiple persona as a basis for an artistic investigation has been of prime concern in my own practice since developing a system of roles in 2004. I have often discussed the roles that I enact as being internal aspects of myself in constant conflict with each other, emerging from the inside to the outside. Deleuze and Parnet dis-

cuss the assemblage of multiplicity in *Dialogues II*, stating that: "What we call an assemblage is, precisely, a multiplicity." (Deleuze & Parnet 2002, 132.) I am attracted to the idea of my own existence being an assemblage of part me's, always interchangeable, never static, always a part but never the whole. Each role that I develop can only ever represent a specific self within the assemblage of multiple selves that I am contained of and contained within. Robert J. Landy describes the role system of ones personality to be in constant flux, describing:

"A role system contains the substance of one's identity—all the pieces that, once assembled, represent a personality. However this system is perpetually in flux, changing according to one's experiences within the somatic and social environments." (Landy 1993, 44.)

Rosenthal performs her multiple selves as theatrical stage performances. In her article Lampe considers a wide spectrum of Rosenthal's performance such as: Rosenthal as a teacher is an example of the social self (representative of performing a part of oneself); the private Rosenthal within the home environment is considered as the self not performing; whilst the multiple manifestations of Rosenthal within stage performances are placed within variable categories. For example the ritualistic drumming in the performance *Gaia* is considered to be the self in ritual, whilst the charming hostess in *Traps* is considered to be a solely a character (without aspects of self involved), and lastly roles such as the warrior and monk are considered to be representing aspects of the self (a part but not the whole).

Basically Lampe's article considers the varied performatives taking place in Rosenthal's life. Her scale of performing/ not performing is based on: Richard Schechner's theories about restored

behaviour; Michael Kirby's theories surrounding the acting and non-acting self; Eugenie Barba's thoughts about extra-daily performing; and Erving Goffman's *Frame Analysis* in which he "employed the theatrical concept of performance as a model for the social realm; for both on stage and off, he distinguished between a person as an individual complex identity and the specialized function of a person in a social role." (Lampe 2002, 299.) What interests me the most about this scale, and Lampe's article in general, is the discussion about levels of how to reveal the self through performance, whether the performance is a staged event or the everyday presentation of self within private and public scenarios.

Considering the work by other artists that produce work through persona I am curious about the approaches and specifically if different artists define role as emerging from outside of self or inside of self. The artist Sarah crowEST explores alternative selves as part of her artistic research, viewing her constructed personas as tourist versions of her own self stating that they "*can be more accurately described as semi-alter-egos because although the personalities are not entirely mine they are not different from but rather simply 'mutilations' of my personality.*"¹¹ Mark Shorter on the other hand constructs personas that he does not fundamentally view as connected to his own personality or his authentic self. In a recent interview that I conducted with Shorter he stated that: "Part of the working process is thinking through the character but I keep myself quite separate from my alter-egos." (Shorter 2010.) Considering Shorter's assertion that his personas are not related to his own self and considering Lampe's scale of performing, then his performances could be placed within the 'character' section of the scale, Shorter's preoccupation being to create another self which is subsequently acted.

To date Shorter has introduced two alter-egos to the art world, the already mentioned Renny Kodgers (since 2005), and Tino La Bamba (since 2009), both personas aim to parody specific male role types whilst simultaneously attempting to subvert the very specific masculinity being emulated. As my own performance development has been innately focused on bringing to the exterior the psychological mutilations (to borrow crowEST's term) of my interior self, I am curious to discover that Shorter evades intimate connection between his everyday self and the "performed" selves that he constructs. In the next section I will further discuss Shorter's performances as Renny Kodgers as an interesting contrast to Rosenthal.

SUBVERTING THE SUBVERTER?

Social roles are often born out of expectation to conform to the norms of a given society. For example I found myself in the role of wife as a young adult consumed by social pressure, and found myself conforming to what I thought I should become. Rosenthal was once also a wife, and seemed to follow a path mixed with confusion about expectations to be a particular way. She discusses the reasons for not becoming an artist as a young adult as being based on the belief that she could not enter the art world as a woman stating that: "If I'm a woman, I can't be an artist because women are not artists." (Rosenthal according to Roth 1989.) Combined with feeling that as a woman she could not enter the art world, Rosenthal also identified at times as being a gay man stuck in a woman's body. Years later these issues about gender and identity were provided a stage in the performance art that Rosenthal would eventually develop. I often pause when I read about these limits that Rosenthal describes, limits to pursuing desires due to a sense

of expectation. I pause because I identify a part of myself within her story, locating a small thread of similarity.

In 2006 my role as wife began to disintegrate, and around this time I first encountered the performances of Renny Kodgers. Two experiences that became interwoven in my recollection of them. Reality and fiction clashed as I attempted to make sense of my changing 'everyday' identity, and the personas that I performed through. It was through these personas that I encouraged performative interactions between myself (in role) and the larger than life presence of Mr. Renny Kodgers.

Shorter has explained that the role of Kodgers, although parodying specific aspects of the iconic American singer Kenny Rogers, is "more about employing strategies that (re)presented a world view of America, in particular the manner in which the United States has been perceived since the Bush administration. I adopted a self-important, misogynist, ignorant, unbeatable approach to the persona." (Shorter according to Stein 2007.)

The first Renny Kodgers performance that I experienced (other than gallery sightings around town) was titled *Imagine Sin Ti* 2006 and involved a red carpet, gold coupons, a white limousine, and security guards. Several restrictions to experiencing the performance were set up in order to simulate power dynamics that evoked celebrity status and an exclusive experience for those granted entry to view Renny Kodgers performing inside the limousine. Gold coupons had been given to invited guests during the weeks preceding the performance, those with coupons could queue to enter the limousine, security guards controlling the process. A maximum of three guests could enter the limousine at any given time. I entered the limousine in role as Jesse-Liina accompanied by her friends Paris and Tacky Motel who were dressed as sequin

trophies. The experience of entering the 'exclusive space' was a daunting one, Kodgers being positioned in the far left corner of the limousine's interior, again dressed in a white suit and white hat, his head tilted down, his body language conveying a strong sense of control within the space. Indeed the power dynamics were set up with Kodgers position within the space, the level of control to accessing the work, and finally in his overtly sexualized and aggressive conversational methods. Effectually I felt every inch the naïve bimbo that my own constructed me / not me role was representative of. I left the limousine marked with his signature on the flesh of my upper right thigh.

This performance exemplifies the types of situations Shorter has played around with, testing audience reaction, setting up positions that highlight patriarchal power narratives as social and political commentary. Rosenthal's approach is in many ways the complete opposite, her initial performances between 1975 and 1981 derived very much from exorcising personal narratives and experiences, later her performances evolved into comments on social and political concerns, although still drawing inspiration from the personal. Acknowledging her own social and political concerns Rosenthal was able to provide greater depth of meaning to her performances, such as commenting on animal rights, environmental concerns, and overpopulation. Rosenthal only began performing as an artist due to her involvement with *Womanspace*, the feminist artist group fuelled by Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro during the 1970s.

It seems to me a slight contradiction to discuss within the same section the overtly sexualized male dominant positioning of Renny Kodgers performances, and the feminist art movement that shifted the role of women artists in the 1970s, Kodgers representing an

archetype that I am sure most feminists of Rosenthal's generation would have hoped to abolish. Yet my initial reaction when witnessing Kodgers can perhaps provide the link.

Meeting Kodgers for the first time initiated both a sense of excited attraction and a question of positioning. Feeling mutually repelled and attracted by the behaviour of Kodgers, I recall my initial reaction of his dominant presence placing into question my own position as a woman. A desire was illuminated in me: to subvert the dominant male position that Shorter's work highlighted. Which I guess supports an ideal feminist train of thought, to deconstruct and reclaim the dominant male narratives prevalent in society. Yet my continued desire to subvert Shorter's performative positioning, as he himself attempts to subvert dominant male archetypes, has become a comical and seemingly impossible dream. One which overlaps and confuses fiction and reality, my numerous attempts to occupy my fictional self within Renny Kodgers environs has occasionally resulted in (polite) accusations of invading Shorter's fictional domain.

PERFORMING GENDER

Andrew Frost poses the question in the Australian television program *Artscape* at the beginning of the episode *Who Made Who?* "How do we know who we really are, is identity composed by society or is it a matter of choice? [...] These are questions being asked by contemporary artists; who are we, who made who?" (Frost 2009.) I am interested in how so much of identity is a repetition of person 'types,' are we all merely copies mirroring each other? "As he imitates from the outside – and copies what is effective." (Carlson 2004, 39.) Judith Butler discusses performativity as reflecting the way in which cultural norms are repetitively and ritually re-en-

acted. For several years I have wondered about the everyday-ness of performance, how behaving is learnt and mimicked through observing (at conscious and unconscious levels) and generally adhering to cultural and social norms. In this next section I will consider ideas about performativity, with reference to Butler's notions of how gender is constructed and performed. Alongside I will consider how Shorter and Rosenthal each approach concepts of gender construction in their performances.

The example of Allan Kaprow brushing his teeth exemplifies an attempt to reposition ideas about the art 'product' whilst also critiquing norms of behaviour. The consideration that Kaprow is performing (despite the lack of audience) occurs predominately because he proceeds to frame it as a performative act, writing about it within this context. At the same time if we view Kaprow brushing his teeth through the Butlerian lens, then he is always already (performatively) performing anyway. In my own work I am particularly interested in the nuances between the me that is performatively constructed and the me / not me versions that I construct in a deliberate and conscious manner.

Butler's notions of performativity have been specifically developed around how gender is performed, as a regulated prescription of conventions. With her focus on gender she views that gender conventionally has a mimetic relationship towards biological sex: "Gender mirrors sex or is restricted by it." (Butler 1999, 10.) Whilst I have found that I have remained within exploring the female psyche, Shorter has remained within male representations. His male alter-ego's illuminating what could be considered to be representative of both the best and worst masculine traits; assertiveness (aggressiveness), sex appeal (misogyny); power (dominance). Shorter's investigation explores the way in

which the contemporary male performs, as a doctoral candidate his research centres specifically on the role of the male alter-ego in contemporary culture. In an interview with Jesse Stein in 2007 Shorter discusses his investigation about the masculine subject, "If we view gender as something performed, then why can't Renny be considered an interrogation of the masculine subject, and the fallibility of that subject? [...] It is also relevant to consider the concept of the veiled masculine subject in modernism. In a way Kodgers parodies that symptom, and opens up a more 'real' schizophrenic male identity." (Shorter according to Stein 2007.)

Rosenthal's performances, on the other hand, cover a more varied ground. Lampe discusses how Rosenthal adapts elements of Asian archetypes and principles within her role development as a way to deconstruct representations of gender that are specific to Western binaries. "Whenever Rosenthal uses gender clichés, she foregrounds them as cultural fabrications." (Lampe 2002, 295.) In one of her earlier performances *The Arousing (Shock, Thunder)* (1979), Rosenthal emulates the male role model, in this case her father. This performance is an example of deconstructing not only her own mixed associations towards gender but of dissolving the layers of "who made her."

The actions of this performance involve a masked Rosenthal jogging on the spot and reciting a monologue whilst a film of her face is projected. Once the film stops, Rosenthal removes the mask only to reveal that her face is wrapped in bandages. The long white bandages are then unwrapped revealing that Rosenthal's face is covered in facial hair. In a symbolic gesture the facial hair is ripped off with accompanying grunts and finally a scream. Tension is first created as Rosenthal constructs herself as man, and then rupture as she destroys this construct through the violent action of tearing of the beard. In an

interview with Moira Roth Rosenthal discloses idealizing her father, he being the role model of her childhood; one that she could never herself truly emulate because she was a girl. This performance illuminates identity issues and the gendered stereotypes that Rosenthal previously adhered to. Rosenthal states in the performance: "To have been just like my father. The emulation of whom would have killed me in his eyes. And what if this were not emulation at all but the very fiber of authenticity?"¹² (Rosenthal 1979.)

Rosenthal's approach to deconstructing gender within her performances seem to delve into territory that is far beyond the gendered binary norms, often exploring androgyny as well as a combination of male and female manifestations, contrasted with animal roles. Her 1987 performance *Rachel's Brain* (1987) is a more ambiguous example of incorporating fragmented gender constructions such as the womanly Marie-Antoinette, Koko the gorilla and also the role of Koko's trainer Penny who is a scientist teaching Koko. This performance incorporates different extreme personas that present a spectrum of Rosenthal's own self and an overview of the world concerns that she has. Rosenthal's work is an assemblage of multiplicity. Fragments of selves that are always in motion and evolving.

Contrastingly the constructed masculine characters presented by Shorter appear far less ambiguous as a critique. He overtly highlights extreme examples of the performing male that are often saturated in media around the world; presenting a parody of all too familiar masculine representations of political superpowers combined with celebrity status symbols of popular culture, teamed with careful consideration of conquerable territories to explore as artistic sites.

A POSSIBLE CONCLUSION

"Actuals imply already constituted individuals, and are ordinarily determined, whereas the relationship of the actual and the virtual forms an acting individuation or a highly specific and remarkable singularization which needs to be determined case by case." (Deleuze & Parnet 2002, 152.)

On my way up in the elevator I glance nervously at the tall man next to me. The elevator rises fifty floors and eases to a halt. A sharp right. Ten paces. A turn of the key and we're both inside. Before either of us have the chance to turn on the light the phone rings. Just like he said it would. As the tall man answers the phone and speaks with a secretive hushed tone, I turn on the light and visit the generous bathroom. Gold edged porcelain details offer a small touch of luxury. I pick up a toothbrush and attempt small circular movements, with a firm hand I brush my teeth. At a specific moment I look up and catch a vision of my reflection in the bathroom mirror. I recall that I usually avoid looking at my reflection in the mirror, especially in the mornings because I prefer to wash and smooth my face before presenting it to myself. But this particular morning is different. As I catch sight of myself an unremarkable image starts to surface, one that I had never really examined even though I myself have created the image.

This essay is an overview of the concerns that I have "with the way we are and the way things are and the way the Earth is." (Rosenthal 1991, 280.) As the scale of performing and of not performing depicts; it is the various levels of performing, the fragmentations, that are relevant to the making of the whole being. The event of a performance would not be possible without the multiple

fragmentations of the performer as vessel. These fragmentations stretch beyond the here and now and are the collection of ways of being, of threads of multiple narratives, of truth, make-believe, escapism, and of reality.

When I finish brushing my teeth and adjusting my hair I walk back in to the abundant open space of the master suite, and in my faux American accent I attempt a conversation. 'Renny darling, you know I'm really in the mood for cooking up a cauliflower soup. I don't know if I ever told you but I absolutely adore working with cauliflower. It's kind like working with a brain. Don't you think?'

No answer.

'Well cauliflower totally reminds me of a performance I once saw, this lady, Rachel I think her name was, was going on about how the cauliflower is like a human brain. Then she attacked the cauliflower with cleavers and knives, and proceeded to puree it. She said it was about how "fundamentally split we are" (Rosenthal 1991, 281). But you know, Renny darling, I never really believed her. I don't think us humans are split at all. Just look at us, complete individuals. Whole in ourselves.'

I wait for an answer.

I then notice that I am alone in the room. I walk back to the bathroom. The vinyl plastic edges of the cupboards are starting to crack, I stare at myself in the mirror. Whilst adjusting the crinkled white suit that I am wearing, I realise that my severely orange fake tan has started to sweat, making my grey beard look a little, well, fake.

The End.

NOTES

- 1 Sarah crowEST website: <http://www.sarahcrowest.com/> (accessed April 20th 2011).
- 2 <http://www.youtube.com/user/artinquiry#p/u/2/TOicUIUB5MQ> (accessed December 18th 2009).

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Alastair MacLennan To be aware of the moment – or the quality of engagement

ILKA THEURICH

FIRST ENCOUNTER

While I was looking at the cover of Manuel Vason's book "encounters" for the first time, I could not stop watching. A very strong image from a performance for a photo camera came across my eyes. The work was called "Collaboration #1, Belfast, 2006" and on the picture was the performance artist Alastair MacLennan sitting on a garbage hill. The profile of his body was directed to the right side of the picture, his eyes were covered with dark sun-glasses, he had a bunch of garbage in his lap, with parts from a wooden puppet coming out of it, and at the horizon one could see hundreds of seagulls. All of them were flying in the same direction aligned as MacLennan's line of gaze – towards the right out of the frame. After some minutes of staring at this cover photo, I immediately had the desire to see more sequences from this moment of happening. Why was this image so strong?

Nearly forty pages later I found another photograph from this session, called "Collaboration #5 Belfast, 2006" (Vason, 41). In this picture MacLennan stands on the garbage, wears a small bunch of garbage with the parts of a wooden puppet around his head and right behind him one can see a digger working. Even in this picture there are seagulls, but in this case they are flying in different directions. It looks more like a big chaos around his already covered head and

the vertical body of MacLennan is much more concentrated, than his surroundings. If the first picture is taken more in the tradition of landscape images, the second picture could be seen as a portrait. Both works are minimalistic, single static images without any moments of movement in them – besides the seagulls. Two-dimensional images, but with a hidden third dimension; it feels, as if there is a kind of story behind the scene without the need to fulfil the narrative completely. Both photographs are changing, from the view through the small lens of the camera, towards a hidden entrance into another world of bigger phenomena.

In Vason's photography the single static picture has the ability to create a volatile image. And exactly in this moment the fact of abstraction develops the power of the images. Both photos look at me, as if they are single picture-frames out of a feature film. They make me believe, that bigger things happen behind the scene. This does not mean that an artistic bluff was used. I want to clarify that the recipient gets the opportunity to follow the visual idea of the photographer and the performer, without that they have ever articulated their ideas literally. In the moment of absence of sounds and movements, an abstract concept can arise and an imaginary entity, a gap, a blank part, or an open space in the mind of the viewer has the chance to be perceived.

SECOND ENCOUNTER

This Essay is based on an interview which took place at the 23rd of January 2010 in Plymouth (UK) and I would like to thank Alastair MacLennan for his openness and the perseverance, which he applied to all of my questions. All quotes that are not specifically mentioned in this essay are from this interview.

COMMUNITAS

Energy

In my opinion a still image is just one frame out of a movement – but it still moves. The energy still oscillates inside this single static image. If we take a look at the term energy, which comes from the Greek term ἐνέργεια - *energeia* and means “activity, operation”, it is based on ἐνεργός - *energos* “active, working”. In physics we have learned that the term energy always describes a certain amount of work, which can be performed by a certain amount of strength. Any form of energy can be transformed into another form, but the total amount of energy remains always the same. I think that the physical principle of conservation of energy can be also found in art. According to Noether’s theorem the total energy of a system will not change by time, but the value depends on the frame of references. What does this mean for the collaboration between Alastair MacLennan and Manuel Vason? Let’s take a look at the photos “Collaboration #1, Belfast, 2006” and “Collaboration #5 Belfast, 2006”. They are constructed in a classical style of image formation, which meets the power of the performer. For me it is precisely this moment of encounter that gives rise to something bigger. This moment of encounter cannot clearly be specified and described as an object in the final product. The performer influences the energy of the landscape and vice versa. The photographer influences the energy of the performer and vice versa.

For the collaboration between Alastair MacLennan and Manuel Vason I guess it means that we should become aware of the contrast between the static moment of the artistic photos (with their never changing amount of total energy) and the constant flow-of-power in the actual work process. For MacLennan:

"Energy is what we are in life. The transitions in life, the energy in transition. (...) it is energy that is in one state for probably some years, but the form is in transition. Maybe we can't quite perceive it, because the transitions are almost like slow-motion, we can't quite see them literally. The Transition – if we could see better on a molecular level, we could see the atoms... hovering around. The cup wouldn't seem as fixed as a cup and the table wouldn't seem as fixed as a table and so they would seem a bit more in flux... Also ourselves, our bodies... So I am very aware of the fact that, what seems solved and fixed is actually energy – is transition."

TRANSITION

During his MA-studies in Chicago, MacLennan encountered the Japanese za-zen practice, where he learned, to perceive the "true nature". In the school of Rinzai Zen, "seeing one's true nature (kensho) or enlightenment", is the gateway to authentic Buddhist practice and the possibility to embody the free function of wisdom within the activities of daily life. MacLennan's first KOAN, which he received from his teacher, was: "How do you realise your true nature, while you are painting?" At that time he was painting as well as performing and he received a KOAN which was related to the most important thing in his life – a KOAN about his art.

"What direction to take? How to function? Do I do it in the art world or not? Do I do it in galleries or not? Do I do it with the feeling of wanting to make an object at the end or do I do it where I make the creativity and let the creativity dissolve? So I had questions like that for myself. And to get a KOAN that asks you the question, 'how do you realise your true nature, while you are making your art', was perfect for me. It took me two years to come through that, but for me

it was very worthwhile. It had a major effect on how I would spend the rest of my life making art and teaching also.”

The academic painting tradition which MacLennan encountered in Scotland, before he moved on to Chicago, was a very traditional one. Everyone had to paint a live model, which means that all students were working on the same theme, just the representation of the painting was individual. But when MacLennan went to the graduate course in Chicago there was no central theme anymore and this situation immediately provided him with a huge problem. MacLennan was a very skilled painter, who could technically do any kind of painting, but he asked himself what direction would be the right one for him?

“I remember thinking this: I learned the language of how to paint academically, but it was like learning another language, e.g. like French or German, without knowing what do I say with this language? And then I had a question to myself: What is the point of having learned a language very well, if you don’t even know what to say in it? ”

This dilemma forced him to think about the content of his work. He found himself confronted for the first time in his life with a big problem; what should he make his art about and how should he convey it with the skills he had? And exactly that was the moment when the search and questioning really took place. While he was thinking about this big question, he painted a few pictures. But instead of painting with colours he just used black and white. The buildings in Scotland, where he comes from, had a much more individual character for him. They were colourful and the streets were curvy,

contrary to Chicago where everything was organized in a grid and was looking minimalistic with less individual character. MacLennan noted that Chicago had a great lack of individual character. For his paintings he observed the technical and mechanical characteristics of this American city. He tried to paint architecture in a way where it was “almost a representation of the human presence”. During this working phase, he got the idea to create a minimalistic structure in an empty gallery. An artistic work which could not be touched, heard or seen with any of the individual senses. But an artistic work that would be experienced in some way. MacLennan got the idea of a huge rectangular block within an empty space. But even in the Chicago University, no one thought that this idea would be possible to realize. “And my tutor said to me at one point – nice idea Alastair, but you won’t be able to make this.” But when he explained this idea to a student, she mentioned that it sounds like ZEN. “She said, well you want to do something in this empty space and this thing that fills the empty space. In Zen they talk about the fullness of emptiness and the emptiness of fullness.” He created this space after two years and presented it in an empty gallery. And the knowledge he gained from that experience was – no matter what you do, you should do it with full commitment.

“As one is doing it, to give oneself to it, totally – 100% (...) performing or walking down the street or whatever. This can manifest itself in any aspect of one’s daily living, but a lot of people may not notice it even, and I accept that.”

I can see that this early za-zen knowledge is still alive in the work of Alastair MacLennan today and in the Collaboration#1 & Collaboration#5, Belfast, 2006”., as well in the minimalistic way of Ma-

cLennan's performances, especially in the durational ones, I can find strong similarities to za-zen practice. His actions are stripped down to their most fundamental features like sitting, standing and walking for example. MacLennan pointed out that encountering with Zen changed his everyday life experience substantially.

"And the whole teaching practise would involve giving the student (...) a question, a KOAN, a problem to solve. And the solution would manifest itself, only when the person had exhausted all the thoughts – all constructed thoughts (...) The student should learn to give an answer to a problem that would show that the student was responding from a source within him or herself, that was not dictated by conceptual thought or by a constructed self."

VITAL TIME

For MacLennan "time we have is not as vital as time we make". This important concept of vital time is part of his performative process and I think it creates the basis for poetic encountering. "In a way we don't have time – we are time. In English we use the term to make time. What it really means is to make a point of not just letting time slip away, not wasting time – to make a point of doing it." When MacLennan encountered the ideas of John Cage, his use of sound and his thoughts about trying not to make value judgements, like for example "this is a musical sound or that is not a musical sound", he became interested in trying to experience phenomena as they are and without making judgements. He was using chance as a device to get past some of his own habits, thoughts and evaluations. John Cage's book "A Year from Monday" fascinated MacLennan because of the humorous side and his refreshing attitudes. He had the impression that

almost anything is possible, and at the same time Cage was trying to strip away prejudgements by using the I-Ging. MacLennan sometimes uses the I-Ging, too. "It doesn't tell you what to do – it is like a mental mirror that gives you back to yourself." At that time MacLennan realized that you can make art about anything, in any way. In the case of Cage it would be to avoid hierarchical values and not make judgements, prejudgements. "Very, very useful, to just listen to sound as sound, not saying that this is a better sound than that sound, that this is more musical one than that one." For MacLennan it became obvious that one can do the same in visual art. And when he left painting behind and moved on to performance art it was even just a simple decision for him. And he remembered from his old ZEN teacher: "Just give yourself totally to what you are doing while you are doing it – Then it has its own authenticity. Your marks will feel genuine. People might not know what the marks mean, but they all feel genuine and not like a fake construction or something." For MacLennan five people can do the same action or movement, but because they are all different, there will be differences in each action and the differences will have to do with the specificity of the individual person. "So we don't have to force anything, it will be individual anyway – because we are. It is not so much what we do; it is how we do what we do, as we do it. That makes the art."

CHALLENGE AS A CHANCE

Same differences

As we could see already in the change of his work in Chicago, also his life in Belfast influenced the artist enormous. The social surrounding in the present moment is part of the way of doing performance art. MacLennan found it very instructive to live in Belfast.

"Because during what is called the troubles, there was as a religious aspect of it, political aspects of it for sure and there were social and economic consequences. So that just by living there, I found many of the conditions that human beings have to live through (...) and it was so obviously damageable."

MacLennan observed that one can testify the results of oppositional thinking in a place like Belfast in the streets, in the families and on the graveyards. You can see the roots of the problem in binary thinking in the field of religion and politics. If you think that something is right, then something else must be wrong automatically. For MacLennan the constant use of these kinds of thoughts is born out of language.

"So I found it very interesting and constructive to be there ... in this situation where I could myself examine the effects of this kind of thinking; and seeing this as a person who is not coming from one side or the other. I could see that the whole situation, in terms of holistic thinking had been split and this was the result. It is maybe a more extreme result than in some other countries where you don't find something which is almost like a slow-motion civil war. But you would still find conflicts in more settled forms; the scenes would be the same, because of binary dualistic thinking."

I wondered if MacLennan could still be neutral, after living for such a long time in Belfast. If someone could still have a neutral position as an observer, although he has already arrived at the heart of the society? He thinks that he is still an observer as well at the same time as he is a participant. And while I was still wondering whether this could work out for me, he came up with an Irish

phrase which opened up my mind. This Irish phrase implies that even within differences there is sameness. It is just a question of what we choose to focus on.

"There is a saying in Ireland: They look at two opposite situations, seemingly appearing to be opposite points of view and they say: SAME DIFFERENCE. And what that perception really means is that within what appears to be very different, you can see communality within both."

MacLennan has many friends who are Catholics and Protestants. But as human beings he likes them very much and he works with both. "Not one or the other, because I want to think in a holistic way." All over the world there are institutions which try to create a bridge between oppositional parties on a humanizing level, so that they can start to empathize with each other, as we can see, for instance in a project where parents who lost their children in the fights between Palestine and Israel are coming together and mourning together the loss of their children. And also in Belfast there is a project where families who lost members in the troubles are coming together with some of the people who actually did the killing. They are working together on reconciliation and doing workshops on reconciliation. "Over time they see the picture more comprehensively and more openly. They are willing to engage in the healing process. "And it is exactly this kind of healing process which we can find in a lot of performances from Alistair MacLennan. Gray Watson mentioned in his text *Alastair MacLennan: A Poetic Invitation* "that the title 'Healing Wounds', is often used by MacLennan for more than one of his works, contains an in-built ambiguity" (Watson, 9). In Plymouth MacLennan men-

tioned that he thinks it is very important to be prepared to sense what seems to be the opposite. "Sometimes when we are dealing with performance, it can be very much like visual poetics. And sometimes suggestion or evocation, sometimes ambiguity can be more effective ... than what is obvious ... remembering to forget, forgetting to remember"

ECOLOGY OF MIND AND SPIRIT

And with the last phrase of "remembering to forget, forgetting to remember" we are suddenly in the middle of the topic which MacLennan explains with the ecology of mind and spirit. He stresses the importance of realising how we process things and how we recycle things, not only through the view of needs and urgencies in physical terms, but we should also view our mind with similar thoughts.

"Seeing the mind as a kind of soil, in which we can plant seeds and the seeds come, whatever we grow. And for instance if we are consumed with negative thinking and all kinds of oppositional, antagonistic, ego driven concerns it is as if we are doing a lot of negative things to the soil."

The word which came to my mind was immediately 'imprint' and something that seems beyond our consciousness control. If we have negative thoughts and if we are almost only reactive to situations or even react very badly, this will make an imprint on our soul.

"People have negative thoughts (...) almost reactively to situations, action/reaction, like when somebody reacts very badly or has bad feelings. But if we can imagine what this is doing to the

state of our mind, out of which a lot of our later thoughts and actions come from. We are often polluting the mind. Even in a later reaction, it would be only reaction and not a form-giving moment. Not something that would be organic or holistic but fractured, factional, binary and oppositional, with a bit of aggression. And it doesn't have to be this way."

MacLennan recognized a diaspora of artists and he thinks that it is more than healthy if we could evolve this more. If an artist goes away to other places and other situations, mixing with other societies, he will encourage diversity in art and within art. For MacLennan it is important to let art make a transition to other areas, other disciplines, also to other countries, to get a new view on whatever topic. With this new view, mirroring on the artist's own being, his own culture will be different and new perspectives will come out of it.

BREAK – a small exercise // While you are reading this text, please realize the walls around you. Within these four walls you might be in an institution, but try to realize that these walls are just a construct. And if you imagine these walls not being here, where are you? And try to think as much and to feel as much about the outside as inside and as inside-outside. Don't rely on the institution. Here we are; what will happen if the walls collapse? (According to an exercise Alastair MacLennan is practising with his students)

Afterwards MacLennan would give the advice, that you should take yourself with you, wherever you are and that this is, what we do all the time. In this sense we should not see the spiritual and the physical worlds separately. In his view, it would be necessary "to bridge our spiritual and physical worlds", which means to find

ways where both parts could inter-fuse each other with the aim to experience life more holistically in everyday life. "We walk down and we see something (...) we see naturally a kind of interchanging of energies." As I understood, we should try to perceive the present moment, while we are at the same time part of that moment. We cannot be separated from the present moment.

THE PRESENT MOMENT AND THE OBSTACLES

According to MacLennan you should not try to use the force of opposition. Encourage just the momentum of it, but then use this force as an aid by finding a way to embrace it and work with it, as something that helps and also tests the evolution of one's own work. "If a fish is going upstream and there is a big boulder in front of it (...) the fish will find a way of navigating through this way (...) So the obstacle does not become something important – just finding a way to navigate around." Now the question arises, whether I would become a bit too lazy if no obstacles would cross my path?

Once MacLennan was asked to give a talk on his own work and he went well prepared to the lecture hall. After he started the talk, with all his images and preparations of what he wanted to say, the electronic device broke down completely. Thus he had to make a decision. After apologizing, he saw a chance in this situation, an opportunity to do something together. There was a group of people, who might never meet again in this particular combination and in this specific situation.

"There is nothing missing. (...) we make something from that. And I had no clue what would happen in two seconds time – you can't know. But something even better can evolve when you realize that everything is fine."

He sees the chance to create something out of very little – because everything is there. He argues that even in a performance the seeming absence of something can work very well. I believe that absence does not exist, for me it is only a different kind of presence. When MacLennan was growing up, he felt as “an outsider looking in and an insider looking out”. He said that there were “double-take overlays”, which he now uses. And that he can slip into the dualistic thinking and he can slip out of it. “If I am thinking in a dualistic way, I can feel like an outsider, because almost all people at a conference have different motors. Some of them maybe come from wealthy backgrounds; I did not come from such background. So I can sometimes feel as an outsider... but then I slip into this other mode” So he can use the mode of being in the present moment and the binary thinking as well. If he feels the need to change mode, in order for a better understanding of the given situation, he enters the frame of binary thinking, but if he feels the limitation of this, he can also move on towards a nondualistic way of thinking.

“Just as we can put on the glasses and take them off. That is how I often think of it. Sometimes I think of the glasses for physical purposes to see. Sometimes I think of the mental glasses, to put on mental spectacles for conceptually based thinking and then take them off. The problem for most of us is that we put conceptual glasses on and are not aware, that we have them on and so we never put them off. So we get trapped by them. ”

PRIVATE AND PUBLIC UNFINISHED BUSINESS

What makes the art? For MacLennan it is the quality of interlinks, which means “art is life – life is art”. And he often asks himself why stop at a certain frame? What if we could expand the frame?

One aim of his work certainly is to use all the rooms in which he has already been staying and all the rooms which he will enter in the future, as long as he lives.

"If we are a painting, before we know, when we move and go around, we are like a paint stroke. And so we are part of the process of this on-going art work. So if the quality of the inter-relations is important within the frame, it is equally important out of it. You are trying to make it as beautiful as true. Try to make the inter-links you have with whomever and with whatever you need in ordinary living as you would make them within the painting. For me, that's it."

I can only emphasize this – everything is unfinished on one hand, but on the other hand every moment is a completion. According to MacLennan people live private lives and they take this life with them wherever they go. There is a kind of flexibility within the parameters of what we call private and of what we call public, but there are times and situations in which the public becomes private and the private becomes public.

"These inter-fusions of private and public are always unfinished businesses. There are certain things somebody may wish to do in their life, there are still good things to do, there are still good processes to engage in more, these all are unfinished businesses. But also as an artist someone may want to make more comments on political, social, cultural situations and think of the state of politics, or religion, or philosophy, the way things happen. Or, something happens in the society he or she is living in, which is needing improvement, needing development and you might regard that as unfinished business, to be worked on."

AFTERMATH OF THE ENCOUNTER

I decided for two reasons to write about Alastair MacLennan. Both reasons were very personal. First, I wanted to know more about how one can find peace within oneself, even as an artist. Although I did not ask Alastair MacLennan this particular question,

I am pretty sure, that peace inside a performer is one foundation for a performance practice which wants to create a deep concentration and energy in space and time – at least at the moment of action. Second, I was searching for an artist who also believes that *art is life* – *life is art*. It is important for MacLennan of how we are settled as human beings in the world and as an artist you should take the performance-energy with you outside of the ritual of the performance.

"If we are not hypocrites, we should be able to get on with whoever we meet. So this, for me, would be an aspect of taking the value on the benefit out of the monastery into the everyday where we are."

The encounter with Alastair MacLennan opened for me a way to a wider view on my own artistic production and I had the opportunity to go deeper with some issues, which I have already asked myself. My emphasis in this paper is not on the visual result of the art of Alastair MacLennan. I am much more interested in understanding the process of finding a basis for one's own art work and the connection with the processes in life. MacLennan updates his artistic principles as far as possible again and again, and tries to combine them with the more complex context of everyday life.

"I would not see encounter, real encounter as a conflict, I would see it as just being in the situation. Just being in the situation and not separate from anything that is taking place there, that happens simultaneously – simply that."

For my own practice I learned that you need a network of openness, vigilance and a lack of interest in labelling things and circumstances. I think that we should say simply yes, if someone invites us to share a moment with him or her. “The game” is over when one partner says no, instead of yes. As long as both are saying yes, you can cooperate. It is important to be aware of how you look at situations and that you change perspectives very often. So that things will look different, even the opposite – but there is always the other side of the reality. MacLennan really wants to connect his art to the audience, to be aware of the moment and not think of the audience as such. The artist-audience-relation is based on cooperation in the sense of a poetic network.

“If you are putting something down, just be totally prepared. They can pick up a kind of quality of engagement, this involves something. It is not about entertaining. The quality of engagement – that’s it!”

A third interesting point came out of the encounter. Teaching is part of the art for MacLennan, as was our interview itself. For MacLennan his job is to be a mirror in which the student sees his or her reflection. And this is exactly my point of view for my performance art, but till this moment I never thought about it as a principle for teaching, too. But now I think that this is a convincing path for the process of teaching, too. The viewer should be mirroring him or herself in my performance work. I am not willing to give an answer with my art work. I would like to raise questions. The recipient can choose for himself whether he needs an answer or not.

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Twisting the Frame:
Hayley Newman's Connotations
KATARIINA MYLLÄRI

In this essay I will discuss the controversial work of the British performance artist Hayley Newman (born 1969). Newman studied in Middlesex University and Slade School of Art in Great Britain, in Hochschule für Bildende Künste in Hamburg (in Marina Abramovic's class) and she completed her PhD in University of Leeds. I will concentrate on her project *Connotations*, which is alleged to be still on-going. I will discuss the relation between the documentation and the actual performance, questions of fiction as artwork it arises, and the layers of performativity in her work.

The first part of the *Connotations* project is *Connotations – Performance Images 1994–1998*, which was originally exhibited in Beverly Library in 1998, a series of photographs and texts that seem to be documentations of performance art pieces Newman performed during four years in various locations in Europe. The work includes another information text that clearly states, that the pictures are staged, situations are set up for taking the photographs of a fictional career of a performance artist. In the text Newman announces that the locations, dates, contexts and photographers are fictional and that photographer Casey Orr took most of the pictures in one week in summer 1998.¹³

I find Newman's work very interesting in a sense that it plays with the ways of witnessing a performance art work and subverts

the claims of being present at the moment of the documentation to be able to experience the performance. On the other hand, she rearranges the documentation or the person contemplating and experiencing the work to be the performer instead of her, the artist.

Newman explains that her motivation making the work was the notion of having a certain conception of a performance art canon, which was mostly based on artists and works that she never witnessed personally but only saw the documentation of the piece, images and photographs. She states she wanted to explore image's relation to the text, since so much of the information we actually get from performances, that have happened years ago, is still pictures and texts to explain them; how do we actually know if the text has anything to do with the picture document, or that it is not just one interpretation of the happened, a shopping list or just an associative exercise?

I see *Connotations – Performance Images 1994–1998* as a tribute to the performance art works from the grand Adrian Piper, Dennis Oppenheim, Chris Burden, Fluxus-artists, Vito Acconci; these are artists, who discussed the demands of the “real” and authenticity of documentation in the 1970's, and at the same time, being in the front line of performance art as we today see its history, ended up creating the strongest images and myths in performance art and body art.

Connotations – Performance Images 1994–1998 is “mimicking, misinterpreting and re-expressing what already existed in the canon”, as Newman (2003) herself expresses. She states that it was a conscious choice to show contradictory information: the fictional and the truth. To my interpretation she wanted to use the mechanism of the documentation becoming independent, but the work *Connotations – Performance Images 1994–1998* seems to be

based on partially revealing the myth, partially creating a new one by using fiction in many layers on the work.

Newman also refers to *Connotations – Performance Images 1994–1998* as an aspirational piece: as performing the dream of having an international performance career, which she did not have at the time. I see her determinedly working towards the career she wanted and fortifying her status by uttering her desire.

The piece became in a way a role-play for a week; Newman dyed her hair 3 times during the week; she wore her old clothes; in her essay she explains a fair amount of tricks to alter her appearance, so that the illusion of the four years supposed to pass during the process would be complete. Newman's photographer, Casey Orr, was at the time mostly making portraits, and in a way you can see that effect in the pictures. The images, however, differ in no way from almost any other pictures taken from performance, unless compared with still-pictures from a video. To my experience and knowledge, documentation photographs of performances are usually staged; they are shot before and after the actual performance. Performers perform for the camera, just as Hayley Newman did.

THE QUESTION ABOUT THE ROLE OF DOCUMENTATION

Newman states that she wanted to explore the role of the documentation to the actual performance and the relation of performer and the document, since she felt that quite many of the careers and reputations of performance artists in the 1970's were based on a single picture of a work that then after the documenting became their most significant work. So the one single picture with an explanation text telling what we are supposed to see happening in the picture, can create a myth about the performer.

Newman notes that the documentation enables many of the chaotic or temporary structured performances to become somehow formal and to be passed on to a bigger public (than the observers present) or to the archives. On one hand it awakes questions about the necessity of the author for the work; if the piece can create meanings by its document, it can be considered, whether the original (and the artists' intention) is relevant to the document at all. (Jalving 2005).

On the other hand, documents that create myths about the performance and the performer are very relevant to artists. Newman uses Chris Burden as a good example of this; if we have a photograph that shows Burden with a gun connected with a text stating that Burden shot an airplane in the seventies, we most probably believe that he actually did that. Amelia Jones has referred to the same iconic photos of performances from the 1960–1970's by stating that the documents are access points to the performed happenings, to past reality, and very important in transporting the experiences to those who were too young to be there! (Jones 1997). Probably true, but the photos seem to me to be as accurate interpretations as a spoken word would be.

Even though *Connotations – Performance Images 1994–1998* was in her own words "made as both a celebration and analysis of the performance canon"¹⁴ there can be read subtle criticism towards the alleged "canon" when Newman (2003) is referring to her notion about "performances that were often chaotic or ad hoc events, became formalised through documentary processes." Newman seems to question the grand masters of performance art; if the works she comments are the ground works, that constitute the canon, is the respect towards them based on the documents rather than the actual performances? I interpret that with *Connotations*

– *Performance Images 1994–1998*, Newman wants to comment on this hit and miss – method that creates well-established artists and to my understanding she successfully exploited the method. Unfortunately, there is very little, if any, material about the audience's or the "canon's" response or reaction to the piece.

I am interested in Newman's work because she cleverly combines fiction to realism and changes the ontological claims of experiencing performance. The audience is tricked and then made aware of the actual happening; after that, the audience is made to realize, that there is another layer of action happening right there when contemplating and understanding the hoax. By revealing some of the mechanisms of the work Newman challenges the audience to see the pictures and her whole work again in a different perspective.

Connotations . . . extends beyond theatre, mimicry and parody to acknowledge contradictions between the artifice and realities of performance art. (Newman 2003).

Making this sort of action, revealing a hoax, sets up also long-term consequences; by this work Newman situates herself as being critical towards the discipline of performance art; she is questioning performance's nature as the "disappearing art" (Phelan 1993, 145–166) by referring to the document as the one constructing an artist's reputation or legend. She suggests that the performance happening in the reflections of the audience and the document are more important in making meaning than the alleged original performance, which as far as we know may never even have existed in the way the document states.

Philip Auslander has investigated performance documentation through J.L. Austin's terms of constative and performative,

seeing photo documentation as analogical to utterances. He states that performance documentation photos, rather than proving that something happened, as evidence, as constative, refer to events that only happen in the realm of the photograph; there is for example, no other audience, than the one contemplating the photo documentation. Auslander (2006) suggests, that "perceiving the document itself as performance" is the element that makes it possible to experience the presence of the performance and reflect on the artist's aesthetic project. In other words, there is the performance, the event of documenting; there is also the event of contemplating the document.

In Newman's work the emphasis is definitely on the contemplation of the document, which has become thus an independent work apart from the "original" performance to be documented. In Newman's work, the document is performing. The "document", the photograph combined with the text, is the *original*. In Auslander's spirit against Amelia Jones's (1997) claims of the mutual dependence between the performance and the document, I claim, that Newman's photos do not refer outside themselves. It is there and then when someone is contemplating the work, when it produces action; it functions. The work performs.

I personally became interested in Newman's work, because I find the notion of fiction, deception and hoax very intriguing from the perspective of contemporary art. In a way escaping the body art tradition and claims of the artist's physical presence in performance, I see even more and more opportunities to widen the notion of performance art. Newman's way of openly making fiction in a performance art venue, that has been very sensitive to the claims of making "real", changes the discipline towards a more openly cross-genre manner of performance art. My opinion is that all

art is in a way fictional – even if you claim art is life and life is art; it is based on manmade concepts and ways of action and attitude.

Newman is also making reality very ambitiously; she intentionally misleads the audience. Her working process can also be viewed by looking at the texts that she includes to the *Connotations*-piece on her webpage: The original texts that are combined with the photographs, the information panel that is stated to accompany the original texts in an exhibition, and the essay that was published in an essay collection. The interesting aspect is, that the text of the assumed information panel is dated 2001, but the piece was first exhibited in 1998. So how do we know that the information panel actually was there at the first exhibition? And on the essay, written in 2003, she states that even though she at first thought about doing a fully fictional piece, she then decided to give all the information about the process to her audience.

Is this a way of continuing the action, performing the piece? Is Newman creating a myth of her own work by confusing the observer? On her website she gives a considerable amount of information and makes the process transparent, but to my opinion very wittingly keeps the suspension on the subject. To me she seems a very intelligent and sharp-sighted artist, who can rationalize and justify all the various phases in her development in this piece.

Connotations – Performance Images 1994–1998 was followed by *Connotations II*, exhibited in Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, in 2002¹⁵ and the project is apparently going on, although Newman's website announces her to be concentrating on developing ideas for a documentary on climate change.

NOTES

- 1 The entire information panel text can be found on <http://www.hayleynewman.com/artworks/show/15>.
- 2 See <http://www.hayleynewman.com/artworks/show/15>.
- 3 See www.hayleynewman.com.

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Remembering – Forgetting: The Voice as a device of Memory for the construction of Identity in Performance Art

CHRISTINA GEORGIOU

INTRODUCTION

The voice is the incarnation, its sensuous, evident manifestation. Hearing a voice, I know a soul, and the words it utters do not deceive me (Gautier in Acconci et al 1998, 4)

The voice as sound is an important part of one's identity as it signifies the human experience. The manifestation of the variable meanings of the voice emerges through its sound and when these meanings become apparent, they can also affect the emotional state of the listener. Therefore the significance of the voice is expressed in our daily life from the first moment we come to this world. The colour, range and characteristics of our voice and also the way we use our voice to talk or articulate other expressions are not identical to someone else's voice. The sound of the voice that we own and we bring with us when we come to this world is even more important than the language we speak as the words and phrases we use can shape fake stories or meanings but the voice itself cannot hide its psychological condition.

Jacques Derrida in his book, *Of Grammatology* (1974) states that writing has been derived from speech, which is closer than writing

to the truth. This implication can lead to the assumption that *phonè* is part of this truth and the meaning of *logos*. Analysing the voice as a form of sound by ignoring the words, phrases and construction of syllables can help define several aspects of the speaker's expression and consequently aspects of the speaker's identity. Voice expression can emotionally affect the listener but it is not only a reflection of inner feelings, it is part of one's social encountering, it is our communicative tool to interact with the world.

This essay will examine the use of the voice by performance artists during the realization of their live performances. This investigation aims to focus on the way the artists used their voice in order to uncover aspects of their identity, national, cultural, political and historical background, and personal experiences. While interrogating the notions of memory and identity, this essay is questioning: How do artists use their voice to bring the memory of the past in real time and how does their presence reveal aspects of past memory? How is the idea of identity referred to through the use of voice and how does the viewer perceive this experience? In this essay, memory is discussed as an element that constitutes the construction of identity, in the sense that when remembering our history and past there are indications of what we have experienced, where we come from and who we are. The idea of remembering gives also an autobiographical reference to the artists' works.

The artists' works, which will be discussed, are Marina Abramović's *Balkan Baroque* and *Freeing the voice*, Marica Gojević's *More* and *Miroir* and my performance *Krunk*. All these performances are selected because of having a common ground, which is related to exile and has affected the artists' lives. This essay will particularly observe how issues of traumatic memory have been addressed through the use of the voice during the artists' perform-

ances. The intention is to articulate how artists perform identity and embody the experience or remembering of exile, loss, dislocation and war through their body and voice. Also how they use their voice as a tool to communicate or share these meanings in a broader sense. Looking at how they use the voice as a medium, I question: how does the voice construct performative elements for a socially shared meaning? What is the purpose and the importance of the existence of the voice in each art piece and what aspects arise out of these works? Furthermore this essay discusses how the cultural and historical background of the artists is raised in their work and how they deconstruct traumatic experiences that have formed their identity. The examination of these works becomes a journey of perception and an understanding of the past, present and future, as the time entity of identity.

THE ARTIST'S BODY AS THE MEDIUM OF ART FOR THE PRODUCTION OF AUTOBIOGRAPHY

The physical intimacy of performance art seems to attract artists to represent or embody elements of their human essence like memory, identity, nostalgia, loss, longing and belonging. The experience of an art performance can state what is real or it can provoke reconsideration of what is real. In *Adrian Piper: a Retrospective*, Laura Cottingham, an American art critic, curator and visual artist writes:

The deployment of the artist's literal body as the medium of the work of art – it is formally structured to actively produce autobiography. Its medium is live experience. Enhanced within an attitude of self-consciousness, in either private or public space, alone or in the presence of an audience, 1960s performance works sought to provide both the artist and her/his audience with an experience –

frequently, a transgressive experience structured to challenge reigning assumptions regarding what constitutes normal and acceptable social behaviour. (Laura Cottingham in Berger et al 1999, 64)

The voice and body are commonly used in performance art and both function according to the memory and knowledge of what has been experienced in life. The traces or characteristics of personal attitude, behaviour and consciousness are articulated in the artist's performance in front of the public. Voice is expressed in a specific manner as a unique characteristic of one's identity, as it cannot be hidden, covered or easily transformed; as it is naturally conveyed through one's personality which is linked to one's personal background.

MARINA ABRAMOVIĆ

In *Balkan Baroque* (1997) Marina Abramović installed two large copper sinks and one copper bath filled with water in the main gallery space. During the live performance, in a white dress, she sits on a massive pile of blooded beef bones situated in the centre of the room. She takes each of the 1500 bones and washes it. Abramović is continuously singing from memory excerpts of folk-songs, belonging to her native land and her childhood. These actions took place for a period of four days, six hours every day in front of the video portraits of her parents that were projected onto a wide screen to the left and right of a middle screen. In the middle screen, Marina Abramović stands motionless, in a white lab coat, glasses and boots, giving a pseudo-scientific talk on how they kill rats in Balkans.¹⁶ Then she takes off her white coat. Suddenly the father, a former Partisan and General under Tito, holds a pistol in his hand. The mother, also a Partisan and later the Director of

the National Museum of Art and Revolution at Belgrade, suddenly raises her hands in fear.

With *Balkan Baroque* Abramović states the nature of war and how war is part of people's perception. *Balkan Baroque* designates the characteristics and variable dimensions of war and presents loss as its evidence while referring to those who were lost in such incidents. The mass of cow bones covered with blood that were used during the live performance seem to refer to the remains of the loss of the people who were involved during the war. Consequently *Balkan Baroque* deals with life and death and the reality of war. Abramović's action is a statement that becomes a response to the immense amount of deaths in the former Yugoslavia while offering a memorial to the historical accounts of war and the nature of war in general.

The artist undertakes the repetitive action of 'cleaning' each bone as ritualistic means to recovery. The repetition of cleaning emerges as a sign of longing to recover from pain and to forget while the constant singing follows the performative action of grief. The mourning and sorrow that become part of the action denote a great empathy towards the lost ones while the cleaning process is presented with the significance of treatment for the group of people who have been lost during the civil war in the Balkans. The curative intention of the action becomes also a sign of purification while demonstrating a resistance towards the cause of war.

During the preparation of the piece *Balkan Baroque* Abramović interviewed her mother and father back in Yugoslavia and made confessions concerning the nature of her personality and identity that was constructed due to the environment she experienced during her early life:

I never understood, before listening to them talk about my earlier years, what an extreme person I had been. Because I really come from the Balkans, where everything is extreme violent, extreme feeling for heroism, for legend, and all the rest. (Abramović 1998, 365)

Abramović's choice to recall the past throughout a performance piece implies remembering an event of the past. Remembering is the process of re-experiencing, re-locating, re-constructing and a mode of understanding the past that Abramović experienced through the mechanisms of her being.

In the performance *Freeing the Voice* (1976), Marina Abramović is positioned on the floor with her head turned backwards and she screams until she loses her voice.¹⁷ In this performance, as also in the performances *Freeing the Memory* and *Freeing the Body*, Marina Abramović seems to use her body both as her subject and object in order to explore her physical and mental limits. This action of exhaustion signifies an emotional and mental transformation where the repetitive use of the screaming voice in the piece *Freeing the Voice* is presented as a healing ritual to overcome the limits and achieve catharsis. These series of performances can also be easily described as a kind of response against the conventional thinking of the tyrannical civilization of Tito's post-war Yugoslavia, and even as a fight for freedom of the self from the reserved past in order to overcome obstacles. Marina Abramović confessed that all her work in Yugoslavia

... was very much about rebellion, not against just the family structure of the art system there, and I was always accused of being a traitor in regard to art. My whole energy came from trying to overcome these kinds of limits. (Abramović 1998, 15)

Abramović used her voice in its utmost volume as a source of energy to overpower conservative structures and created a possibility of breaking boundaries in order to shape a new identity through emotional transformation. She used her voice as a material that breaks after extended use to show the fragility and the limits of the voice and therefore the limits of the body. *Freeing the voice* raises issues of freedom and limits while suggesting the idea of cleansing the body and mind through a powerful experience in order to empty the body and mind from what has been collected previously in life.

In Abramović's performances, I perceive a longing for cleansing the body and mind from traumatic memories not through a process of forgetting but through a process of remembering. This is a paradox, but if we think of the action itself, the experience of the body appears to be in a fight with memory. Abramović activates a repetitive and durational ritual where the body as a container of its memories is emptied after exhaustion and therefore forgets. Thereby the artist creates a passage beyond the conventional limits of the mind-body borders while the remembering-forgetting process generates a new identity and a new voice.

The process of remembering- forgetting is a passage that occurs during the performance through durational and repetitive aspects that enable the transformation of the artist. According to the transformation, the artist is presented as a liminal figure that is altered. The embodiment of forgetting also exists within her durational action and denotes forgetting as an achievement of catharsis that opens a possibility for a future identity. My personal understanding for Abramović's performances is expressed through my perception that is informed by my upbringing in a family of dislocated and refugee people. My memory of exile and

loss is what shapes my identity between the past, present and future and also informs my performance practice.

According to Mary Warnock, memory and identity are inextricably linked in the sense that the personal, and also cultural and national identities that each of us carry, have been formed through the continuity of time. On the one hand, people can identify themselves through a process of recollection while using their memory. On the other hand, if the memory of the past would be easily forgotten, people would not be able to recognize where they belong but they would only exist as a consequence of physical continuity. Remembering our past is a process of identifying who we are and where we come from. Understanding the past indicates the acceptance of identity and the knowledge of our personality and its continuation through time. In Mary Warnock's words:

... to identify myself is to identify my body, including its brain and to tell the story of my life is to express my awareness of this body that has persisted through time, and look back with the aid of imagination to make sense of, or interpret, the past. (Warnock 1994, 126)

The past is a significant component that can inform our belonging, which can be recognized and understood only through memory.

MARICA GOJEVIĆ

The Croatian artist Marica Gojević used her voice in the piece *More* (2001) to sing a song from her native country. 'More' is the Croatian word for the sea. A video installation showing a large projection of her face filled the whole room in the exhibition space with her picture and voice. The artist sings in a passionate, boisterous and even

exaggerated manner creating an atmosphere of yearning desire with the intense expressions of her face and her loud voice.

I have developed an understanding of the voice through my personal training in vocal studies and I consider the importance of the sound of the voice in every vowel. I am interested in the analysis of the voice as a form of sound, as it is, by ignoring the words, phrases and construction of syllables, as several aspects of the speaker's identity can be identified from a small sound. During my studies in classical singing, I have learned to identify many aspects in the voice of others. For me the articulated words and phrases are not as important as the sound of the voice is, as the sound of the voice itself can reveal the physical and psychological condition of our selves.

The psychological characteristics of human voice vary and therefore the voice can be used as an instrument to modify or activate individual awareness and the consciousness of a human being through singing and/ or other vocal use. This happens when a singing voice touches us during its performance and when the voice appears as a tool to provide a strong psychological effect to the listener. Consequently, the voice is not just an emotional reflection; it is also a means of communication.

In Cojević's performance, the identification of the voice through the singing is even more important than the reproduction of the song, as the use of the voice in this piece allows us to interpret the artist's emotional state and the subject she reveals with the use of her voice. On the one hand, it is easier to receive a meaning through the words of a song, as our brain understands the words through the known vocabularies. On the other hand, it is hard to interpret a voice sound, as it can be understood differently by each individual. However this might not be a consideration for

this specific example, as the artist used her voice in a clear, exaggerated manner with extraordinary facial expressions and articulation during her singing.

Singing can convey both verbal and musical meaning. The verbal element of a song describes an experience or a story and the musical element can describe the rhythm, pitch, volume and timbre of the piece. Each of these musical elements can be applied to a human voice but the voice is the element that can create a difference to a song, as each voice is different and is expressed differently through singing. So when we listen to a voice we can perceive the ambiance of the specific voice.

In her performance *Miroir* (2000), Marica Gojević paints her skin in a darker colour before she stands on a chair and sings a Croatian song. The artist describes: "I sing loud and long, in a full-throated way, and my voice fills up the room until it almost breaks. With this work, I once again raise the issues of identity and belonging" (Abramovic 2004, 212). In this piece the artist creates a juxtaposition of her identity and an-other identity through the use of her native language, to sing a traditional song, and the use of a skin colour, to alter the colour of her skin. The action of changing the colour of her skin raises questions of identity, belonging and nationalism as well as racial and cultural positions. I recognize the differentiation of cultures and nations indicated in this piece but at the same time there is a respect to the 'other' and a wish to be identically recognized in the global content by avoiding any kind of cultural distance with that 'other'.

Gojević uses mechanisms of identity to represent issues of gathering and separation while at the same time presenting the differentiation between nations by showing the nationalities' *Visible Differences* on her body. On the one hand there is an opposition

to the idea of combining different cultural groups together as cultures are frequently discriminated when they move into a different place. On the other hand, nations have the need to keep alive their traditions and save their identity from other nations. Nowadays, globalization is vigorously discussed with the hybridization of cultures and the continuity of identity appears as a broken chain. For John Berger, on the one hand, the idea of globalization concerns the intermixture of cultures despite their differences, but on the other hand, for every citizen there is a common need to keep the continuity of identity upon recognition in the new global space.

The Irish, the Basques, the Corsicans, the Kurds, the Kosovans, the Azerbaijanis, the Puerto Ricans, the Latvians have little in common culturally or historically, but all of them want to be free of distant, foreign centres, which, through long bitter experience, they have come to know as soulless. They insist upon their identity being recognized, insist upon their continuity – their links with their dead and the unborn. (Berger 1990, 21)

Salman Rushdie believes that each nation needs to have a universally recognized identity and preserve its cultural boundaries in order to protect its cultural 'fundamentals'. This is a way for the citizen to defend its identity against 'foreigners' as the 'other' might be a threat for the security and cultural continuity of its nation. Salman Rushdie calls this 'the absolutism of the Pure'. He also argues that the 'apostles of purity', are always moved by the fear 'that intermingling with a different culture will inevitably weaken and ruin their own' (Rushdie 1990, 20).

The memory of the experienced is linked with one's identity that is constructed over time and formed through different ele-

ments that have been collected through time. Marica Gojević expressed the desire to preserve her identity, to be identified and recognized as an individual that carries an important past and an imperative culture without being against any 'other' culture. She articulates that language and tradition, as well as songs, are indisputably an extremely important part of our identity that we always hold with us.

CHRISTINA GEORGIOU

*Krun*¹⁸ is an Armenian traditional song and it means 'crane' in the English language. *Krun* also refers to my performance with the same title that was realized in Cyprus in June 2009. In this work there is a parallel presentation of the Cypriot and Armenian identity through an abstract representation of past tragic incidents. The idea of war as a remembrance comes with the memory of the homeland through the singing of *Krun*. Also the subject of genocide is brought into the image with the head of a pig that is presented as a symbol of motherhood, and also a victim of man's actions. This is a reference to birth, motherhood and death through the war and other incidents that I recorded during my childhood from the stories and experiences of my loved ones.

The lyrics of the song refer to the homeland and are asking the bird to bring news from one's land. When I was studying the song I realized that both music and words were shaping and revealing an expression of longing and homesickness. I could immediately identify myself with this song, and even if the homesickness was referring to a different territory, the singing melody of the song could precisely express my personal emotions of exile and loss and I could refer to my own history through this song.

Krunk*Krunk usti k'u gas**Crane here you will come**Tsara em dzainit**I am slave of your voice**Krunk mer ashharen**Crane, from our land**Haprik me ch' unis**If you have any news*

The meaning of the song was articulated for my own compatriots during the live performance. The song was referring to a country that was not accessible anymore but alive in memory. This song was a reference to the parallel history of Armenia and my country Cyprus expressing compassion and understanding between wounded lands as a symbol of companionship and acceptance. My appearance during the performance also implied the idea of the mourning figures who lost their native land and their families in 1974 when the Turkish military invaded the Northern part of Cyprus and forced the Greek-Cypriots to move to the South part while occupying the northern part of the island. Since then, female figures have been demonstrating on the border while holding pictures of their loved ones who have been lost or who are still missing, expressing their anger against the silence of the political powers. Even if nowadays the border is open to access the other half of the country, the absence of the motherland for 29 years and the Diaspora was a great wound for the exiled people. The crossing of the border after so many years neither gives back one's land nor answers the questions of what has happened to one's missing people.

The Armenian song is asking a bird to bring news from the homeland and the singing of this song referred to my native land through my appearance as a mourning figure. This song becomes a reference to history, to the result of war and to an open wound. The singing of the song becomes a remembering and a constant waiting, which states the impossibility of crossing the border. The flying bird is the only hope for the exiled person who longs for the homeland and asks the crane to travel and bring news from there.

I have not experienced the incident of 1974 myself, but I have experienced some of the results of this event through the remembrance of my family that created a vague mourning in my own fiction. Particularly the most tragic figure in my childhood was my grandmother, whose narration of the stories before and after the incident of 1974 had an immense importance in my identity construction through my compassion for my own family. I always listen to people in my country discussing how their lives have changed after 1974. The intense grief and the longing for return in my grandmother's narration have shaped the story in my memory with tragic incidences of loss and strong images of mourning. The fact that she was suddenly forced to abandon her home turned her mourning into a force of resistance, where the move to a new place caused meaning to vanish in her life since that day. As Julia Kristeva expresses: 'if the meaning of life is lost, life can easily be lost: when meaning shatters, life no longer matters' (Kristeva 1989, 32). In my grandmother's perception there was no meaning of life anymore, if 'Home' did not exist any longer. And her instant yearning was a powerful force, struggling for national recognition. According to Gaston Bachelard we compare almost everywhere we live to our previous 'home' or 'homes'. He furthermore considers the influence of childhood memory on later spatial responses and questions:

How does the body, not merely the mind, remember the feel of a latch in a long forsaken childhood home? If the house is the first universe for each young child, the first cosmos, how does it shape all subsequent knowledge of other space, of any larger cosmos? Is that house a group of organic habit or something deeper, the shelter of the imagination itself? (Bachelard 1994, 32)

The house as 'the first universe' suggests the base of history and the force of memory of each person; it is the primary reference point of memories. The nature of the relationship between the house and people is extremely important, as the house is an immediate environment for people not only because of the comfort and the familiarity offered but also for the fact that the beloved 'Home' makes people feel that they can hide there or be safe and protected.

For many people who have been displaced or exiled from their homelands, 'other' places cannot provide the same feeling of protection, nor can the memory of the previous place replace 'Home', as 'Home' is linked with birth and with one's ultimate start. When 'Home' is forcefully unlinked with one's life then 'Home' is shaped with desire in one's memory. The relation between place and identity is that places are an important part in the psychical aspect of our identifications. Julia Kristeva in her book *Strangers to Ourselves* explores the notion of the 'stranger' in order to discuss one's alienation in a society or country, which is not one's own. My grandmother could be an example of what Julia Kristeva expresses in her writings:

Every native feels himself to be more or less a "foreigner" in his "own and proper" place, and that metaphorical value of the word "foreigner" first leads the citizen to a feeling of discomfort as to his sexual, national, political, professional identity. (Kristeva 1991, 19)

My grandmother's pain and sorrow for the loss of family and homeland was a continuous suffering. She formed a 'foreign' identity because of her dislocation and resistance. The separation from home and the experience of exile created the alienation of her identity, the detachment from her culture and the narratives of her past identity and belonging.

The mourning of my grandmother that I have been experiencing since the first years of my life until my 21st years and my grandmother's death, have consciously and unconsciously affected my identity perception. The stories of my grandmother were absorbed in my inner world in order to create the ideal 'Home' in my imagination and melancholy emerged in my perceptual awareness through the force of empathy. For my grandmother, melancholy and nostalgia existed as a painful awareness because of spatial/ geographical separation and displacement. They grew as sadness while creating a continuous longing and an expression of grief for something lost.

The feeling of belonging appears to me in a greater sense, through an incident that I have not experienced but know very well through the history of my family. *Krun*k was referring not only to my grandmother but also to all mourning figures that dedicated their lives to the loss of their country and loved ones. My presence was signifying their mourning but my appearance in a white costume was indicating the hope for purification from the traumatic incidence, which is usually linked with the habit of wearing black. These tragic figures who are so familiar and recognizable in my perception over all these years, are people who survived the tragic incident and they hold with them memories from their relationships with people and places that are associated with the lost 'Home'. Past experiences are affecting their behaviour towards current experiences, as Julia Kristeva describes

... the foreigner who survives with a tearful face turned towards the lost homeland. Melancholy lover of a vanished space, he cannot in fact, get over his having abandoned a period of time. The lost paradise is a mirage of the past that he will never be able to recover. (Kristeva 1991, 9–10)

Stories of being 'Home', a continuous circle journey of leaving and returning to the most desirable place in my grandmother's perception, activated my own awareness to realize Krunk. The idealized homeland activates the process of mourning in response to its loss. The only relief for the 'foreigner' is the memory or dreaming of what is absent as Julia Kristeva writes: 'The foreigner is a dreamer making love with absence, one exquisitely depressed' (Kristeva 1991, 10).

CONVERGING ELEMENTS IN THE WORKS OF MARINA ABRAMOVIĆ, MARICA GOJEVIĆ AND CHRISTINA GEORGIOU

Comparing Marina Abramović's *Freeing the Voice* and Marica Gojević's *More* and *Miroir*, the artists sing in a loud, full-throated way, using voice to the limits until they lose their voice. On the other hand, the songs in *Balkan Baroque* and *Krunk* are performed in a lyrical and emotional way while using the voice in a softer and expressive way in order to create a dramatic atmosphere.

The use of voice is shaped in various ways in order to raise specific aspects during the artwork: On the one hand in *Freeing the Voice*, Marina Abramović uses her voice to its limits and raises issues of freedom, in an intention to free the repressed voice. This action is an action that goes beyond the standard limits in the use of voice, an action of transformation that I perceive as an intention to create a deconstruction of the previously constructed repressed behaviour. On the other hand, in *More* and *Miroir*, Marica Gojević

uses her voice in order to be noticed and to be heard. She exaggerates the way she presents the self and her identity while standing on a chair and while singing very loud, as an intention to be as present as possible. Both artists expose elements of their identity to the utmost and while considering their background, the notion of identity in these circumstances becomes even more important.

My interest in the specific works of Abramović and Gojević has also had a great influence on my own performance practice. In my performance *Krunk* similar notions have been addressed by giving shape to memory and evoking the past. The sense of belonging constitutes one's desire to bring back the memory of the past. *Krunk* shows the hybridization of different cultural and social circumstances on the globe (loss, dislocation and exile) while expressing the idea of mourning, nostalgia and longing.

The connection between the performances of Marica Gojević is that they are related through their exaggerated modes: the use of large projections in the piece *More* on the one hand and the action of standing on the chair in the piece *Miroir* on the other hand, and also the use of loud voice in both pieces, signify the intention of striving for a nationally noticed and recognized identity. This exaggerated approach of purpose probably indicates the artist's intention to demonstrate aspects of the need to recognize national identity in a global context as well as the desire of belonging.

In all performances presented in this essay the three artists mentioned have raised notions of past and present circumstances of nationalism with a reference to a broader range of similar incidences. Marina Abramović refers to all wars through her piece *Balkan Baroque*, indicating the traces of immense loss through the substantial sorrow during her durational ritualistic action and the mourning of the singing voice. Marica Gojević refers to national

recognition in the global context with *Miroir* and the recognition of the differentiation of cultures and nations through respect of the one towards the other by avoiding any kind of distance. And finally myself, I use the performance *Krunik* as an indication of remembering and longing for the homeland. The use of the traditional Armenian song by me as a Greek-Cypriot signifies identification and empathy towards the 'one' and the 'other', both wounded lands. The singing of the 'other' song indicates the idea of the globe as the common 'Home' where each unique land is a singular unity that exists together with other lands but under the same roof.

Through the examination of the different issues addressed in this text I am questioning: 'what is home?' For each person, home can be the home where one grew up, or any space related with memories or something that makes one feel like home. For an exiled person though, home is something completely different. The importance changes not because home is more important for the exiled person but because the absence creates other aspects to the psychological condition of one's perception in relation to home.

CONCLUSION

The traditional songs that have been sung by Marina Abramović, Marica Gojević and myself embrace the great importance of history and culture that is represented through the performance of these songs. Tradition is a strong experience formed from the first years of one's life. Homeland is related with the surrounding spaces and places that we grew up in; it is the spaces that are overloaded with memory and importance, the spaces that contain our history. The way of living in relation to habits, the cultural activities, the love of the homeland, the memory of the places and geographical locations that have a memorable significance in one's perception, create an unbreakable link between the exiled person and the lost homeland.

This essay discussed the function and use of the voice in performance art, exploring the importance of memory in the construction of identity. The title *Remembering – Forgetting* is referring to the process where voice and body (as the containers of memory) perform memory while crossing their limits and questioning identity. Remembering is referred to in terms of resisting and forgetting in terms of healing where the endeavour for recognition is followed by a catharsis. The use of traditional songs indicates a history linked to a land, something that has been experienced, a starting point in one's perception. The subtitle *The Voice as a device of Memory for the Construction of Identity in Performance Art* signifies the construction of an identity through the continuation and embodiment of memory in a live performance especially through the use of voice and traditional songs which are linked with one's national identity. The artists construct and deconstruct their identity at the same time during their actions, while putting together memories and elements from the past in order to form a performance piece. In the present moment of a live performance, an identity is revealed with all its manifestations and the experiences that are loaded and constructed in the body and mind as memory. This construction denotes an identity that it is not possible to reveal or present if the memory of the past is forgotten. The strong autobiographical elements in the performances of Abramović, Gojević and myself signify the memory of the past through remembrance, while using elements of identity with potentials of transformation through the use of art as a form of communication.

This essay also discussed the importance of voice as a characteristic of identity. From my personal experience in vocal training, I strongly believe that the voice and the expression of the voice can change by training, while growing up, through our social enactments and the way we learn to imitate ways of talking, but it

cannot dramatically change in order to become unrecognizable. Voice can be considered as an authentic characteristic of our identity and personality. It manifests as a psychological characteristic, which can reveal different fragments of our physical and emotional condition that reflexively express our own existence. The voice is as unique as a fingertip, as it characterizes an immense part of our personality and identity. The voice comes from the body that produces it and therefore indicates the present condition of the living, animated body and expresses the body's subjective quality.

Artists bring a subjective quality to an artwork, especially in a body-based work in which the meanings change because of the liveness and the exposure of the self to the spectator. Artists bring qualities from the past into the creation of an art piece even without aiming to do so. This text focused on the reflection of autobiographical works where the artwork is presented in the present moment but consists of what happened before and what will happen next. The existing work is not only an element that refers to the past but it is also a reflection to the future. Memory informs us how to use the body as a subject or object of the past and transform it, deconstruct it, reconstruct it, or adjust it to the future.

The present is always a link between our past and the future as it is a continuation of our past and a basis to build our future. Our past experiences affect us and how we interpret or act in the present as well as how we visualize the future. And our memory is the knowledge of the past that is brought in to the present through remembrance and shapes our aims for the future, as it cannot be separated from our physical existence in experienced spaces and in specific times. The artist's body is linked to its past, present, future while its presence appears to the spectator in a real time experience, where the body is fleeting between times to reach a transformation...

NOTES

- 1 Watch the performance here: <http://www.ubu.com/film/coulibeuf.html> (accessed 27.03.2010)
- 2 Watch the performance here: http://catalogue.nimk.nl/art_play.php?id=4457 (accessed 27.03.2010)
- 3 This song is written by Anonymous. The translation was provided to me during a singing class with the Armenian soprano Sona Gargaloyan.

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*A Hare can achieve more than a Human
being – An Essay on Performance Artist
Joseph Beuys (1965–1986)*
SUVADEEP DAS

I am beginning to realize what interests me in Joseph Beuys on the process of writing on him? I am a dead hare in the context of understanding his Art and Actions. He explains to me his extended concept of art and actions that he had done. History of performance records the state of a dead hare, cradled by Joseph Beuys at Schmela Gallery in Düsseldorf (26th of November 1965) for three hours, with the work title, *How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare*. By being present as a dead hare in this situation, my role will be to hear and respond to Beuys's views that are similar or differs from his explanations. I have chosen here, to begin with Beuys's life and work.

Joseph Beuys was a performance artist, sculptor, art theorist and pedagogue of art. He was born in 12th May 1924 at Krefeld (Germany) in a strict Christian merchant family. His family moved to Kleve an industrial town close to the Dutch border. When he was young he undertook scholarly studies in medicine, intending to devote himself to little children. His hopes were dashed when he volunteered for the Luftwaffe as an aircraft radio operator in 1941. Germany was then at war since September 1939. At the age of twenty-two in 16th of March 1944, he miraculously escaped death, when his plane JU

87 was shot on the Crimean Front and crashed close to Znamianka in Asia. Beuys lost consciousness for several days, he was rescued in a half frozen state by the nomadic Tartars who attended to his wounds. He gives account of this incident in 1976:

Had it not been for the Tartars I would not be alive today (...) They covered my body in fat to help it regenerate warmth, and wrapped it in felt as an insulator to keep warmth in. (Beuys in Tisdall 1976, 16–17.)

This particular account appeared for his critics, as a powerful myth of origins for his artistic identity. On the other hand it provides an initial key to interpret his use of unconventional materials like felt and fat which were central to his sculpture works. After Beuys returned home at Kleve, he fell into a deep depression, familiar to all artists and enabled him to work out the basic tenets of his art turning towards new materials like felt and fat, which he introduced as 'shamanistic initiatory features'. Beuys was appointed professor of 'monumental sculpture' at the Staatliche Kunstakademie in Düsseldorf. Beuys was dismissed from professorship in October 1972 as he was encouraging free enrolment in relation to his social philosophical ideas, which turned him into a martyr for the artistic cause. During this year 1972 Beuys also established his Information Office in the Documenta 5 exhibition, where he debated issues with gallery visitors for 100 days. On the last day, he fought a Boxing Match for Direct Democracy.

Beuys was introduced to performance art in 1962 when he encountered Fluxus, a nonconformist international group of artists who sought to upset bourgeois perceptions of art and life. Fluxus included fellow artists George Maciunas, Nam June Paik, John

Cage, George Brecht, Robert Filliou, Dick Higgins, Alison Knowles, Yoko Ono, Ben Patterson, Daniel Spoerri, Wolf Vostell, and Emmett Williams. In 1963 Beuys invited Fluxus artists to perform at the Düsseldorf Academy of Art. Brecht, Maciunas, Paik, Vostell, and Williams participated, and Beuys performed his first two public actions, *Composition for 2 Musicians and Siberian Symphony, 1st Movement*. He created and carried out 70 actions between 1963 and 1986, the year of his death. Beuys' pieces are not just about the body, but informed also by his own compulsive reaction to his own body, the physicality of existence, and the many injuries he suffered during his life. He endured his moment of glory in 1979, at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in the art capital, New York which was the only major retrospective organized in Beuys's lifetime. Having several time dived with death, Beuys died of heart failure on January 23, 1986, in Düsseldorf, after a long illness.

Beuys is holding the dead hare (me) gently caressing and an iron slab is attached to his boot. He is coated with gold leafs and honey instead of a hat which could have made me insecure. He explains me that by putting honey on his head he is clearly doing something that has to do with thinking. Since human ability is not to produce honey, but to think, to produce ideas. He says that in this way the deathlike character of thinking becomes life-like again, for honey is undoubtedly a living substance. To him, gold and honey indicate a transformation of the head, and therefore, naturally and logically, the brain and our understanding of thought, consciousness and all the other levels are necessary to explain pictures to the dead hare (me) which combines the warm stool insulated with felt and the iron sole with the magnet. In his symbolic language, it is understood that honey is connected to organic productivity and the hare is connected to birth. This action

of Beuys captures the imagination because everyone consciously or unconsciously recognizes the problem of explaining things, where art and creative work are concerned or anything that involves a certain kind of mystery or questions. He goes on saying that even a dead animal preserves more powers of intuition than some human beings with their stubborn rationality. This must be the root of this action of holding a dead hare (me) seeking out the energy points in the human power field and trying to bring out the complexity of creative areas.

Beuys explains his perception of drawing while he is walking. He says that drawing is the first visible form in his works (Temkin & Rose 1993, 11–73). To him it's like the first visible thought, the changing point from invisible powers to the visible thing. Then he adds drawing not only as a description of thought but it also incorporates the senses... the sense of balance, the sense of vision, the sense of audition, the sense of touch. It reminds me of my own dialogue when I thought about sketch, as I once wrote that the beauty of sketch is in its truthful confession of defaults and rise from defaults like when one learns to swim or ride. Not a valid comment as I am still listening to Beuys and he goes on saying that everything now comes together: the thought becomes modified by other creative strata within the anthropological entity, the human being. He continues to explain that, last but not the least, the most important thing is that some transfer from the invisible to the visible ends with the sound, since the most important production of human being is language and this is his broad understanding of drawing. Well how does he connect from his description of thoughts and senses to sound towards the language?

Shedding out of my dead hare image, if I think of language which evolves out of sound, to me it has some acoustic value. To think in

words has been always a difficult task for me, when there is a visual expression. Words need attires like articles, tenses and grammar to support its stand towards an explanation. I am looking for words in my work, which can be authentic like that of proper nouns without specific and related meaning. One possibility can be to form a structure of sound, which can be a difficult process that needs further exploration. In the system of the animistic society sound plays a very important role as emotions and expressions. In their society words with meanings are not authoritative and have no such fundamental influence. They came out with a certain representation of sound through their ceremonial and domestic behaviour, which is difficult to logically analyse but which is experienceable. I am looking for sound through which I can communicate, which in itself becomes a word, a language and a source that can help in presenting my own works.

Beuys takes over my drifting thoughts and then explains the use of felt in most of his works and actions which is particularly important for its ability to absorb many of the other elements in his installations like fat, dirt, dust and water and also to muffle sound by covering with felt, evident in pieces like piano or loud-speaker. Felt becomes his own symbol in the form of the 'felt hat' that he wore daily or in the form of 'felt suites', an oblique representation of self-portrait. The material felt played an important role in his works which offers particular insight into his message regarding communication, healing and the power to revolutionize society. Beuys's interest in the grey colour of the felt was meant to inspire all colours as an after image, referring to the phenomenon of complimentary colours. Here he extends his explanation of complimentary colours:

...it's a matter of evoking a lucid world, a clear, lucid, perhaps transcendental spiritual world through something which looks quite different, through an anti-image. One can only create after-images or anti-images by not doing something which is already there, by doing something which exists as an anti-image — always is an anti-image process. So it isn't right to say I'm interested in Grey. That's not right. And I'm not interested in dirt either. I am interested in a process which leads us way beyond those things (Beuys in Schellmann 1977, 11)

Most of his works where he wraps and uses felts have a purpose: In *Homogenous Infiltration for Piano* (1966), a grand piano is wrapped in a "skin" of grey felt, metaphorically trapping the sound inside and rendering the piano impossible to open and play. The felt legs of the piano appear similar to the legs of an elephant, which might be related to Beuys' boyhood experience of working at a circus. This animism could relate to the "power animals" of shamanism. The Piano has been homogenized (made into one) and infiltration could mean the desire to liberate the music itself (or the musical instrument). This symbolizes the *healing process*, necessary for Germany to recover from WW II.

The Pack (1969) is an installation built from a Volkswagen bus with 20 wooden sleds, each equipped with a rolled-up felt, leather belt, fat, rope and flashlight. It symbolizes rescue and ought to be a statement of Beuys' belief that *humanity could survive if people cared for one another*. *Felt suit*, one of the series of "multiples" (1970), was tailored from the exact measurement of one of Beuys's own suits. He wore one of the suits in a performance called "Action of the Dead/Isolation Unit" (Nov 24, 1970). For Beuys, it symbolized protection of the individual from the world and the isolation of

human beings. This work also represents *insulation and spiritual warmth*. As he explains:

Not even physical warmth is meant... Actually I meant a completely different kind of warmth, namely spiritual or evolutionary warmth or the beginning of an evolution. (Beuys in Schellmann 1977, 19)

Beuys continues his explanations of drawings that have abstract logic, mathematics or philosophy. He says that from the drawings concepts have evolved (1993, 11–73). These drawings show an infinite number of aspects of the world, they show an infinite number of topics. But he tried to arrange them so that those concepts (that is shamanic concepts) harken back, to formally awaken interest in the current consciousness of viewers, so that the viewers become interested in a general view of man in time. Not only in the present, historically or anthropologically but also by offering aspects for the future and offering solutions by way of an opening of problems.

In the same way, drawings for me gives a more visual perspective for Actions and sculptural forms, I am unable to do that in the form of texts. For me drawing is a more open form of communication that allows me to reach wider audience where I don't have to stress more on the lingual difference. When I think of sculpture I prefer drawings as a preliminary process rather than merely going for tiny reproductions which in sculptural terms we call makets. Drawings then individually become work of art revealing the process that leads to the final installation or sculpture. I like to feel the materials live and it similarly goes with space, site and place of the work or action to happen. I like to understand art by experiencing the being of it and by being of me, in it or around it.

Drawings for Beuys served as the "energy source" in all media. He drew on many supports, often with torn and cut paper collage applied to the surface, combining traditional art materials like watercolour, and ink with organic substances such as blood, fat, felt, wax and soap. These materials became Beuys's trademark and were imbued by him with social and spiritual significance. Thematically the drawings concern the transition between, or the coexistence of, such polarities as active/passive, warm/cold, soft/hard, male/female, chaos/structure, earth/heaven, animal/human, body/soul, life/death. Beuys declares that his intention is not to depict symbols 'but to express the powers that exist in the world. He explains in this context by clarifying that butter for him embodies 'warmness'; felt as an insulator 'a dividing principle meaning both mental and social insulation'; the blood of a hare as the 'alchemical character' of Beuys himself; the ice skate as a conductor 'a moving element between cold and warm'; the stag as a 'positive element of life' appearing in times of 'distress and danger'. (Temkin & Rose 1993, 11–73)

Beuys with his blackboard pieces would liberate drawing entirely from its association with a private, intimate act. He states that if there is a necessity to draw it is about structures, like they are on blackboard. Sometimes written sentences, ideas, a symbol of forms, a little form on blackboard is done in a kind of performance or dialogue with many people. He claims that he does his drawing principally in public constellation and never works with blackboard alone. *Virgin* (1979) is the product of a public discussion; using chalk, tempera and soap, the piece bears the chemical formula for soap; its title derives from the artist's association of cleanliness with virginity. (Temkin & Rose 1993, 11–73)

Beuys relates here about a material he introduced in the late fifties, "Braunkreuz," that had particular autobiographical associa-

tions to his work. It refers to Nazi Germany conjured by the brown colour which had associations with National Socialism. Beuys finds it as a metaphor since he was looking for a colour, which was not experienced as a colour but as substance, a kind of sculptural expression. Drawings such as *Condensed Field in Braunkreuz Field* (1963) and *The E-Plan for the W-Man* (1974) reveal the range of colour from red to gray-brown hues, density, and texture that Beuys achieves with this medium. (Temkin & Rose 1993, 11–73)

The dead hare in his arms (me) brings Beuys back to recollect the missing half stamp which is imprinted in most of his multiples, sculptural objects. He describes it as a complementary or counter image conception, assuming it as a supplementary concept in the narrower sense. He does not see it as a longing for the missing half of something but as an association of the omitted opposite. (Schellmann 1977, 11) This symbol has been adopted and treated in conjunction with cross symbols such as the sun wheel of Bronze Age and the swastika of the Vedic practice in India. It also symbolizes the concept of the creator, evolution, eternity, cycle of time or duration and so on.

Beuys's explanation shifts now towards his own concept on Art with the question of what are the forces working on us and the world that justifies the creation of something like art? (Schellmann 1977, 11) He made this shift provoked by this question to study the source of art, thinking on the need for the world to develop and evolve through art which appeared unresolved. For Beuys the expanded concept of Art is not a theory but a way of proceedings which says that the inner eye is very much more crucial than the external images that develops anyhow. He explains that the inner image, the thought form, the structure of the thought, imagination and feeling has the quality required for a corresponding picture. He therefore shifts the picture back to its place of origin. He goes

back to the sentence, the word as form of evolutionary principle that springs out of man. His personal experiences have found expression in the objects that he used for his works and actions. Therefore he believes that art expresses the realm of experience and goes far beyond the comprehensibility of logical content. In this connection, for Beuys, man is looked upon as a creative being, as a producer. This is where his sentence: "Everyone is an Artist" becomes interesting. On the other hand Beuys admits while everyone is an artist there are qualitative differences between each of us as practitioners. (De Domizio 1997, 198–202)

Beuys clarifies that to prevent the total extinction of the mythological content in his works; one has to work in opposite direction, to show that in this biological phenomenon there is something that goes beyond the nature. With these formulations from the world of animals, he points out to the connected meaning in nature, in the environment and in the forms of life which live with man. Beuys claims that all the connected meanings are missing and so using the example of animals one can get to an answer to the question: What is the human being, how is he meant? He believes that with the help of phenomenological method, factual, non-ideological observation, research and anthropological approach in the concept of art, the essence beyond appearance can be recognized.

In his extended concept of art Beuys wants to make declarations about the creativity of human work in general. He proceeds towards the description of a valuable social action project which began with the inauguration at Documenta 7 at Kassel, Germany (1982) with a plan, which called for the planting of seven thousand trees, each paired with a columnar basalt marker. Beuys states that the planting of seven thousand oak trees has been a symbolic beginning as oaks symbolizes the earth. The symbolic beginning requires a marker in the form of basalt column. The Basalt columns symbolize as vast

scale of time, found in the craters of extinct volcanoes where they form into prismatic shape with five to eight corners. He states that planting these trees is necessary not only in biospheric terms in the context of matter and ecology, but also it will raise ecological consciousness. Beuys quotes on this massive project:

Thus, 7000 Oaks is a sculpture referring to peoples' life, to their everyday work. That is my concept of art which I call the extended concept or art of the social sculpture. (Beuys in Scholz 1986, 32)

7000 oaks – This project functions not just literally, in practical environmental terms, but symbolically, as “inspirational images.” It embodied, metonymically, Beuys’s utopian and poetic metaphysics of a social sculpture designed to effect a revolution in human consciousness, “the human being as a spiritual being.” Even though the art work was first viewed as controversial, it went on to perfectly represent the idea of a social sculpture, in the sense that it was defined as both “participatory and interdisciplinary.” Beuys had aspired to make every human an artist, all contributing to one piece, therefore what better example than this could he have produced? He brought together a community through participation, and as a result changed the land around him and his community. Beuys’ project, which involved planting 7,000 trees in Kassel, took five years to complete. Volunteers, neighbourhood residents, students and city officials engaged in the physical act of planting trees throughout the city. As Beuys calls it an act of ‘social sculpture,’ the project also involved local districts and citizen groups in the decision-making process of how and where the trees would be planted and how they should be maintained. In Kassel the project of planting 7000 oaks was completed by the opening

of Documenta 8 in 1987, which transformed the once industrial and urban environment.

Beuys concentrates to explain some of his action which began with Fluxus. He believes that performance art can evoke a spiritual response in the audience providing a healing process. His actions were often described as intimate, autobiographical, politically charged, and intense. Though his actions were not rehearsed, Beuys often created a score in which he would plan the objects that would be used and the sequence of the performance. Actions would last 45 minutes to nine hours and Beuys viewed each action as a new version of a basic theme and an attempt to make his philosophy more comprehensible. He also believed that the less literal the performances were, the easier it would be for the audience members to translate his message into their own lives. His public persona was created almost immediately after his first two public performances *Composition for 2 Musicians and Siberian Symphony, 1st Movement*. He wore a signature costume of jeans, felt hat, and fishing vest, both onstage and off, and repeatedly used certain materials in his work, such as fat and felt, which refers to his earlier life and wartime experience. (Carini 1993, 128–129)

His “actions” utilized elements of the absurd and contained layers of meanings and symbols. He compares his role to that of a shaman. His performances or actions were ritualistic, incorporating powerful symbols of birth, death and transformation. The objects he used were often exhibited later as works in their own right. He began his association with Fluxus in the early sixties, seeking a rapprochement between art and life, favouring actions that brought art out of the studio, substances from the material world. It was in the 70s and 80s that Beuys was most active on the international stage and his works were displayed around the world,

from Vienna's Biennale to New York's Guggenheim to the Seibu Museum of Art in Tokyo. His better known performance piece was *Coyote*, "I like America and America likes me".

COYOTE, "I LIKE AMERICA AND AMERICA LIKES ME" (1974)

Beuys spent three days in a room with a coyote. After flying into New York, he was covered in felt and then driven to the gallery in an ambulance where the action took place, without having once touched American soil. He later explained:

I wanted to isolate myself, insulate myself, to see nothing of America other than the coyote. (Beuys in Tisdall, 1976)

Beuys opposed American military actions in Vietnam, and his work as an artist was a challenge to the hegemony of American art. For three days there were behavioural changes in the coyote sometimes being aggressive, calm or amiable. At the end of the action, Beuys was again wrapped in felt and returned to the airport. Beuys saw the debasement of the coyote as a symbol of the damage done by white men to the American continent and its native cultures. For Native Americans, the coyote had been a powerful god, with the power to move between the physical and the spiritual world. His action was an attempt to heal some of those wounds. He said:

You could say that a reckoning has to be made with the coyote, and only then can this trauma be lifted. (Beuys in Tisdall, 1976)

Actions and sculpture works of Beuys can be seen through his symbolic dictionary. The symbolic elements that he used, attached with the ideas and meanings of them are listed here.¹⁹

Materials:

Fat – nourishment and fuel, a fundamental material for life.

Felt – insulation, preservation of warmth and energy.

Copper – fast conductor of energy and represents the 'female' side of us all.

Iron – slow conductor of energy and represents the 'male' psyche and stability

Battery – storage of energy.

Nature:

Rock/crystal/basalt – the vast scale of time

Earth/soil – people and their birth place.

Plants/trees – life; growing into future.

Things:

Flashlight – spiritual guidance

Sleds – horizontal death

Spirals – Celtic symbol of organic growth; growth pattern.

Drawing – 'thinking forms'; a way of expressing thoughts without using language.

Animals:

Hare – mobility, burrowing underground, the earth.

Bees – social structure, produce energy – giving wax and honey.

Animals (generally) – intuitive powers.

Beuys explains that his work as a political activist has a logical extension of his attempts to fill the gap between art and life through the happenings and actions. To him art is the only evolutionary – revolutionary power because it is capable of dismantling the repressive effects of a senile system that continues to totter along the death

line. The discipline of art will only reach fruition when every living person becomes a creator, a sculptor or architect of the social organism. Beuys adds to his discussion that his objects are to be seen as stimulants for the transformation of the idea of sculpture or art in general, which encourages an evolutionary process by means of invisible materials. Those invisible materials he emphasizes are:

*Thinking forms – how we mould our thoughts or
Spoken forms – how we shape our thoughts into words or
Social sculpture – how we mould and shape the world in which we
live. (Beuys in Beckmann 2001.)*

Beuys worked intensively with the three fold structure of social theory of anthroposophist, Rudolf Steiner (1993) which aims to establish freedom in the cultural sphere, equality in the rights sphere and solidarity in the economics sphere. The following questions were always primary for Beuys:

*What is the task of the government? What should be its limits?
How can a currency system be created that recognizes that fact and
develops abilities rather than maximizing profits?
What is money? How can production, consumption and trade
work together in ways that result in altruism?
Why is it possible to buy land even though no one has produced it
and no one has invested in its creation?
Why are things turned upside down when the government subsidizes the economy?
What is the task of the government in education? In which of its
tasks should it be limited? Why should the goal be independent,
self-governing schools and universities rather than the private
ones? (Beckmann 2001, 97–8.)*

In response to these questions, Beuys claims for Art as a new concept of economics in terms of human need, not in the sense of use and consumption, politics and property, but above all in terms of the production of spiritual goods. Beuys' ideas for a new concept of economics were inspired by Wilhelm Schmoldt (1898–1992), whom he had met and who had developed Steiner's ideas further. For him the answer to this concrete concept is in the connection between ability and creativity of humankind's relation to product. *Art = Capital* (1985). To achieve this goal, Beuys worked within numerous groups at Dusseldorf like, German student party (*Deutsche Studentenpartei* founded in the summer of 1967), the Organization for Direct Democracy (founded in June 1971), *Free International University for Creativity and Interdisciplinary Research* (April 1973) and *the Green Party* (by participating in election campaign plans, 1979–1982). Beuys argues here that children have to become educated in other ways than in the universities which are mostly enterprises from the state or from economic foundations. To him this is not a real free education since everything is embedded in a kind of power structure. This brings him to ask for free education system, as he knows that the state holds the education where people are filled up with materialistic understanding, inclined to competition and also career instincts. Beuys thinks that the only thing that remains to grow through these hindrances in humankind's hands is the weapon and power of art. When Beuys mentions 'Power of Art', I look through his *Fluxus West Zone*²⁰ manifesto (1970) which is an alteration of George Maciunas' *Fluxus Manifesto* (February 1963):

Purge the world of bourgeois sickness, "intellectual", professional & commercialized culture, PURGE the world of dead art, imitation, artificial art, mathematical art, – PURGE THE WORLD OF "AMERICANISM"

*PROMOTE A REVOLUTIONARY FLOOD AND TIDE OF ART,
Promote living art, anti- art, Promote NON ART REALITY to be
grasped by all peoples, not only critics, dilettantes and professionals.
FUSE the cadres of cultural, social & political revolutionaries into
united front & action. (Beuys in Rothfuss 2001, 44)*

Finally I shed out my dead hare image from being a listener to Beuys's explanations and instead I bring out here the term 'public anatomy' with reference to Beuys's manifesto. In my own works I am interested in the aspect of public anatomy by which I mean making and doing something with the public. I use the tools of intervention, interaction, anticipation, perception and the sense of community, when I work in public space. Making the people perform and looking into the aspects of a collective understanding of Art form. Beuys extensively worked with symbolic elements that had revolutionary – evolutionary approach. But how to make the people understand the art works only through conceptual form and symbolic approach? To this question, Beuys's answer is:

Art is not there to provide knowledge in direct ways. It produces deepened perceptions of experience. (...) Art is not there to be simply understood, or we could have no need of Art. It could then be logical sentences in a form of a text for instance. Where objects are concerned it is more the sense of indication or suggestion. (...) There is "more" in them that means they appeal to more than understanding. If you take for example the concept of "atmosphere": a thing has certain "atmosphere" or "mood": How can one experience this atmosphere anywhere? It's not TO be understood rationally. Atmospheres must be perceived. They cannot be rationally verified. All these things are a "more". (Beuys in Schellman 1977, 20)

When this term of perception comes to my mind, I relate to this in my work as layers, found for instance in onions. Each layer smells different, looks different, feels to be different. I accept the layers of acceptance, rejection, possessions, position, sentiments, moods and modes in my being. Layers of ownership that appear like a make-shift stall of goods that are purchased, given, recycled, bartered and banished. I witness as an eye-witness – layers of animus, layers that are bound by void, dissected and adjoined by them. Because layers are not intact as they are destined to peel off, or destined to stay dormant, undisturbed by curious minds. In this stage of existence I am and all are appearing as reactionary beings to experience these layers of happenings with our own sense of perception. I will come to conclusion returning to Beuys's campaign *How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare*, where he intends to make people aware of the ecological damage that results from the actions of humanity. Dead Hare to him symbolizes as external organ of humanity. He believes that if he is able to explain his works to this external organ, then art can also be understood as a genuine rectification of human creative powers²¹. He is concerned of the external organs of mankind – nature, animals, soil and forests that we are destroying, all of which we need for our source of food and existence. In order to understand what we are doing we have to enter into a dialogue with the animal world, with the plant world, with the soil without which we cannot live. The nature, animals and soil that we are now destroying is responsible for the progress and evolution of mankind.

NOTES

- 1 This description of symbols is compiled from the study of the sources I have included here.
- 2 The German student party changed its name to Fluxus Zone West, in turn this manifesto became a fundamental document for the Green Party, 1968.
- 3 A hare running from one corner of a room to another "can achieve more for the political development of the world than a human being" An Interview with Joseph Beuys, Willoughby Sharp, *Art Forum*, December 1969, 43. This quotation was an inspiration for the title of this Essay, "A Hare can achieve more than a human Being."

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PART II

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CRITICAL REVIEWS OF COLLEAGUES' WORK

*Crafting a bond between people – A review
of the performance artist Suvadeep Das’
work “Walls have ears too”*

TUULI TUBIN

Suvadeep Das’ work with the title “Walls have ears too” was a part of an exhibition and performance art project “Pori Live Art Generator” that took place at the Generaattorigalleria in Pori, Finland, 03.05–15.05.2010. This work consisted of a long wall across which many strings were tightly pulled and in front of which one big cylinder of cardboard was hung up, so that people could use it for drumming. Inside the wall there were several pillars and the artist had covered them with brown paper and written fragmented texts on them. These texts also invited people to come to strum, touch, fiddle and bang the strings, so that they would make sound. Also a ladder was set up against the wall and people could climb up on this in order to reach the highest strings. A wall that became a huge musical instrument on which many people could play together at the same time. During the first week the artist himself was present in the space, played the strings and engaged the audience members also in the playing. During the second week the audience members could do the same on their own, being guided by the texts on the wall.

As a proto-performance²² for this work, old log drum tradition can be seen, although the artist himself does not strongly point it out. But as his preceding bigger work, “A Crush with Log-Com-

mune”, during the Nights of Live Art: Performance Cabaret in the Theatre Academy Helsinki in December 2009, was based on the same idea and for which the artist made a log drum out of wood, a clear connection can be seen. Just that this time the material and form were different. Log drum has been and still is in many cultures used as a means of communication. Das himself, in connection with the work “A Crush with Log-Commune”, writes about log drum as a means which in the ancient times was used in order “to reach people, to restore peace, to commit war, to perform rites, to celebrate, to heal humanity, to preserve nature and to maintain connection with outside world”. (Das 2009, p. 15) In the same text he also brings out that he presents “this log drum communication system as an experiment to bring people into a commune together”. (Ibid) The same experiment he seems to have been aiming at with the work “Walls have ears too”.

Das combines different roles at times, for example an artist, ethnographer and community worker; an artist who creates a participatory performative artwork, an installation as an invitation for actions; an (auto)ethnographer, who works with/studies the elements of his native Indian culture and creates ways for performing the outcome together with the audience. A community worker, who tries to develop means by which to create, bring together or preserve a community. The observation of his way of working as an ethnographer is merely based on my personal view; I do not know, whether the artist himself regards his work to be connected or originating from an ethnographical perspective or not. But looking from the outside through an ethnographical viewpoint, his work seems to bring forth an interesting shift. A traditional ethnographer would go to another country with another culture and try to learn as much as possible about this

other culture, then go back to his/her own native country and very often publish a text based on the research there, or then do a similar ethnographical research within his/her own native culture. But Das has come to another country with a different culture and creates ways in which to bring his own native culture to another one, doing this not via presenting a text, but via showing, mainly by the means of performing, the elements of his own culture. He is dealing with performing ethnography, in quite a similar way as for example the anthropologists Victor and Edie Turner, who have, together with their students of anthropology and drama, taken descriptions of strips of behaviour (for example old rituals) from other cultures and made play scripts based on them, by putting these strips into a play frame. (Turner and Turner 2007, 265–266) Das takes strips of behaviour from his own native culture, makes play scripts based on them and presents them in another culture. In the Turners' case, the aim is to do this as close to the original material as possible, whereas in Das' case, the authenticity is not primary; rather finding new forms around the authentic starting point seems to be important. The main constituting points of the play script for the work "Walls have ears too" may perhaps be thought of and very briefly written down as following:

- the starting point based on the authentic material
 - log drum and the use of it
- the artist himself playing the role of a community elder
- the audience members playing the role of community members
- the main actions for the artist and audience – playing of the "log drum" together.

There were many people who came and followed the "script", and via their playing on the different elements on the wall, a great sound work was produced. And for a moment, these people, in this space, doing similar actions, and being embraced by a powerful sound created together, really formed as a kind of community; a community, whose members have shared a brief common experience. But here, at least for me, this work suddenly stopped and stayed somewhere halfway, because after playing on the strings and the cylinder, nothing followed. The people parted again and everyone went their own way and I was left with a feeling that it was just playing a huge musical instrument for the sake of playing a huge musical instrument, and that we were all just tools for bringing forth the sounds that this instrument could make. I am not sure, what exactly I was expecting to happen in addition, and I am not pointing out that the artist had left his play script somewhat unfinished. I think it is mainly about my own and the other's inability to go further from just playing an instrument; for example starting a talk or a discussion or something else. Perhaps the artist's idea was just to create a tool, a means for something, and the rest, the using of this tool and exploring what else this tool might create in addition to just making sound, was left totally for the audience to decide. Anyway, after experiencing this work, I was left wondering, how does a log drum work for example in India, in a place where this idea has been used for hundreds of years already, and what kind of community feeling the use of it usually creates there.

Das seems to be using the old log drum communication system as a basis for creating his own communication code; a code via which to forward messages and create a community. Here is an example of one text written by Das himself, used in "Walls have ears too", on the pillars, perhaps containing some of the messages:

*our being itself is duration
we need no rationalizing
duration as texts which
inter-textual/lectual being likes A to Z
we will love you & invite
you to strum, fiddle and touch
with your hands and body at
our (7-6-6-7-parts) body strings &
create your own durational experience
and we will hear you.*

But as one of the viewers and participants of this particular work, I find this code difficult to decode and put all the pieces together. One of the problems for me is the association with walls, which seemed to be very important according to the texts that were written by the artist on the pillars, but which I did not manage to comprehend totally. The artist was writing from the position of walls and maybe identified himself also for this work as one of them, or at least as a spokesperson for them. The word "we" was mentioned a lot in the texts, as for example: "we are connected, even though we are different", "we, walls, feel the same", "whether you are mainstream or underground, we give no credits for you to worry". (Ibid) According to this, the artist's intention was perhaps to draw attention to that walls can be thought of as alive too. This brings to my mind also the main idea of animism, which is that not only humans have souls. So perhaps one of the main messages in this work was to make more visible the idea that we are all part of one whole world, part of one whole community, and connected to each other, things and beings animate and inanimate.

The title of the work refers also to the proverb “walls have ears”, which means that one should be careful of what one is saying, because there is always a risk of being heard. In the texts used in this work, Das brought out different versions of this proverb: “walls have cracks and partition ears” (China), “walls have ears & little pots, too” (South Africa), “walls have ears & paper sliding doors have ears” (Japan), “walls have mice & mice have ears” (Persia), “the field hath eyen, the wood hath ears” (Canterbury tales)²³. So on the one hand this work cautioned people to pay attention to what and where they are saying, but at the same time it was also inviting them to produce sound, as if to share their thoughts, although not in the form of speaking; to make themselves heard and to trust the surroundings. Perhaps one of the aims was also to bring out that words and speaking are not the only and most important, perhaps always not even most accurate, means of communication. Therefore, this work can be seen also as a presentation of one example of an alternative way of communicating. An example, a tool, for the artist himself for communicating with the world, animate and inanimate, around him, and at the same time also a tool created by the artist for others for experiencing a different way of communicating.

As can be concluded, “Walls have ears too” by Suvadeep Das served many purposes. It introduced some parts of the Indian culture, created a short-lived sense of community among audience members/participants who played a huge musical instrument together, presented an alternative way of communicating (other than spoken speech), and directed attention to the connections between animate and inanimate things in the world.

NOTES

- 1 According to Richard Schechner, a proto-performance is "a source or impulse that gives rise to a performance; a starting point" (Schechner 2007, 226).

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Fact, Rumours, & A Glass of Taittinger:

The work of Katariina Mylläri

SARI KIVINEN

She is in the space when the audience arrive. Sitting on a chair near the entrance, wearing a black suit, she has a calm and focused facial expression whilst making figure-eights on the floor in front of her with a whip. Not aggressively but assuredly. She holds the whip in her hand and firmly brushes it along the ground.

The audience take their viewing positions.

After some time she moves to the stage area, a table is already in position. She places two silver trays on the table. Silently moving, she undertakes several actions. 1) Takes a tube of lipstick and slowly applies it to her right foot, covering its whole surface up to the ankle, 2) She takes another tube of lipstick and applies it to her right ear, covering her whole ear, including the inside which is firmly filled with the bright red make-up, 3) she pours 2 jars (1/2 a kilo) of runny honey onto the two silver trays, 4) she positions herself on all fours on top of the table, 5) she licks the honey; all of it.

These actions are each undertaken with an interesting facial expression, which could be described as a combination of assuredness, slight curiosity and a hint of being, in general, unimpressed.

The above description was animatedly narrated to me by Lisa, an acquaintance of mine, who recently attended a performance by Katariina Mylläri at Telakka in Tampere (Finland) as part of *Perfo!*²⁴ My knowledge of these actions, and the presence of Mylläri in this performance, is second-hand. Yet upon listening to Lisa's description I gain the sense that I was really present at the event, my senses responding to Lisa's description. The lipstick in all its sticky tactility, the runniness of the honey, the action of lapping, not to mention the final action narrated to me by Lisa:

A bucket of water is carried on stage by Mylläri, a sensation of tension is perceived in this room, the audience wonder if she is planning to throw the water all over them. She holds the tension for an elongated moment. She then places the bucket on the table, climbs on the table (again on all fours), and violently dunks her head in the bucket of water over and over again.

As I listen to Lisa's description, I start to wonder about the details that become etched in my own sensory system. A memory is stored. I wonder whether if I now repeat to others this description of the performance will I germinate a myth?

In this essay I consider examples of Mylläri's art practice that I have experienced either first or second hand. I am interested to discuss the function of myth via rumour whilst considering distinctions between fact and fiction.

IN THE VIP AREA

Greetings Citizens/We are living/In the age/In which the pursuit of all values/Other than Money Success Fame Glamour/Have either been discredited/Or destroyed. (Party Monster, Money Success Fame Glamour).

Although I was not present at the performance outlined in the above section, I have previously witnessed Mylläri in action. For example in May 2010 I witnessed Mylläri 'live' in a small Finnish town called Pori, she was being *Somebody Important*. Although framed as an artistic project, there was no specific performance for the eager audience to attend. Rather, if you were lucky you could catch a glimpse of Mylläri as Kathryn Booster as she rushed from hotel to limousine, to fancy restaurant and so forth.



Mylläri as Booster in Pori, photo by Sari Kivinen

Mylläri as Booster as *Somebody Important* was developed as an intention to confuse people, to cause a re-take in one's mundane everyday life.

I am reminiscent of a performance I recall that was staged by Sydney based artist Rachel Scott. Scott created a spectacle around the idea of celebrity, clothed in a fur coat Scott's performance consisted of celebrity signing. With Scott seated at a signing table at the end of a long red carpet, the audience interacted with her by queuing and obtaining her signature. Scott's performance subsequently caused confusion in a similar way as *Somebody Important* manages. Both examples question the constructs of VIP's (celebrity, importance, power). Both examples play with positioning, and with spectacle.

The spectacle is the stage at which the commodity has succeeded in *totally* colonizing social life. Commodification is not only visible, we no longer see anything else; the world we see is the world of the commodity. (Debord 2002 <http://www.bopsecrets.org/SI/debord/2.htm>).

I myself was lucky enough to spot Mylläri as Ms Booster enjoying a glass of Taittinger at Pori's bookshop bar on Antinkatu. I was aware of the project only because it was part of the same performance event²⁵ that I was in Pori participating in. I specifically appreciate that Mylläri's gestures in *Somebody Important* were intended for an unsuspecting audience, as opposed to Scott's in which the performance was for a knowing audience, her actions occurring within an art institution. Location thus can heavily influence the way that a work such as this, which inserts itself into daily life, is perceived.

Allan Kaprow once discussed the distinctions of lifelike art and artlike art. I am inclined to consider Mylläri's *Somebody Important* as fitting within the sphere of lifelike art, especially as I am aware

that it could be argued that this performance is just Mylläri dressing up (as most people do on occasion) and hanging around. Yet this is the crux of what I find central about *Somebody Important*; that through using everyday elements and doing pretty normal things, Mylläri questions the concept of importance. This is done by using constructs already in place in society (thus blending into the domain of lifelike art) to examine, play, and create potential myth, about the everyday life of somebody 'very' important. *Somebody Important* is also a tease in capitalistic culture in which if you look the part you will be the part, (here I am reminded of a never ending stream of make-over T.V. shows). *Somebody Important* exemplifies a performance of importance within a commerce driven specularized society. Perhaps not so dissimilar to Allan Kaprow's and Guy Debord's perspectives, which are continually relevant commentary to the market/ image driven world we find ourselves living in.

Whilst catching a glimpse of Kathryn Booster as *Somebody Important*, I curiously watched the faces of the other bar patrons. There was a young couple seated just behind Booster, they seemed more involved in each other appearing oblivious to Booster with the awkwardness of a first date. An older couple entered the bar and sat two tables to the right of Booster. Their faces indicated curiosity despite quickly focusing on their drinks and appearing to try not to pay extra attention to Booster whose own gaze was unperturbed as she sipped her champagne nonchalantly.

BOOSTER'S VIOLENT COUNTERPART

Every performance that I discuss in this essay has, to the best of my knowledge, really taken place. Yet the realness, the concrete facts of what has taken place may in many cases have become obscured, mainly this is because the memory plays its tricks. Some

of the examples I use I have been told about (for example in the description by Lisa), and other examples are first hand viewing experiences. In both variations I find it imperative to keep in mind that one's subjective position always obscures that which is witnessed. Which leads me to throw in the question, what can ever be considered as real? And what, in respect to this consideration of the real, is myth?

Sometime after glimpsing Kathryn Booster, I encountered Violencia. I suspect that in the first performance I described via Lisa's description, that Violencia was the protagonist. If I understand correctly: Violencia is what Mylläri becomes after being Booster for a certain period of time.

I once heard Mylläri discussing the connection between Violencia and Booster as she gave an artist talk in Helsinki, explaining Violencia as a kind of monster that must express itself in order to counteract Booster. I have a flashback to the character of Glory,²⁶ from season 5 of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, she was a hell god trapped in the body of a human named Ben. There are some strange similarities in my associations towards Violencia and Glory, an eerie similarity (except that Violencia is not bent on destroying the universe.... yet).

Violencia is generally clothed in a black suit and is dirty in contrast to every way that Booster is pristine. The connection between Booster and Violencia also seems to me to be a kind of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde relationship. However, the connection between them is not specified to knowing audiences; rather a story is merely suggested, feeling like a game of Chinese whispers is put into action.

CONSTRUCTING MYTHIC CONCLUSIONS

...no one person invents myths; myths are found, recognized. [...] The realm that is seen when myth is found, the realm of myth and fairytale, identifies human nature.
(Acker 1997, 32–33.)

Marjatta, another acquaintance, recently narrated to me that while she was on her way to work one morning a woman dressed in a pink wig, puffy green shorts and bright red blouse asked her if she'd seen any charity workers in the market square she had just walked through.

She was holding a red clipboard with what appeared to be a survey clipped in it. Her bright pink wig was short and curly; she looked kind of like a clown with white face paint and that kinda thing. She told me she was looking for charity workers to survey with special questionnaires she'd concocted. You know those charities that are always asking for you to join their organization for 2 Euro's a week. She asked me what I thought about them. I shrugged my shoulders and scurried off to work....

About a week after I heard this account by Marjatta I spotted an image on Mylläri's facebook account of her made up in white face paint, a pink curly wig and red blouse. Thus the story of Mylläri as charity targeting clown forms, forming not as a clear-cut artwork, or performance, but as gesture of confusion; a tease in the psyche of those who witness and experience a glimpse of her gesture.

Each of the above examples from the Clown persona to Kathryn Booster to Violencia are offered as fragmentary performance expe-

riences, with most occurring outdoors amidst the public domain, on the move; thus resisting focused attention from an audience in the know-how. Yet provoking attention of a different kind, stimulating confusion that may or may not lead to the development of myth. The type of attention sought by the public outings of Booster and the Clown persona aim to rupture the normalcy of the everyday routines of random witnesses. Prompting second takes. Prompting discussions based on questions about what was experienced and witnessed. Thus prompting the grounds for gossip, for story building, and for the growth of myth.

This essay has aimed to present examples of Mylläri's artistic endeavours whilst attempting to join her in her own game. To play with the potential of germinating myth via teasing the constructs in place is a sweet folding of fact into fiction and vice versa. The criticality in place is in disguise, avoiding explosive spurts. Rather, the criticality in Mylläri's pursuits can be located in the potential ruptures caused by recognition and mis-recognition. Critiqued here are behavioural norms, social constructs, and a capitalist culture in which every charity has a representative on every street corner trying to sell belief in their goodwill. I hereby swear that to the best of my knowledge everything I tell you is true.

NOTES

- 1 Perfo! is a quarterly performance event held at Telakka cultural house in the city of Tampere.
- 2 The event was Live Art Generator, a collaborative endeavour between Taik and TeaK..
- 3 Glory (full name Clorificus) was a god from a hell dimension who had been banished by the other hell gods into the earth dimension, her essence being imprisoned in a human child named Ben. However Glory was too powerful to be completely contained, by Ben's 20th birthday Glory had gained enough power to take over Ben's body for short periods of time. The time she could take over his body gradually lasting longer and longer. There is a strange body contortion that happens when Glory gains control of Ben, the visual switch between them is how I imagine Violencia also coming through; changing from Booster (or Mylläri herself) into Violencia.

SOURCES:

Acker, Kathy. *Bodies of Work*. London: Serpent's Tail, 2006 (1997).

Debord, Guy. *The Society of the Spectacle*. (Translated by Ken Knabb). Online version: <http://www.bopsecrets.org/SI/debord/2.htm>, 2002 (1967).

Christina Georgiou:

The Rites of Passage and other works

KATARIINA MYLLÄRI

Christina Georgiou is a Cyprus born artist working mainly in the field of live art and performance. Georgiou has also studied classical music and singing, which she combines with aspects of body-work and performing in her interdisciplinary practice. Georgiou's work has recently concentrated on the topics of cultural embodiment and related questions of identity.

In this essay I mainly concentrate on the piece "The Rites of Passage" performed in Helsinki, in October 2010. In addition I use Georgiou's blog (www.christinageorgiou.blogspot.com) as an archive when I discuss various aspects of Georgiou's work in general and I am also pointing out insights to personal histories based on informal discussions with the artist.

"The Rites of Passage" was performed in October 2010 as a part of a workshop taught by performance artist Roi Vaara. The piece is exceptional in Georgiou's production, as the majority of her works are performed in a gallery or studio space instead of an outdoor location. Nevertheless, Georgiou's personal expression catches the essence of sensitive, alluring presence and calmness I have witnessed before. The same atmosphere can be grasped in the photo documentation of performances in her blog.

MOVING THROUGH "THE RITES OF PASSAGE"

The audience is asked to come to the Tokoinranta Park by 12 o'clock. When I arrive, I see Georgiou sitting on her knees on the bank of the waterfront, soaking white papers in the water one by one, and carefully drying them by squeezing them. The action can be seen clearly already from the distance, because the white papers point out from the murky water when she immerses them. I walk closer and I see Georgiou's hair falling on her face covering her expression and I imagine her looking serious and determined, almost like something is driving her action.

I walk closer again and I see a big swan swimming closer to her, curious about her action. The swan, followed by few courageous ducks, gracefully sails in front of Georgiou and gazes at her; it puts out its neck and stays in the scene. It seems to be as interested in the performance as we are. The visual view is breath-taking; a harmonious composition with contrasting features of the white swan, the papers, black water, dark hair, grey coat, yellow and orange leaves- underneath an unconscious fear of big birds (known to be a bit unpredictable and aggressive) and the phantom sensation of the icy-cold water; it is in a melancholic way a very romantic image.

Obviously all the Finns are sure that swans are furious creatures; I see an old couple approaching Georgiou and asking her if she could come up from the ladder since the national bird could get her otherwise; or they think she is about to hurt herself and the swan is the perfect excuse to use to get her away from the freezing water. Georgiou courageously continues her action, defying the killer lurking just a couple of meters from her.

Eventually, the couple sees us watching and they decide to carry on their way, and we are left to observe the washing of the white papers, watching as they transform yellowish as the seawater dyes

them. Georgiou sets the papers into a pile again after she has squeezed the water out of them; one by one the papers go through the process. The performer's hands start to get red little by little. The swan has left with his entourage, the other smaller ducks.

I watch her, I freeze with her, I wish the papers would end, I calculate how long it will take us to get her to the Emergency room in case she gets severe frostbites; at the same time I feel fascinated by this simple action and the contrast it makes to the surrounding environment of people going on with their morning walk, their way to work, their hurry to where ever they are going. Bright coloured jumpers, jackets and beanies whirl by but the monochromatic girl has caught us in the tranquil action parallel to this moment, and we simply cannot leave her.

Finally the papers are finished. Georgiou picks up the pile of wet papers, walks up from the water's edge and walks across the street, up the stairs in the backyard of the nearby office building. When she starts to move, one can see her hands shake from the cold, and her feet tremble, as the muscles in the feet seem stiff. She breaks up the poetic atmosphere of her washing action, moves on quickly and puts the pile down on one tile in the middle of the concrete constructions of the office-building complex. The sudden ending of the performance leaves me remembering the powerful still images of her washing the papers; I gaze to the waterfront and I can see her there in flashes from the past, as reflection of the moment that has gone.

COMPOSITION AND PRESENCE

The issue of aesthetics is important for the visual images of Georgiou's works that are classically beautiful and carefully composed; they are in a sense settled to please the eye. I find this neatness refreshing compared to the flood of guts and dirt and splashing

paint. The clear, graceful images she performs are calming; Georgiou uses this calmness and breaks it by an outburst or distortion that creates another visual layer of aesthetics in its transformation.

In her work, Georgiou also links her practice with traces of theatre and stage art. She is connecting voice to her bodywork and action as she produces contemporary spaces and landscapes with singing and sounds and she plays with traditional notions of aesthetics and style in composition and appearances. She flirts with materials and elements of symbolism fearlessly in her performances whilst creating a captivating intimate surrounding to her interdisciplinary practice.

The visual images Georgiou creates are strong, calm and very often harmonious compositions with very carefully thought out colours and lighting. Her presence is captivating yet at the same time very fragile and private, and as an audience member one feels the necessity to observe her work silently and take the time to get to the flow of simple actions with her.

Contemplating on "The Rites..." other performances I witnessed and images in her blog, I see connection to the classical music background in her way of working with composition, choreography, visual effects and also in using her voice in her work. There seems to be a certain clearness and simplicity in actions. Being still and observing "pretty much nothing happening" might be challenging for an audience member; but on the other hand Georgiou's simple actions never seem to be vague or messy or over worked or meaningless or uncertain and in that way tiring to watch. Often her performances have a clear beginning and an end, a rupture or completion, which gives a certain feeling of narration in the piece.

Georgiou's way of working with "the whole of the scene" operates with the means of theatre and the tools of spectacle: carefully

thought lights, shadows and contrasts, the performer's appearance being part of the space within the movement and in the form, colours, texture. The carefully planned compositions also enable documenting by photography without having to set up the situation again just for the camera. In this method the camera manages to capture some glimpses, gazes, expressions, that sometimes are secondary to the live performance, but very important and interesting to be experienced as another layer of the work.

INFINITE MELANCHOLY: DISLOCATED IN TIME AND SPACE

There is a certain melancholy in Georgiou's pieces; in the harmony of the images, pace of actions and expressions. Her gestures are subtle and gracious, her body movements are controlled also under physical stress, but it does not mean that she is holding back any expression; on the contrary, embodying her motives and intentions, her performances seem very sensitive, personal and sincere, sometimes her expression gives out something deeply emotional and very sad.

Having lived and performed abroad away from Cyprus for years has made a big impact on Georgiou's work; questioning the meanings of her cultural background and self-image are one of Georgiou's main interests. The question of identity becomes obvious when a person's appearances give her away for being "dislocated"; connotations to stereotypes can make one question the effects of cultural roots to identity. The changing environments require a person to readjust and adapt her behaviour, and perhaps make her long for places where the patterns of behaviour are familiar.

If I get back to the main piece I am contemplating, "The Rites of Passage", I find myself connecting the way of performing melancholy with the stories of Georgiou's personal and family history, connotations to the exile and deportation from the occupied

country, being torn from one's roots and home during 1974 when the Turkish invaded the northern part of Cyprus. From the conversations with Georgiou I have gathered that the issue of diaspora is constantly negotiated especially in her works of the past years, but for me, "The Rites of Passage" is the core of this longing, this melancholic desire for "home" and the piece where I sense the dislocation of the body and mind strongly.

My interpretation, the notion of dislocation in "The Rites of Passage" may be influenced by the contrast of the appearance of Georgiou, her being very Mediterranean, to the very typical, harsh northern October weather; the impact is engaging. Georgiou's outfit seems to add a layer to the alienation, it reminds me of historical black and white photographs taken in the beginning of the 20th century in Central Europe, and the grey shade looks to me matching exactly. It seems like something got stuck in the picture when she travelled through time; the surroundings glow bright yellow and red, but she in her grey coat and dark hair is monochromatic with her papers and the swan.

After relocating Georgiou in my mind to the old Europe, I dislocate her again: I get faltering images of Kalevala's Aino throwing herself to death in the deep water, incident depicted in a Finnish mythology. This reference to a story from the underworld is inflicted by the swan, appearing in the mythology as the swan of Hades (Tuonelan Joutsen). In Georgiou's piece, the swan performed rather peacefully and did not cause any panic, but apparently I am deeply enough indoctrinated the myth to get a nervous feeling and make a reference to melancholy that might lead to suicidal tendencies.

The sense of tragedy was lost, when the piece ended suddenly; the water had gone through all the papers, altering them, the process of remaking was over; washing (usually connected with taking

the dirt off) had become building (adding material); white papers had become a yellow and brownish pile. Georgiou's hands had become red; hopefully not for a long time. Her body had transformed, at least for a couple of days; walking was notably hard and painful.

The harmonious movement and concentration was blown away, the hypnosis was gone. *The audience was dislocated*; just when the repetitive action of washing the papers distracted our thoughts from thinking about her being cold and the muscular discomfort she must have felt, she ripped us all out of the dream and left us feeling out of place, feeling loss and melancholy.

AFTERWORD: PHYSICAL TRANSFORMATIONS

Besides issues of cultural identity, Georgiou's main interests in performance concern the body; its relation to space, body as material, body as infrastructure. The transformation that works through language and gestures that we adapt to certain social reality is an actual physical change. Georgiou is exploring and pushing this physical change, which is constantly embodied in her due to the changes of environment.

These passages through countries, changing identities, time, performances, people, make a difference in one's life; these features are constructing and moulding us all the time, and at the same time we construct and mould them. The random people passing by Georgiou when she was kneeling down on the sea bank did not necessarily perceive her the same way I was observing her, and their notion or visual image of the bank or the park perhaps did not change so much, maybe only for a glimpse they witnessed something unusual. For me, the sea bank is no longer the same as it were before her performance; for me it evokes the remembrance that is now embedded in that site.

*Activated Spaces – A review of the
Performance Artist Tuuli Tubin's work*

SUVADEEP DAS

How far is it relevant for 'the other' to make a review without being in the actual space where the artist activates? By saying 'the other' I mean the viewers and the readers who go through the work of the artist through a review. Sometimes it is a pleasure not to perform and to be placed in the seat of an observer, but to observe is again contrary to a participatory performance. An observer who is embodying rather than being critical in the 'doing and making doing' of the other as a performer. It makes me think of a certain thing we know as margin. A margin that we draw is an illusion. In the sense of a border or a kind of boundary.... Margin is a violent explosive that remains dormant in itself, constantly triggering two sided coins to react to each other or in other case not to react at all. This illusionary margin becomes a strong tool even without its visible existence where certain kind of communication occurs. Margin is also a kind of space in between or a pause that enables the nature to approach the one and the other. It can be taken as a kind of waiting room, no man's land, a bridge, a bank of visibility separating the river and the inhabited land. In the oblivion, margin extends as an illusion to merge the two different dimensions as horizon. Right now, the margin is in the form of an observer in the role of creating an essay.

Repetition of action. Activating the space. Changes in the parameter of repetition. Empty or abandoned space. Movement that creates questions. Subtle changes in building up an action to create an image. Attempt to create unusualness. There is no sign of making an act, but actions develop. Presumptions and assumptions playing a game of return and serve on observer's mind through the action. Aspects of beauty not specifically in the literal meaning of it, but in the process of action or in activating the site or space or place. In other words rebuilding a responsive energy shared between the observer, the spaces and the artist herself. The artist here initiates by activating the spaces through the availability and invention of traces.

These notes are included here from observing the images and video of Tuuli Tubin's Co-operation work (2010). They are the short sentences I have chosen to start with, in this essay on the artist Tuuli Tubin's works in the field of Live Art and performance art. She has studied textile art and art and cultural anthropology earlier. In the following three projects in Theatre Academy, Helsinki, she concentrated upon activating the spaces in the winter 2009 (Nights of Live Art), spring 2010 (Pori Live Art Generator project) and autumn 2010 (International project). Through these projects she was questioning her being in the respective space that she explored through her actions, in the manner of how body gives meaning to the spaces through actions and images. Her interest in activating spaces, while questioning the role of herself in the space, has been quite evident through her works.

In this essay I will focus on Tuuli's works that she presented in the project "Co-operation". This project was an international collaboration between MA Visual Performance: Time Based Practice, Dartington (UK) and the Degree Programme in Live Art and Per-

formance Studies (MA), Theatre Academy, Helsinki, from 7th to 10th September 2010. The process of developing the installations, performances and video documentation was presented in studio space 1, a black box at Theatre Academy. Tuuli Tubin was doing a live performance in the studio space and also installed a video documentation of her work on "activated spaces". Her work was based on the search for spaces abandoned by actions. The viewers were asked to follow the activating of such spaces on some moving images and during live performances. I will discuss here the description of three still images of Tuuli's live performance and also the five videos shown in the black box at Theatre Academy at the same time.

DESCRIPTION FROM THREE STILL IMAGES: SPACE – BLACK BOX

First image – artist is partially hidden at the entrance on top of the door panel. She reveals a device resembling a net. Is this fishing net or a basketball net? Her right hand holds a piece of string which almost connects to her video projection that she displays below, almost near to the entrance door of the black box.

Second image – artist reveals herself in the action of dropping feathers in the net. In the second image the image of a basketball net becomes more prominent. She holds a large silver bowl supported by her left hand. She places herself on the entrance of the black box sitting at the top of the door panel. The mark of her shadow on the wall of the black box is appearing rather distinct due to the light arrangements inside.

Third image – artist is seen holding a white paper and there are now additional images paper cut inanimate beings hanging with strings. The white paper is giving a darker or greyish complexion, the image here is representing as if the artist is animating with her concentrated gesture of holding the paper in the wall. The basket

is filled with the dropped feathers. The shadow of the basket is bringing clarity to the real presence of the basket. The question to me still remains – is this a fishing net or a basketball net?

DESCRIPTION FROM THE ARTIST'S VIDEO DOCUMENTATION, "ACTIVATED SPACES" DISPLAYED IN THE BLACK BOX

First space – viewed in the video frame – a space with yellow coloured wall (probably an abandoned space); two brown coloured doors – one at the front and another at the left hand side of the space. A fish net hanging from the wall is in the left corner. On the right side, a portion of a wooden table is visible. The space appears as a porch. Also there are iron railings on both sides of the space which indicates, that there are steps leading to the abandoned space. The artist is activating the space here, using repetitive action of walking in and out from the front and side door. Approximately 25 rounds of this repetitive action also showed up subtle changes by pacing in and out faster from slow action of walking and running. Sometimes she almost hides through the change of her motion when she is opening and closing the door. In the last round of her repeated action, she is seen walking out by leaving a trace. The trace she leaves is a red chair.

Second space – an outside view from a glass frame of a window or a door. Scene of a sunny and breezy day. Here the artist is walking in a visible distance holding a pipe like structure, green in colour. The repetition is done only once in the scene and appears almost like a shadow version of her immediate walking action.

Third Space – the space looks like an old fort built of stones, arch shaped with an open window in the centre from where the outer landscape is visible. The artist enters the space from the right hand side, holding a net attached to a circular metal ring, which is fixed

with a long stick. She stands in the centre where the open window is seen. She begins her action of placing the net through the window outside and then brings it back inside. She repeats this action for some time. She places her left hand inside the net twice or thrice. It is difficult to understand what she intends to examine by placing her hand inside the net. In one of her repeated rounds, she places her head close to the metal ring. This appears as if she is capturing sounds or air from the outside towards inside. The sound of the airplane and the voices of the passers-by that take place in the old fort at the same time are creating a contrast to her concentrated action. After a while she leaves the space from the left hand side of the site.

Fourth space – a view of the sea where the horizon is marked with land and sky. The artist here continues to push a shovel with her left foot in the sea water and lifts it up causing the sound and the splashing of the water to form a contrast in the calmness of the surrounding scene.

Fifth space – view of the sand near the sea. An empty steel kettle is placed on the ground. The artist appears in view with a steel ladle and continues to fill the kettle with the sand. She goes on filling the kettle until it is full to the brim with sand. The artist then walks backwards leaving the image of the sand-filled kettle as a trace.

Through the description of her images and video documentation, it is evident that Tuuli is concentrating on researching the space. She has also been interested a lot in traditions and the way things have been done and thought about in the past and in different cultures in comparison with the culture where she comes from, and in finding traces of these traditions and patterns of behaviour in here and now. The attempt to make alive or to animate the inanimate objects has been her constant effort in her works. The choice of exploring minimal frame or space is quite evident in her works on spaces and

traces of spaces. The effort of making a simple action into a strong image without using numerous props, she explores the space that she encounters and manipulates. Through her actions of activating the space she finds a way to research the being of space. I can see through her works, the reason to discover the space that contains and overlaps with place, site and environment. She considers place as something static, secure and predictable whereas space is more or less indefinite to assume, unpredictable and abstract in nature.

Tuuli explains that she classifies her own work in between site (and space) specific and site particular. (This information is from my discussion with the artist on her works and performances in the Co-operation project, 2010). The term "site-specific art" also appears controversial in the sense that there can be a collision as to whether it refers to work made specifically for a site or in response to a site. We can also replace this collision of meanings and combine them to give another perspective with this notion of "site-specific performance". In Tuuli's work I see more a site-responsive approach as she engages in the process of investigation-oriented action in the site. She develops an interest in what is happening and what has happened in the place or space or site through her actions. Through her works, she is not making a direct comment or telling the viewers what to think. Instead she brings forward a kind of an open source for the viewers to draw their own conclusions of relation to space and site. But then for me, the responsiveness fulfils with the engagement of the audience participation. To conclude I think that even though Tuuli's work explores the space as she perceives it, concerning activation, I still would be willing to see more audience participation in her live performances.

*I would like to see a group photo of you
—questioning The Role System
of Sari TM Kivinen aka STMK*

ILKA THEURICH

Doctor: Mrs Vogler is an actress, as you know, and was performing in Electra. In the middle of the play she fell silent and looked around as if in surprise. She remained quiet for a minute. Afterwards she excused herself by saying she was overcome by laughter. The next day the theatre rang and asked if she'd forgotten her rehearsal. When the housekeeper went in she was still in bed. She was awake but didn't answer questions and didn't move. She's been like this for three months and been given every conceivable test. The result is clear. She's perfectly healthy, both mentally and physically. It's not even a question of some kind of hysterical reaction. Any questions, Sister Alma? No? Then you can go in to Mrs Vogler. (Bergman 1966)

The Finn-Australian performance artist Sari TM Kivinen is an interesting and strange character, who brings me to intriguing contradictions while I am thinking about her work. On one hand I am fascinated and curious about her artistic biotope and on the other hand I am pretty sceptical when I take a closer look. Sari TM Kivinen calls herself also STMK, Satuma Kivi or Satu Maa. But you can never know how she will call herself at the moment when this text will be published. Kivinen graduated 2004 from the University

of Western Sydney with a Bachelor of Fine Arts and in 2007 with a Graduate Diploma in Expressive Therapies. Already during this time she investigated her own series of roles. Since 2004 she's been working on a performance project titled *The Role System*, which is based on the notion that each person is constructed out of a variety of roles. They appear in various life situations.

In the following paper I want to outline what happens when a person enters the presence of others, but is still one person at the same time? Four sisters meet each other in the body of just one artist. Who is doing what? Are there differences in actions in different places? How does social interaction function inside *The Role System* of Kivinen? And why is a role doing what she does? Do they know what they are doing? In this essay I will combine thoughts of *The Presentation of Everyday Life* by Erving Goffman with *The Role System* and my own questions on roles and presentation – representation and presence. While Goffman observes everyday life through the lens of the dramaturgy of theatre performance, I do it also vice versa.

THE STARTING POINT

As her first step Kivinen developed *The Role System* out of three sisters named *Jessee-Liina* (the eldest), *Caroliina* (the second coming) and *Starella* (the youngest). According to the artist the story follows a familiar narrative, which I think might not be obvious for the observer in any moment. You cannot meet the sisters together in the same moment in a live performance – of course not. Or, are they always present as a group in every embodiment on stage? I think that Kivinen wants to indicate with this statement, that each sister in the family is assigned a specific role. For *The Role System* in particular it means that *Jessee-Liina* represents everybody's darling, *Caroliina* believes that she is the cheaper edition of her big

sister, and *Starella* is the slut of the family. With a deeper view on the three sisters, one becomes aware that there are more layers to find behind these obvious stereotypes. For the artist for example "*Jessee-Liina* represents a loveable persona (...) she has spent most of her life re-enacting the attitude and the gestures that she gained the sense of social acceptance from in the first place."²⁷

Sister Alma: Good day, Mrs Vogler. My name is Sister Alma. (They both have given hands in greeting) I've been employed to look after you for a while. Perhaps I should tell you about myself. I am 25, engaged... I got my nursing certification two years ago. My parents have a farm. My mother was also a nurse before she married. I'll fetch the dinner tray. (Bergman 1966)

Also the other two sisters have more to offer than they reveal at first glance to the public. Kivinen describes that "*Caroliina* has always viewed herself as the 'lesser' version of *Jessee-Liina*, the second coming, an inferior model. This fixation has remained with *Caroliina* throughout her life and informs her operational framework for (not) living."²⁸ I never encountered *Caroliina* live in a performance yet. All I know about her is through the artist or the internet. She seems invisible – a literary figure only? I think I saw a photo once a long time ago.

Starella often appears out of control and a little bit aside of the real world. She is often drunk and does not care about the rest. Kivinen describes *Starella* as someone who "often comes across like a wild animal caged and confused, however she is completely aware and in control of this primal impression and finds strength in her out of control behaviour and uses this image to protect her true self from the harsh opinions of her older sisters."²⁹

A SHIFT OF PERSPECTIVE

In *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* Goffman applies the dramaturgy of a theatrical performance to everyday face-to-face interactions. He believed that an individual will attempt to control or guide the impression that others might have of him, by changing or fixing his or her setting, appearance and manner. At the same time, the person that the individual is interacting with is trying to form and obtain information about the individual. While I observed Kivinen for the last one and a half years, during her studies of Live Art and Performance Studies at the Theatre Academy in Helsinki, at first I thought that the role of Starella might be more important than the other two sisters. But after a while I realized that this is not true. They are all important in life and in the artistic work of the artist. Between these sisters jealousy is present. The sisters compare each other and look enviously at the respective roles of the other. Goffman wrote that all participants in social interactions are engaged in certain practices to avoid being embarrassed or embarrassing others. He saw a connection between the kinds of acts that people put on in their daily life and in theatrical performances.

I am not willing and I am not able to analyse the artist in this paper through a psychological lens, but I am wondering if the artist tries to protect herself with the different roles. Or does the artist gain more power and strength through the roles? As an audience member I always have the feeling that I am out of the frame, and that it is not at all important for the roles, if someone looks at them. I am pretty sure that they would exist even without an invited audience.

According to Goffman a front region also called front stage, as in a theatrical performance, always exists in social interaction. Here the 'actor' becomes equal with a single person in daily life. For Goffman we are always on stage in front of an audience. The

audience for Goffman are e.g. colleagues at work, friends, family members, strangers and others. For Goffman the front stage is the place, where positive aspects of the idea of self and desired impressions are highlighted. But at the same time there is always also a back region or back stage, which can be considered as a hidden or private place, where the individuals can be themselves and get rid of their roles or identities in society. The question that now presents itself to me is, who is playing the role on the front stage and who is occupying the back stage in the case of Kivinen? If *The Role System* is in the front region, can we ever encounter the artist Sari TM Kivinen on this stage, too?

Doctor: Sister Alma. What's your first impression? Sister Alma: I don't know what to say, Doctor. First her face looks soft, almost childish. Then you see her eyes... She's got such a severe look, I think. – I don't know, I should... – Doctor: What were you thinking? Sister Alma: I thought I should refuse the job. (...) she should have a nurse who's older and more experienced. – Experienced in life. I may not cope. (...) Mentally. If Mrs Vogler's silence and immobility is the result of a decision... – ...it must be as she's seen as healthy. (...) It's a decision that shows great mental strength. Perhaps I'm not up to it. (Bergman 1966)

I encountered the sisters for my first time, during the *Nights of Live Art* at the Theatre Academy Helsinki in 2009. For these three nights Kivinen developed *Role Investigations* 1–3. And while she slipped in and out of different roles, during these three nights, she was wondering "what is role anyway?" "Who is the authentic me?" and "is there even an authentic me?"³⁰ During the first *Night of Live Art* Kivinen appeared as *Jessee-Liina* and interacted with the audience.

At the beginning she served drinks at the bar and walked around in the space. When she went on stage she fastened two hooks in the rear wall of the black box. She placed pink coloured paper houses on the floor and placed her dress and her blond wig on the hooks. She tried to deconstruct her role system. Under the pink dress a camouflage neuter entered the stage. He/she sipped whiskey from his/her own hand, passed between the pink cardboard houses and fixed the model houses with ribbons on his/her body. Later on, the neutral character turned around its own axis, until he/she was falling to the ground. At the end Kivinen returned to the role of *Jessee-Liina* and left the stage. I never met this neutral character again.



Sari TM Kivinen in Role investigation 1, Nights of Live Art, Theatre Academy 2009, Photo: Davide Pavone.

Instead, only a short time later, sister number four called *Sari* entered *The Role System*. *Sari* as Sari TM Kivinen herself? *Sari* as the authentic me? Kivinen describes the last sister as someone who “meanwhile mediates conflicts between her sisters. She studied counselling some years ago and views herself as a good role model to guide her sisters in the right direction.”³¹ I got the impression that the role *Sari* started to protect *The Role System*, while the artist at the same time was still struggling with the system and tried to deconstruct it. As an artist and as sister number four, she documents the sisters' lives through text, video and photographs. The artist herself is the family narrator. *Sari* herself “exists somewhere within the slippery gaps between the age hierarchy of her three sisters”.³²

Victor Turner mentioned in his book *The Anthropology of Performance* that an actor has two ways to get to know himself better. One “may come to know himself better through acting or enactment” and another way one might get to know himself better is “through observing and/or participating in performances generated and presented by another set of human beings.”³³ While Kivinen comes to know herself better through enactment, she creates at the same moment her own set of human beings where she can mirror herself; where she can observe the others while she is participating at the same time. She did not need an audience, in the sense of Coffman, for observing another set of human beings. And the other sisters know *Sari*; they know that they are observed in any situations of their life. *Starella* writes about her sister number four: “*Sari* keeps revealing herself, in effect revealing me. I'd prefer to hide, to remain unseen. To my surprise *Sari* is starting to resemble my own identity, she seems to think that she can become me...”³⁴

Sister Alma: Shall I turn on the radio? There's a play, I think.
Voice from the radio: Forgive me, my darling, Oh, you must forgive me, I don't desire anything other than your forgiveness
Sister Alma: What are you laughing at, Mrs Vogler? Is it the actress that's funny?
Voice from the radio: What do you know about compassion? What do you know? What do you know about compassion?
(Mrs Vogler turns the radio off)
Sister Alma: I don't understand things like that, Mrs Vogler. I'm interested in film and theatre, but I go so seldom. I have enormous admiration for artists. I think art has an enormous importance in life. Especially for people who have problems of some kind. (Bergman 1966)

In the first chapter of *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, which is titled “performances”, Goffman discusses the presence of the self before the observer enters and influences the situation. In terms of *The Role System*, I have the impression that there is a constant movement of observation from one role to another, and even from the artist Kivinen onto *The Role System* and vice versa.

Goffman defines different possible states and developments of a person which can appear while an enduring presence. He explains two extremes which are dealing with the “belief in the part one is playing” (Goffman, 1959, 17–21). On one hand there is a performer who really believes in his “doing” and “showing doing” (Schechner 2007, 28) and on the other hand there is a performer who doesn’t believe at all in his actions. Goffman calls the first performer a “sincere one” and the second performer a “cynical one”. Between these two extremes Goffman sees a reciprocating motion, but he reminds the reader not to forget the impact and the power of the state of self-illusion. I am not sure if Kivinen wants to uncover the blind spots inside herself or inside *The Role*

System. Or if she really thinks, that this form of creativity can help her “to perceive beyond the received ideas and values prevalent in society”³⁵ I would question whether one can really perceive the society as long as one is inside his or her own role system? I got the impression that *The Role System* is a closed-circle system.

Sister Alma (alone in bed): It's strange. You go around almost any old how. Do almost any old thing. I'll marry Karl-Henrik and we'll have a few children that I'll raise. All that is decided. It's inside of me. It's nothing to ponder over. It's a huge feeling of security. Then I have a job that I like and am happy with. That's good too. But in another way. But it's good... good. I wonder what's really wrong with her? Elisabet Vogler... (Bergman 1966)

With “dramatic realization” Goffman (1959, 30–34) emphasizes that human actions are not done only for their own intrinsic sake in the presence of others, rather they are fundamentally social in nature. In the presence of others, people will always dramatize what they are doing. They will be emphasizing those aspects of what they are doing which they want to stress most. Under the subheading “idealization” (Goffman, 1959, 34–50) he asserts that close to every performer tries to idealize his act in front of the audience to emphasize his thoughts. But even for him there is also the part of “negative idealization”, which arises when a performer tries to give expression to ideal standards and when a performer starts using extreme stereotypes. Kivinen uses stereotypes, but is far away from Goffman’s notion of “negative idealization”. I think that she tries to idealize her role system and also tries to create a myth around *The Role System*, because she has a profitable income thereof. The income is not based on money yet, but on recognition

from the audience. Never stop a running system – why should she? Even small faults in the actions of her roles, become idealized in her performances – what I really like to look at. She incorporates them in an idealized style inside her performances. But when she presents artefacts to others, she hides information and she will aspire to show them only in the final state of the product, even if this product will be already the starting point for a new work. I think that Kivinen weighs very carefully what she tells, to whom she tells, what she presents and how she presents – a successful artistic performance at all levels. I think that the different roles which are embedded inside the artist are presenting an idealized performance which sometimes continues afterwards in the social life of the artist. And therefore the artist has to hide elements of her work, her thoughts and her presentations even in her theoretical approach. Art and life seem to be totally interwoven with each other. Kivinen knows her roles by heart and it seems that she doesn't even need to rehearse them before she embodies them.

I will try to get a little bit closer to understand the "maintenance of expressive control" (Goffman, 1959, 51–58) in *The Role System*. The performer, as Goffman presupposes, can trust the spectators to interpret even small hints as a distinguished indication of an act. But the audience is for him a sceptical one, which interprets small laps of signs as a confirmation that the complete performance is a fake. He brings up, that this can happen to a really positive, open and unprejudiced public, too. And because of these circumstances, Goffman recapitulates, a performer always tries to maintain expressive control. We must not forget that he speaks here of everyday life situations. He asks in the sub-chapter "misrepresentation": "What are the ways in which a given impression can be discredited?" (Goffman 1959, 58–66) He points out that

it is natural for most of us as a recipient, to feel if the impression the performer seeks to give may be authentic or fake. In Kivinen's embodiments of the different roles, I tried to figure out which parts of the roles are fakes and which parts of the roles are real, or embedded in the reality of the artist. But because of the artistic abstraction, the transformation into the art context and the cut-up-method which Kivinen uses for the development of her roles, you never know what is fantasy and what is reality. The audience will witness the moment, when the boundaries start to blur. Goffman is furthermore asking what disturbs a performance. For him such a disturbed moment can arise when an idealized performance is given. When Goffman asks whether a fostered impression is true or false he says that we have to think about whether or not the performer is authorized to give the performance. In the case of Kivinen there is no doubt that she is authorized as an artist to perform her own role system in the art context. *The Role System* gets the security certificate through the role of the artist. But still there is one open question for me: Which role and importance has the audience during this performance? Goffman (1959, 67–70) tries to explain with "mystification" the regulations and limitations of the contact between audience and performer. These limitations are created to keep the social distance. The performer will use these limitations for the development of his own choice of impression and he will use them to protect the audience from a too close consideration, which would destroy the show. I can feel the distance between me as an audience member and the roles embodied by Kivinen. Although Kivinen's roles communicate a lot with the audience, they do it always in a certain manner.

The last subtitle in Goffman's (1959, 70–76) chapter one is called "reality and contrivance". Here he points out that we nor-

mally look at a life performance as something that exists as an undesignated commodity, created by the subconscious. He believes that a lot of humans really think that their situational construction is identical with the present reality. Goffman analyses the immediate correlation between sincerity and embodiment. He says that for a persuasive presentation it is not even necessary that the performer believes in his own sincerity. With different examples he tries to explain a kind of double role which some performers can maintain for years. To understand the reality, he again uses a theatrical phenomenon and analyses the theatre-actor. Even for not so well educated actors it is possible to give life to a manuscript, because life itself is dramatized. Goffman thinks that if we are used to a role, which we learned once in a candid and earnest way, then it is easy to stage this later on again. What does it mean for an artist who is constructing her own role system? I am pretty sure that, up to a certain degree, an artistic role system is always considered and reflected. But when the roles are part of the artist's personality, could the innocent moments and the unconscious developments within the role system become rife? For the theoretical consideration, one would have to look very carefully to what extent conscious shaping-moments exist inside the art work.

I feel dizzy. The artist on my left shoulder is fighting with the academic researcher on my right shoulder. I am very sure that the artists among the readers of this text start to jump straight to the ceiling and that suicidal thoughts arise in them. As I said before, I really like the artistic work of Sari TM Kivinen. But what I try to do with this text is, to analyse the artistic work within an academic theoretical approach to gain knowledge, and I try to view the work through a new perspective. Is it an illusion to believe that one could create a shift within a half-fictional and semi-real role system?

In his final chapter "The arts of impression management" Goffman (1959, 208–237) points out the different techniques of conscious or unconscious control of the impression that a person or even an ensemble make on others. Goffman hereby understands that in social interactions people first have to analyse information about their interaction partners. The picture that is developed by the performer of this other man has a lot to do with his own expectations. The focus of impression-management is the strategic and tactical use of self-presentation. One, who e.g. is throwing away 'bad pictures' of themselves and retains good photos, acts on the basic principle of impression management. We select specific information, which we expect to have a positive effect and stage them. We anticipate potential reactions and expectations of the audience. Our image of the other thus depends greatly on our own expectations. I think that a deeper analysis of this relationship could create a shift in this analysis of *The Role System* and should be developed in another text.

MY PROVISIONAL CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE ROLE SYSTEM

In the beginning I asked, what happens when a person enters the presence of others, but is still one person at the same time? Four sisters meet each other in the body of just one artist. Who is doing what? Are there differences in actions in different places? How does social interaction function inside *The Role System* of Kivinen? And why is a role doing what she does? Do they know what they are doing?

They know very well, what the others are thinking and doing. I think that the actions and details of the embodied roles of Kivinen, up to a certain degree, have been consciously constructed by the artist. Manipulations within the roles are not possible. Each of these four roles has the awareness of the action and manipulation techniques of the others. But the dependency relationships among the four sisters

seem quite large. Only through this dependency relationship manipulations happen. And I am quite sure that even Kivinen cannot be aware of the dependency relationship. The scepticism which I had in the beginning of this text still exists. But certainly I realized that the scepticism is more on the side of the artist-audience-relationship, rather than inside *The Role System*. Goffman based his model on the idea, that "life itself is a dramatically enacted thing" (Schechner 2007, 210) and sees our everyday life performance as actions which we train and rehearse again and again. In his opinion we are introduced early on to roles and we learn different patterns, which we can apply in later life even to untrained situations. For *The Role System* I realized that Kivinen adheres firmly to the formal rules of society and plays along. She focuses in her interactions on the aspects of social life and how people interact. Hereby she develops stereotypes and stereotypical behaviour, which I would classify under the term idealization – in the spirit of Goffman. Richard Sennett (2008, 79) criticizes Goffman, that the society as presented in his books, is based on individuals, which in contact with each other, are always interested in a situation of equilibrium. And it seems to me that in *The Role System* it is unfortunately also the case. Barbara Meyerhof figured out in her article "The transformation of consciousness in ritual performances: some thoughts and questions", that "Goffman stresses the highly non-transformative nature of many rituals, their very perfunctory, conventionalized character that allows the individual to disappear underneath them" (Schechner, Appel 1990, 249). If I look at *The Role System* we might see rituals again and again, but always slightly different, and there are still new roles coming up – evolution did not stop yet. I am looking forward to seeing new segments of *The Role System* by Sari TM Kivinen.

NOTES

- 1 Kivinen, Sari TM http://www.sari.net.au/text_4.html (31.01.2011)
- 2 Kivinen, Sari TM http://www.sari.net.au/text_4.html (31.01.2011)
- 3 Kivinen, Sari TM according to Artswipe <http://www.artswipe.blogspot.com/2006/09/punch-drunk.html> (31.01.2011)
- 4 Kivinen, Sari <http://saritmkivinen.blogspot.com/> (31.01.2011)
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- 6 Kivinen, Sari TM http://www.sari.net.au/text_4.html (31.01.2011)
- 7 Turner, Victor *The Anthropology of Performance*, 1986 (p. 81)
- 8 Kivinen, Sari TM http://www.sari.net.au/text_4.html (31.01.2011)
- 9 Kivinen, Sari http://www.artfiles.com.au/focus/focus_detail.php?focusid=112 (Stand 23.03.2011)

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The Moment of Encounter.
A Critical Review on the performance
practice of Ilka Theurich
CHRISTINA GEORGIU

It is not difficult to recognize her presence in the space as soon as she enters the door. The sound of her shoes indicates a confident, steady walking pace and her loud voice clearly resonates inside the space. The appearance of the artist Ilka Theurich in the space draws one's attention to react either with the voice or the gaze towards her. Ilka Theurich is a German performance artist. She studied sound art in Germany and Japan followed by a Master's Degree in 'Live Art and Performance Studies' at the Theatre Academy of Helsinki, Finland. Her performative practice is enriched with different characteristics of performance art, which is the main field of her artistic practice.

Theurich's performance work can be divided into two categories: her performances in indoor and outdoor spaces. The performances in interior spaces, which are frequently inspired by the memory of her dreams are presented through complex and surrealistic settings and energetic actions of short duration and sometimes followed by the use of her voice. In addition Theurich uses different kinds of materials at the same time: from food and consumable materials to objects that seem to have been taken from household settings. Theurich's recent performances have

been set in outdoor spaces and they concern her recent research plan based on the theme of "encounter". These performances are joined with the main theme of encounter and are realized as long durational performances that last up to twelve hours. These performances are also visually minimalistic and conceptual, where Theurich manages to complete much longer performative pieces with fewer objects and less actions.

Theurich articulates and proposes different thoughts through the context, the setting, the action and the mode of working during the performances she realizes. Her performances come from personal inner pictures that function as a need to be shaped visually and performatively. Through her performances she endeavours to offer these pictures as "open pictures" so that the spectator can read the work in different ways through his/her own subjectivity. In her recent work, Theurich opts to diminish the communication gaps between the artist and the spectator while proposing open spaces for encounter.

ENCOUNTERS IN PUBLIC SPACES

Focusing on her performance practice based on her interest in space, I will discuss Theurich's project in Pori in Spring, 2010. Theurich realized site-specific actions in the city of Pori especially in public spaces where possibilities of encounter could take place more easily. These long durational actions were mainly shaped through a non-verbal "poetic encounter" with passengers, people in the street and mainly strangers. She also created different poetic pictures in the city centre, with her body characterized by both stillness and small minimal actions.

Theurich considers duration as an imperative element in this work in order to develop the communication process between

herself and the residents of Pori, and also to achieve a difference to their everyday life, against the ordinary. Theurich's performances are researching ways to create a new dimension concerning encounter and communication while blurring art and daily city life. The actions, which are planned for the performances, aim to change the energy in the spaces through a deeper encounter with strangers that we normally have in our daily life.

In order to give an example of Theurich's durational pieces on encounter I will refer further to her project "I'm pleased to meet you in the mountain", the two week durational performance series realized in the city of Pori. This performance project consisted of ten different twelve-hour durational solo performances in public spaces within the city of Pori. The photo documentation of these pieces was presented in a specific manner together with objects, materials and traces from the performances in an exhibition in the Generator Gallery, Pori in May 2010.

In Theurich's site-specific work, there is an important connection between the chosen space and the behaviour of the body during the action, as well as the type of clothes and the colours she wears. All these elements merge together to create the encounter between the artist and other people. In her durational interventions in Pori, Theurich's endeavour becomes a small provocation and suggests a different experience to the passers-by in order to cause a change in their behaviour based on a particular social practice. The situations she creates inside the specific environments she chooses in the city of Pori, which can be a public square or a street, negotiate different cultural information presented through the action of the body, the clothes she wears and the visual appearance of the whole action.

Theurich's appearance during this project consisted of different clothes each day but all in the same line and style and also the

same shades of blue, pink and brown. During her first intervention in Pori, Theurich was wearing a blue coat with a brown fake fur and light pink scarf around her neck, brown shoes and a brown purse as she was walking on a pedestrian route and other spaces. By moving in the streets and other public spaces for several hours with the same colours in her clothes, her aim was that the people would remember her through her visual appearance, and she searches for moments of encounter with them.

Reading through Theurich's blog on "deep encounter" (<http://deepencounter.blogspot.com/>) and more specifically about the research and questions of this project, I identify the main focus of these performance series as the moments where the performance artist comes to an encounter with the people in the public spaces. In her writing reflections of the 3rd intervention, Theurich decides – apart from appearing in the public spaces – to make questions to people in the city of Pori as a broader approach to the notion of encounter. While questioning the possible modes she can apply in order to activate the inhabitants of the city and their alertness without appearing strange in the perception of the witnesses, Theurich plans on the 3rd day of the project to ask pedestrians and other people if they remember the first street they lived on in Pori and also what is the most beautiful place and the worst place in Pori in their opinion. With these questions Theurich might appear as a traveller or a tourist in one's perception. On the other hand the question regarding which is the worst place in Pori aims for a personal charge that might create wonder in people towards Theurich's intention. This is a challenging approach that appears in the notion of encounter and it allows Theurich to question possible ways to diminish the communication gaps and the cultural communication gaps as she appears as a foreigner in another territory.

THE NOTION OF "DEEP ENCOUNTER"

Theurich refers to her long durational interventions in public spaces as endeavours for "deep encounter", shaped and given to the viewer through a poetic sense. A significant factor that functions as a motivation in Theurich's work and is essential for a "deep encounter" is to change the energy in the spaces she shares with other people. While investigating the notion of "deep encounter" in Theurich's work, the aspect of duration seems essential as it can build the climax of a situation and allow the change of a situation during a longer time. The idea and realization of encounter through site-specific interventions, which I discussed earlier, becomes a bigger concern as the notion of "deep encounter" appears in spaces where people are unaware of their possible encounter with the artist. Earlier I mentioned the significance of Theurich's presence in the space as an element of change (in the environment she becomes part of) while now questioning her appearance and actions according to the notion of "deeper encounter". I assume that one's perceived presence by others can be the starting point of a possible encounter but what is necessary for a "deep encounter" to occur?

Theurich uses minimalistic approaches to art and performance in her recent research project while blurring them with actions of daily life. From my experience as an observer of Theurich's performances in the public spaces of Pori and later in Helsinki, I consider the artist's actions as appearances of everyday life but at the same time dubious and suspicious. Theurich avoids the exaggerated use of action and she uses minimal poetic actions instead, which are closer to daily life but loaded with performative elements. The staging of a performance might easily threaten the possibility of encounter and therefore the absence of it can create possibilities for surprise and uncertainty. In addition to

this observation, I believe that as soon as people in public places (where Theurich intervenes with her actions) realize that they are witnessing a performance they would become spectators by putting a distance between themselves and the performer. But if there is an uncertainty of the performative action and its intentions, then the action of thinking, looking, coming closer and wondering immediately opens up the possibility of encounter.

I personally witnessed Theurich on the 7th day of her performance series in Pori. She was standing still in a market square in Pori while holding small objects. From far away she looked like a woman who was selling goods. My observation from a distance led to an uncertainty of what she was holding. While moving closer, I realized that Theurich was holding undefined objects making also her intention seem undefined. The suspicious elements of Theurich's appearance are so minimal that it is possible that a passer-by who moves in the market square can encounter the artist first and then realize the uncertainty of her intention. There is no possibility to recognize the objects she is holding from a distance and this creates an uncertainty to the unaware passer-by so he/she can move closer, but what more is needed to create a "deep encounter"? What is the moment that can be recognized as a moment of "deep encounter" between the artist and the passer by?

The performative action of Theurich enables the moment of encounter to already take place in peoples' endeavour to come closer and then wonder what they have just encountered. Moreover, the uncertainty of the purpose of these actions enables moments of encounter while questioning the intention of the performer. The decision to work on the line between everyday life and art seems fundamental according to the artist's decision not to look strange to the unaware spectator but to somehow trigger his/her attention

towards her in order to examine her action inside the space they both share at the same time.

I believe that one's presence and the way it is used through actions can lead to smaller and bigger encounters between oneself and others. There is a certain element, a specific quality projected from one's being and presence in space. As I mentioned earlier, Theurich's presence in a space becomes noticed through the nature of her being that informs different elements of her personality not only in her daily life but also each time she performs. In her performances this presence appears in relation to the actions she forms in order to create encounters or to bridge communication gaps with the people she encounters. Moreover in Theurich's interventions there is a constant intention to create "deep encounters", encounters that can actually make a change in one's perception instead of remaining on surface.

Apart from the perceived presence of the artist, other elements are necessary to create a "deep encounter". The long duration and the location shape the frame of the action and the possibility for the depth of an encounter to grow. On the other hand, the decision by Theurich on the 3rd day to start a conversation with the people in the city is another way to create a deeper encounter. The poetic non-verbal encounter and the poetic verbal encounter, both produce the presence of the performer, in order to make a change in the space through the moment of sharing and exchanging energy with others. The "deep encounter" can be developed in certain ways that the artist can shape and realize but it seems difficult to achieve as people in public spaces can easily abandon the situation and therefore abandon the artist. There has to be something that can firstly draw people's attention while at the same time trigger their curiosity. Furthermore, this situation is necessary

to be framed in a specific manner according to the environment that both the artist and observer are placed in. The space/place is the first element that one perceives while entering and it therefore shapes our understanding of the cause of the action, as when Theurich appeared to be holding "goods" in the market square. I believe that verbal encounter can also be necessary in the development of a deeper encounter as it enables possibilities for deeper encounter while keeping the audience at the same spot for a longer time. I believe that the moment where the passer-by and the artist encounter each other through a situation, and the moment where the passer-by perceives this encounter as something new, slightly different from his/her reality perception, then in this specific moment the unaware audience becomes part of the artwork.

CONCLUSION

For Theurich the moment of direct communication is very important as it lives in the present moment of a shared experience. In such a situation, this moment that might last only for some seconds cannot be documented or easily described afterwards. In Theurich's work there is a suggestion of an ephemeral situation, which neither can be suggested nor described for those who were not there in the moment of experience. It can only be experienced and reflected by the artist and the audience who share that very moment of encounter, where the line between reality and virtuality and the blurring moments between life and art occur only for a short time.

The intention to create a "deep encounter" appears as a constant longing that motivates the artist's performative practice. Between encounter and deep encounter there are several layers of achievement, which Theurich reaches in each intervention she realizes. The phenomenon of encounter is determined according to

the connection between the performer and the passer-by, they are like two elements put together in order to create a reaction. This action-reaction occurrence shapes the variability and changeability of the work and therefore the notion of "deep encounter".

To conclude, in Theurich's performative work I observe a continuous alertness in order to capture any possibilities for encounters. Her artistic inspiration indicates the endless consideration of her inner images and thoughts, distinguished with the aspect of longing. The project on "deep encounter" is offered by Theurich in public spaces as a possibility to diminish the gaps of communication between the passer-by and the performer. Theurich's recent performances are mobile and her position in the performative situations she forms creates shifts between the performer and the passers-by, as she becomes also the observer and the passer-by who encounters the others. This characteristic in her work is informed by the idea of moving and changing, giving in this way the possibility to move around and come back in order to find and grasp possible occurrences of "deep encounter".

PART III

—

OTHER ESSAYS

The Ludicrous in Satirical Art: Sophisticated Social Commentary or Bizarre Entertainment?

LISA ERDMAN

This essay explores the power of the ludicrous in satirical art, and how it may serve to enhance the critique of social or political norms. This claim challenges the notion that the ludicrous – or any form of satirical humour in art, for that matter – results in the work losing its artistic value, transforming itself to a version of pure entertainment. The argument will be presented within the context of the Incongruity Theory of Humour as outlined by German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer. First off, we will investigate general elements of satire. Then, through the artworks of the Yes Men and Justine Cooper, we will look at how the element of the ludicrous may enhance the message behind satirical art.

Through wit and mockery, *satirical art* strives to make fun of the faults and weaknesses of others. Along this vein, Sheri Klein, in her book “Art and Laughter” describes the role of satirist. She proposes that “the visual satirist mimics the knowledge and behaviour of a culture or group to overemphasize and exaggerate aspects of life and its foibles with the hope of provoking laughter or a change of attitude or ways” (Klein 2007, 16).

Historically, satirical humour has often been presented in the form of caricature, in order to reveal social or political corrup-

tion. For example, nineteenth-century satirists Gustave Doré and Honoré Daumier brought comic relief to a mass audience and generated controversy by creating political cartoons that cleverly exposed the shortcomings of the bourgeoisie and members of French royalty (Klein 2007, 16).

In contemporary art, satire extends itself to a variety of art forms, as I will point out later in the discussion.

According to Arthur Schopenhauer's theory of incongruity, we find something humorous when we experience a pronounced contrast between a perception and an idea that are intended to be of the same nature. As Schopenhauer explains, "In every case, laughter results from nothing but the suddenly perceived incongruity between a concept and the real objects that had been thought through it in some relation; and laughter itself is just the expression of this incongruity. It often occurs through two or more real objects being thought through one concept, and the identity of the concept being transferred to the objects." (Schopenhauer 1958, 59). An example of this incongruous perception is illustrated by the contrasting realities that exist within the following joke: "A turtle was mugged and robbed by a gang of snails. When the police asked for a description of the villains, the turtle replied, "I'm sorry, but I just don't know. It all happened so fast" (Cohen 1999, 39).

I should mention here that several other philosophers such as Immanuel Kant and Søren Kierkegaard have formulated their own theories of incongruity in relation to the cause and effect of humour and laughter. In this argument, however, I refer to Arthur Schopenhauer's theory, since in his definition he explicitly includes a discussion of *the ludicrous*. According to the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, ludicrous is defined as: "amusing or

laughable through obvious absurdity, incongruity, exaggeration, or eccentricity.” Here in this dictionary entry, the word “incongruity” is the element that crosses over into Schopenhauer’s definition of the ludicrous. Schopenhauer claims that the ludicrous is something achieved through the creation of paradox and obvious contrasts [incongruities]. To this end, he says, “Now the more correct the subsumption of such actualities under the concept from one standpoint, and the greater and more glaring their incongruity with it from the other, the more powerful is the effect of the ludicrous which springs from this contrast. All laughter therefore is occasioned by a paradoxical, and hence unexpected, subsumption, it matters not whether this is expressed in words or in deeds. This in brief is the correct explanation of the ludicrous” (Schopenhauer 1958, 59).

My view is that the ludicrous can be a beneficial and, often necessary component of incongruity when used in satirically humorous art. I believe this to be true since, by definition, satire is one of the forms of humour that often requires the use of extreme incongruities in order shed light on human foibles. Therefore, with its inherent exaggeration of form, the ludicrous promises to enhance this incongruity. Some influential works of contemporary satirical art illustrate this concept well. Such artworks include: “Havidol” by Justine Cooper, and “The Management Leisure Suit” by The Yes Men. In each of these examples, a level of interaction was achieved with the intended audience through the implementation of ludicrous elements. In addition, dialogue about social or political norms resulted as an outcome of presentation of the artwork.

Justine Cooper’s multimedia work entitled, “Havidol” (2007) satirizes the idea of pursuing self-perfection through the use of pharmaceuticals. Through a collection of video, web, and print ads,

Cooper's ad campaign presents a fictitious prescription drug called "Havidol", that promises to deliver everything one could ever want in life – and more. The drug offers a treatment for "dysphoric social attention consumption deficit anxiety disorder (DSACDAD)", a condition that Cooper concocted herself. (Cooper 2007) The ad campaign is a satirical commentary on the idea that nearly every psychological difficulty we encounter can be 'cured' by popping a pill.

Here, the element of the ludicrous does not appear overtly, but instead reveals itself in a gradual, insidious manner. As we look past the convincingly slick, professional graphics of Cooper's ads and read more of the textual content, we realize that "Havidol" not only offers the absurd notion of perfection in daily life, but in the process, may also prove to eerily eliminate all the psychological nuances of the human experience. According to "Natural News" an online health publication, Cooper's creation of the fictional disease has fooled several real medical web sites into considering DSACDAD as a real condition (Natural News 2007). The "Havidol" website has also been included on some actual patient support sites as a tool for discussing depression and anxiety (Burke 2007).

In the interventionist performance of "The Management Leisure Suit" (2001), two political artists who call themselves The Yes Men attended the Fabrics of the Future conference at Tampere Technical University in Finland. Posing as representatives of the World Trade Organization, the two men gave a presentation about their new innovation called the 'management leisure suit'. This suit was an outfit created specifically for employee surveillance, through the use of a wireless communication unit. Towards the end of the presentation, the two men demonstrated their product, which consisted of a golden Lycra bodysuit with a ridiculously large phallic appendage, on which a monitor was mounted.

In “The Management Leisure Suit” performance, The Yes Men employ ludicrous tactics on a visual and conceptual level, with the intent of expressing their belief that corporations and governmental institutions often act in irresponsible and dehumanizing ways toward the public (TheYesMen.org 2009). Aside from the absurdly designed visual monitor of the leisure suit, the other shocking component to the performance occurs in the sudden shift where Jacques Servin, initially speaking out against slave labour, suddenly changes his tune at the moment in which one of his colleagues (Igor Vamos) tears open his business suit, to reveal the shiny, futurist-looking Management Leisure Suite. Touting the functionality of the leisure suit, Servin then goes on to explain the cost benefits of employee surveillance and inhumane labour practices. While the Yes Men’s performance seemed initially to provoke no extreme reaction from the conference audience members (perhaps some in the audience were fooled), it’s important to keep in mind that this lack of immediate response is sometimes the intended outcome of these particular activists. As with Cooper’s fictitious ads for “Havidol”, the initial absurdity may appear unusual, but not impossible to believe. The truly ludicrous nature of the message is then revealed to the audience layer by layer, through the media – over a period of time.

Schopenhauer explains this phenomenon of the delayed processing of absurd humour, in one of his chapters entitled, “On the Theory of the Ludicrous” as follows: “In them [absurdly humorous acts] the fact is always so conceived that when it is thought merely in the abstract, and therefore comparatively a priori, it appears possible and plausible; but afterwards, if we come down to the perception of the particular case, thus a posteriori the impossibility of the thing, indeed the absurdity of the assumption, is brought into prominence, and excites laughter through the evident incongruity of what is perceived and what is thought” (Schopenhauer 1886, 278).

Some may claim that the use of the ludicrous (or any form of humour) in art poses the risk of dangerously offending its target, or of turning the art into simply a form of grotesque entertainment, thereby distancing the audience from the complexity of the more serious underlying content. American art critic Donald Kuspit, for example, considers much of humorous contemporary art as simple entertainment that is thrilling, sexy, cunning, and fun, but that is also intellectually and spiritually empty. Here, Kuspit defines entertainment as "enjoyment without enlightenment or without changing habits and attitudes" (Klein 2007, 131).

I disagree with Kuspit's assessment of humorous art. While such art, especially that which employs the ludicrous may initially appear to be seeking shock value, it has been demonstrated (as in the previous examples by Justine Cooper and the Yes Men) that this approach to art may serve as a powerful device for complex social and political commentary. Furthermore, I believe that the general use of humour, for the very same reason some claim that it 'cheapens' the cultural value of art, can also serve as a powerful tool to connect with a broader demographic audience, with people who normally think of art as too serious, pious or inaccessible. I will close this discussion with Sheri Klein's words that describe this process of using humour to connect with the public in new ways: "The creation of humour is a redemptive act by contemporary artists to infuse art with spirit that becomes a 'clever, social mirror' and a force against disillusionment. Humour is hope and a generous act by artists that may lead viewers to more emotional responses with art. While much of postmodern art may be theory and concept driven, it is also driven by desires of artists to connect with viewers in more intimate and meaningful ways, and one of the ways is through humour" (Klein 2007, 131).

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Exercises Learning to Fly
— *and other methodological approaches*
to artistic research

PILVI PORKOLA

The project “CAT-concepts, acts and traces” is a series of participatory works focusing on the relationship between performance and text, an act and its documentation and art practice as research method. The main idea is to create scores to perform and document.

I started CAT at Christmas, a few years ago. In my family we didn’t have a tradition to come together for Christmas, we all were a bit traumatised by Christmas traditions and our history as a family. But a few years ago, we decided to spend Christmas together. I was very much looking forward to it thinking that now when we come together, it is time to create new traditions. As I am a performance artist it is no wonder I soon had the idea that we all could perform something. In my dream my mother is reading poems, my sister is dancing, my brother is playing an electric balalaika and I and my sons are doing some performance art. Well, my family was not so keen on the idea of performing something and in the end there were just me and my sons having a show. I wrote a score “Alive Christmas Tree”, my younger son performed it, my older son filmed it and we showed the video at Christmas Eve. It was a kind of success and I realized it was probably too much to ask my family to perform the score, too. So, I just gave them this idea, the score, to think about. But for me this was only the beginning. Since then I have been conceiving different

kinds of scores and putting them into practice in different places. I have been working with Alive Christmas Trees, Alive Christmas Gifts, Alive Birthday Cakes and Exercises Learning to Fly.

In this text I will contemplate artistic research and its methods using terms from feminist philosophy and adopting them to observations of practice-led research. I will consider what situated knowledge means in the context of artistic practice and how it affects both theory and practice. Furthermore, I explore the relationship between practice and theory in my own work and sum up by emphasising the importance of self-reflexivity as one of the methods of artistic research. This text is based on a conference paper I presented at 8th Qualitative Research Conference in Bournemouth in fall 2010.

We are using various terms in the creative arts when combining theory and practice. The most common of these are 'practice-based-research', 'practice-led research' and 'practice as research'. Thinking very roughly, practice-based research is a collective notion that may cover any form of practice-oriented research in arts. The term practice-led research is giving practice the space to lead the study, while practice as research posits practice and research as related and interwoven.

Artistic research as a concept evinces not only a comparatively intimate bond between theory and practice, but also embodies the promise of a distinctive path in a methodological sense that differentiates artistic research from more academic research, like theorist Henk Borgdorff has noted. In Finland artistic research is established to refer to study, literature and practice made by artist. Expressions and methods are various. For me artistic research means a special way to understand art and a special understanding of research and these both influence my practice and vice versa. The focus is on art, the practice of art, discourses of art and on experience.

I am not the right person to deeply define these terms. I have understood that these terms are very much situated in different contexts, countries and institutions. Still, many studies which are undertaken under these terms are working with very much the same kind of questions and problems; how is the researcher related to her study, how to define the research problem, how are practice and theory related and so on.

Finnish philosopher Tuomas Nevanlinna has pointed out that artists do not investigate into her art but with her art. For method Nevanlinna suggests three points or phases 1) questioning 2) practice 3) writing about questioning and practice. "Every single artistic research is exploring not only the theme of the study but also artistic research itself" he writes and refers to the tradition of modern art in which self-reflexivity is crucial. Modern art is not only aspiring to describe reality but also asking "what is seeing" and "what is describing". Furthermore the question "what is art" is fundamental to modernism. So, applying this to artistic research means that artistic research is not only about art, practice and theory around art and with art, but always also asks what research is and what knowledge in art is.

American performance artist Marilyn Arsem writes about research and her artistic work:

I also delay the design while I'm engaged in the initial research. This gives me time to: 1) find a structure related to the content; 2) identify the issues that become most compelling to me; 3) consider how they might be examined in live performance; and 4) pay attention to my own process. I remind myself that I can create a process rather than a product; this allows me to step away from authority delivering knowledge and instead to take a role of facilitator in a conversation between myself and others. (Arsem 2009)

I feel familiarity with Arsem's thoughts, not only how she describes her method but also how she defines her task as an artist in transformation from authority to facilitator. When discussing authority in arts it becomes clear that we do have very different ideas how we understand the role of an artist and what we mean when we are talking about art.

When I was creating my scores I was very bored with the idea of an artist as a subject, an individual, a self-satisfied unquestionable author. Also I was finished with the idea of art which is supposed to be Artwork, in one way or another, a coherent performance piece with a beginning, middle and end. With my scores I tried to open the view, at least for me, to think of a piece as something quite light and funny, just a few words, which can make the action happen. I have created the scores, but how they will be used, performed or documented it's not in my control. I can say the starting point was that Christmas a few years ago, but I cannot define the ending. So far I have talked about the project in some events in Finland and abroad and written a few texts about it trying to encourage people to go on performing the scores. For me the idea of participation is crucial and a kind of idea of a gift; you give something and perhaps it comes back, in one way or another.

Feminist art theorist Griselda Pollock has strongly argued against the false dichotomy that theory is opposed to practice. She states in the preface of her book *Generations and Geographies in Visual Art*:

[T]here are artists who are also theorists, theorists who make art, there is art deeply informed by theory, theory that was generated by art practice, there is art that reveals its aesthetic density and cognitive complexity once after a detour through the terrains of specifically feminist theorizations of sexual difference, semiotics, subjectivity or painting. (Pollock 1996, xii)

Following Pollock's idea Finnish art historian Leena-Maija Rossi has noted that theorizing, politics and art practice are so deeply affiliated with each other that separating them or confronting them seems to be unnecessary and frustrating (Rossi 1999).

Anyway, regardless of how much we talk about the coalescence of practice and theory it is good to remember to avoid romanticising practice. My experience of art practice is that many times after rehearsal I just sit and stare at the wall without realizing what happened. In the shower I am worried if the actors will get allergic reactions to the gold paint we used in a project. Next day I remember only the indecent jokes from last day's rehearsal. That is art practice for me. Very often it is incoherent, scrappy, and full of different kinds of emotions. All this disorder is part of artistic practice so it is part of my artistic research, too. At the same time we need to be aware of not romanticising theory either. We cannot explain everything, we simply cannot. From my point of view experience is very often related to theory via associations. You do something and it reminds you of something else, one thing follows another, not directly, but it comes, with a leap or after a pause.

An important key term here is situated knowledge. According to American theorist Lynette Hunter the term "situated knowledge" has two distinct disciplinary connections. At first, there is a long twentieth century tradition in studies of knowledge that comes from the margins like black feminists or other groups outside accepted forms of social communication. Another connection is the study of learning that takes place in the process of engaged observation and practice. For Hunter situated knowledge systems are not closed, they do not assume sets of rules or fixed outlines of content. Furthermore, Hunter sums up, "unlike scientific knowledge in which the effect of the observer is often a 'problem' and

many experiments are devised in order to minimize it, in situated knowledge the whole point is that the observer is engaged” (Hunter 2009, 151)

Henk Borgdorff notes that different types of academic research are concerned with different kinds of facts. Scientific facts differ from social facts and both differ from historical facts. Artistic facts have their own status. Furthermore Borgdorff states the importance of context, which should be underlined when talking about the process of art research.

Artistic practices do not stand on their own; they are always situated and embedded. No disinterested understanding of art practice is possible or even naive gaze. And conversely, no art practice exists that are saturated with experiences, stories and beliefs. Research in arts will remain naïve unless it acknowledges and confronts this embeddedness and situatedness in history, in culture (society, economy, everyday life) as well as in the discourse on art. (Borgdorff 2006, 18)

In feminist discourse the crucial question has been how knowledge is produced, how it is constructed. All knowledge is produced in social and cultural relations and is based on financial and institutional disciplines although we might think it is “objective”, like Finnish feminist researcher Marianne Liljeström has remarked. Knowledge is a process, a product and a resource and very much a commodity, too. Knowledge is situated in time and space and with regard to subject, and it is also contextualised and materialised, Liljeström summarizes. (Liljeström 2004)

Adrianne Rich has talked about politics of location (1986) Donna Haraway has talked about socially situated knowledge. When

discussing science questions in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective, Haraway has analysed the problems of objectivity; “the view of infinite vision is an illusion, a god-trick” (Haraway 1995, 180). Haraway writes:

...objectivity turns out to be about particular and specific embodiment, and definitely not about false vision promising transcendence of all limits and responsibility. The moral is simple: only partial perspective promises objective vision...Feminist objectivity is about limited location and situated knowledge, not about transcendence and splitting of subject and object. (Haraway 1995, 181)

So, according Haraway knowledge is always situated, it is a partial view based on embodiment. It is not stable but mobile and changeable. Knowledge is always in a process.

Also Australian researchers Brad Haseman and Daniel Mafe, who are focusing on methods of practice-led research, have pointed out the problem of objectivity and research based on “belief that researcher subjectivity stands to infect the objective ‘truth’ and universal applicability of research findings” (Haseman & Mafe, 2009, 212). Even though they see that artists and creative practitioners can find reflective practice, action research, grounded theory and some other well-known qualitative methods useful for artistic research, a special methodology should be developed based on practice-led researchers’ needs.

For the research strategy Haseman and Mafe suggest a few conditions to be considered. First of all practice-led researchers may not have a clear research problem in the beginning, but a research question will come into being during the process. Second, researchers need to find methods and language based on their own

work, on their own practice. Furthermore Haseman and Mafe emphasize the importance of framing the study appropriately and the need to decide possible forms of reposting carefully. (Haseman & Mafe, 2009)

In their book *Artistic Research – theories, methods and practices* theorists Mika Hannula, Juha Suoranta and Tere Vadén have considered the importance of the methodology of artistic research. For them methodological pluralism needs to be the epistemological starting point for artistic research. Also they encourage artists to develop their own research methods. They underline, however, that it is important to be careful and open with these methods so “readers of the research can evaluate the usefulness of the developed and applied methods. Thus the research is also participating in the discussion about the methodology of artistic research and the development of this methodology.” (Hannula et al. 2005)

Another key concept here is self-reflexivity. In ethnography it is often stated that the researcher must recognize her own epistemological commitments and be aware of her own starting points while conducting her study. This kind of positioning and locating is important so we can know from which perspective and in what way knowledge is created. And after this we can define and discuss our theoretical and methodological challenges. (Fingerroos 2003)

Self-reflexivity is a crucial point in artistic research, too. Not only should you show the way you have undertaken your study but you should also be ready to show when you were mistaken. The process of making art is not coherent, neither is the process of working as a researcher.

In science it is advisable to choose your method before you begin your study. Of course it can happen that you are in the middle of something and you realize you need to adjust your method on the

way. In art practice your work is very often based on your intuition, at least for me, and working in a group means it is very much about reacting to what is going on, rather than following a plan. It is hard to define a method of reacting. You have your schedules, sketches, ideas and goals but then something else happens. There are ways of doing things, but in many cases it is complicated to define what was done afterwards.

So, as mentioned before, my series CAT including Exercises Learning to Fly was born as a reaction to demands of daily life. There is a tradition of working with scores, at least since Fluxus artists. Here I decided to continue it and created a simple method for working. The main idea is to write a score, which is related to everyday life, simple and easy to perform for everyone with a little crazy attitude. First you create a concept (score), then you put it into practice (act) and then you document it so you are aware there will be traces of it. This all makes me to think of three things; relations between concepts, language and acts, documentation as an act and the traces we create.

SCORES



ALIVE CHRISTMAS TREE

1. Take some Christmas decorations
2. Take your clothes off
3. Cover yourself with decorations
4. Imagine you are The Most Beautiful Christmas Tree

(For beginners: you can keep
your clothes on, too)



ALIVE CHRISTMAS GIFTS

1. Take empty boxes
2. Take some Christmas wrapping
3. Wrap the boxes with the wrapping
4. Put the box on your head
5. Imagine you are The Best Gift Ever



LEARNING TO FLY #1

1. Stand
2. Spread your arms as much as you can
3. Close your eyes
4. Imagine You Can Fly



Learning to Fly # 2

1. Blow up some balloons
2. Stand on the chair
3. Hold balloons and jump down
4. Imagine

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Felix The Cat on Air:

Introduction to artistic practice

TERO NAUHA

In the beginning of my artistic practice, I had no theoretical knowledge or aspirations. I had neither skill nor even an idea why and how to approach an audience. Performance art was a tool for personal expression. Through practice an interest and in necessity for theoretical arguments became more and more significant. What is this knowledge that practice produces and how can it become a shared knowledge? If there is some singular or obscure knowledge on artistic practice or subjectivization processes acquired, how is this knowledge being utilized in cognitive capitalist value production, as well? What kind of devices and machines performance is able to develop or adjust?

For some 15 years I have had a performance practice of physical or mental practices and experimentations, which has been a singular, tinkered and constructed practice but not a systematic inquiry of knowledge. This knowledge is often acquired through contamination, rather than filiations. Performance practice does not serve as a cure for some individual difficulties, but it is a subjectivization process, and in that, not contained in a singular subjectivity alone. It does not emancipate or transform reality any more than playing tennis or wasting your time in the arcade or pub. It all lies in the intentions or intensity of such events. There might be no change in

the everyday experience of reality, no matter how extreme actions one goes through. An emancipatory desire for change is stated by Dan Graham, when he says: "All artists are alike. They dream of doing something that's more social, more collaborative, and more real than art." (Simpson & Isles, 2009)

Cognitive capitalism exploits the social nature of human beings, but seems to produce a tremendous alienation between people, as well. Artistic practice is embedded in this incongruity, though skills often acquired in specific performance practices, are not transferable to another context, but remain in a certain region. Practice is specific to a frame and difficult to transfer into another frame. Unless the performative nature of these frames is understood as artificial, a productive subjectivization process may not take place, but a regulated and repetitious form remains, instead.

Aside from the context of performance art, a production of subjectivization has a quotidian side, as well. For my research these aspects direct my interest in the minor apprehensions of performance practice. What else can a performance practice produce except an ability to stand straight in front of a crowd? Acceptance of boredom, apathy, repression and melancholy are not futile, but part of a learning process, and there is always a desire for a change, transgression or transcendental. There is an aspiration that the production of a work would make life more meaningful. This transcendental desire is built on the capitalist exploitation, where the secret of the everyday is dissatisfaction: a production of desire for a new sofa, face, lover, phone, philosopher, or change, as well. In order to understand subjectivization as production, artistic practices should be perceived not as based on lack or on imaginary promise of lack being fulfilled.

1. PRACTICE: SUBJECTIVE BOUNDARIES

BIOENERGETIC THERAPY PRACTICE WITH CAROLINE LAW

I went through a few bio-energetic therapy sessions in Chicago from 2002 to 2004 with the bioenergetic therapist Caroline Law (O.S.F.M.A). Through particular techniques that are used in the bioenergetic therapy, sexual or emotional blockages in muscle and bone-structures are affected. It is a learning practice, where emotions that surface are not necessarily pleasant. A tense body has grown into taking a position of normal – and normative – body. Therefore even a slightly aching experience creates a resistance, which is interpreted as negative and unwanted. A whole machinery of life-style guides provides easy and swift paths to a desired subjectivity, they also promise a bigger control of one's life. In contrast to this, a physical psychotherapy is often a long, confusing, tiring and frustrating process, which does not promise more control. It produces some perseverance with difficulties, but never a mastering of them. It promises not a life without depression, but a life with more comprehension of the nature of depression, agony or loneliness.

In my therapy practice, a certain event has remained significant. Through this event a contestation of gendered subjectivization took place. It is appropriate to define this experience as 'becoming-woman', rather than as a manifestation of a clearly gendered subjectivity. Through this practice, an inhibited part of subjectivity, which consisted of incoherent sexual repression from childhood and adolescence, surfaced, but not in a clearly defined or signified form.

The developer of bioenergetic therapy, a student of Wilhelm Reich, Alexander Lowen describes repression of the body:

While the repression of a memory is a psychological process, the suppression of feeling is accomplished by deadening a part of the body or reducing its motility so that feeling is diminished. The repression of the memory is dependent upon and related to the suppression of feeling, for as long as the feeling persists, the memory remains vivid. Suppression entails the development of chronic muscular tension in those areas of the body where the feeling would be experienced. In the case of sexual feeling, this tension is found in and about the abdomen and pelvis. (Lowen, 2003)

Suppression of this kind shields a becoming subjectivity, which in turn produces a definite subject, a clearly bounded ego. For some reason I needed to give a proper name to this becoming, and started to call it 'Brazil'. On one session, as my neck muscles were treated by my therapist, and I drifted away into some half-conscious state, I had an experience of seeing clearly another person, or type of person standing beside me. She had no face, but long hair and a t-shirt on that had the same colours as the Brazilian football team, hence this odd name, 'Brazil'. It was a proper name, following some concrete results, but I am not so going into the origin or the truthfulness of this image, or where did the proper name came from. This event engendered a subjectivization process, of a processual nature of gender, subjectivization of becoming, and not as a biologically or cognitively determined substance.

SINÄ – YOU (2005): ISOLATION PRACTICE WITH KAROLINA KUCIA
A few years later I was dressed up in a performance, which was located outside a gallery Rajatila in Tampere, Finland. I had covered myself in grey, synthetic fabric and wore grey felt slippers. The performance piece consisted of a single pose, which did not clearly

represent a female or a male. I was leaning against a wall in a crouching position, hidden under this fabric. The only visible information from the pose, where I was clothed in this burkha-type of clothing, was one hand touching the ground and my naked feet in the slippers. Any clear sign of biological gender was obscured. I had decided to use a perfume, Giorgio Armani's *Mania*, and hoped that this smell would inflict some bemused effect on people. For me, there was a need to affirm the subjectivization of 'Brazil', but no need to represent it explicitly. This object manifested as an obscured pose of no direct, gendered signals. A pervert has no explicit clarity, *what* he or she is? A perversion, of this kind is not of a sexual kind, but of a subject that has been turned the wrong way around.

Simultaneously with this act Karolina Kucia was doing her performance in Poland, which she described to me only afterwards. She made a *dérive* type of performance, observing the quotidian performances in a park in Poznan. She was seemingly drifting without direction, only with a certain mental precision. In our way of working at the time, when we were living in different parts of Europe, only the exact time of starting the performance was decided. Often one of us would be performing in a public event and the other one making a performance privately or in an everyday environment. There were curious, minor similarities with the choice of materials, concepts, duration or colours, and even some clearly manifested supernatural connections took place, which created a singular intensity to a practice. It seems that the Lacanian Other, which is never manifested in the Real, would have taken a proper name of a person, as if the internal *fascinum*, evil eye would have been replaced by a more generous and sympathetic eyes of a friend.¹ If nothing else, the nature of the subjective boundaries was contested. These aspects of performance, minor manifestations of joint subjectivization processes are elaborated in my research.



Sinä–You, 2005, Photo: Mika Aalto-Setälä

ALLEGORY OF SPRING

In 2008 I travelled to Rome by train and had a very early morning stop in Florence. I was not particularly interested in medieval and renaissance paintings, but decided to visit the Gallery of Uffizi, which was the first tourist attraction opened in the morning. With my friend we wandered through the galleries and arrived in the room where two paintings by Sandro Botticelli were hung. I had never liked *The Birth of Venus* (c. 1486) by Botticelli and my thoughts about *The Allegory of Spring* (1482) had been indifferent.

The painting *Spring* depicts a pastoral scene with six female and two male figures in an orange grove. When I entered the room and noticed Botticelli's *Spring* I felt as if the woman in the centre of the painting looked at me. This obscure feeling was, as if the gaze was deep, not from a painted figure, but of a carnal person. The colours of the paintings seemed fair, joyful and rich, which created a stark contrast to the reproductions I had seen. This significant difference of size or colour between the reproduction and the original painting produced the strange event; or was it the explicit screen that was able to convey an event, as Deleuze writes in *The Fold*:

Chaos does not exist; it is an abstraction because it is inseparable from a screen that makes something – something rather than nothing – emerges from it. Chaos would be a pure Many, a purely disjunctive diversity, while the something is a One, not a given unity, but instead the indefinite article that designates a certain singularity. How can the Many become the One? A great screen has to be placed in between them. Like a formless elastic membrane, an electromagnetic field, or the receptacle of the Timaeus, the screen makes something issue from chaos, and even if this something differs only slightly. [...] According to a cosmological approximation, chaos would be the sum of all possible, that is, all individual essences insofar as each tends to existence on its own account; but the screen only allows compossibles – and only the best combination of compossibles – to be sifted through. (Deleuze, 1992, 86–87)

This type of screen has a significant difference to a screen and gaze elaborated by Lacan. For him, behind a screen, in the Imaginary resides a *fascinum*, an Evil Eye: "it is that which has the effect of arresting movement, and literally killing life. At the mo-

ment the subject stops, suspending his gesture, he is mortified.” (Lacan, 1986, 118)

Instead of being mortified by the gaze of cosmological chaos I felt fascinated and thrilled. I sat down and started to quietly weep, and so did my friend. We were sitting on the bench and people were passing by, made a few glances towards the painting and left. Apparently *Spring* was not able to create a shared experience or spectacle, but maybe in relation to certain circumstances, another kind and specific subjectivization. Was it the painting itself or the screen that touched me? Bracha L. Ettinger writes about *fascinace*:

A matrixial borderlinking is transformational. I call the transformational subjectivizing potentiality of a matrixial link (gaze or voice): fascinace. Fascinace is an aesthetic affect that operates in the prolongation and delaying of the time of encounter-event and allows a working through of matrixial differentiating-in-jointness and copoiesis. (Ettinger, 2006, 60)

She takes the case of Dora, who according to Ettinger was in search of a matrixial compassion of *fascinace*, and not a father figure, as Freud concluded. Similarly, there was something transformational and crossing over the boundaries of subjectivity implicit in the gaze of *Spring*, not unlike what I had felt in the bioenergetic session. It is not a gaze, who would mortify, but produce a joint connection, instead; a gaze would remain as a spectre in subjectivity. Yet, a certain screen is needed in order a figure to appear and unfold from the sum of all possibilities. An event activates a subjectivization device, which becomes part of or adjacent to subjectivity. The gaze of *Spring* was a distillation of some chaotic

substances, a becoming similar to the event of 'Brazil'. These different approaches to gaze and screen, and their machinic nature, are going to be elaborated in my research, as one significant factor of subjectivization processes apart from gestures and voices.

2 PRACTICE OF OBSTRUCTIONS

GIVING A FORM TO LIMINALITY

Obstruction is a way to give a form to an event, which would otherwise be either too loose or invisible. This research will question the role of obstructions in the context of cognitive capitalism. What do obstructions do, for instance the type of textual tools created and practiced by OuLiPo? Obstruction is a tool, but how does a tool define the result or the form of an event? What are the rules of the game, then? How would artists use the same incentives, which are widely used in a contemporary work environment, in a performative or social practice instead of direct disciplinary commands? These are few of the questions, which I hope to open up in my research.

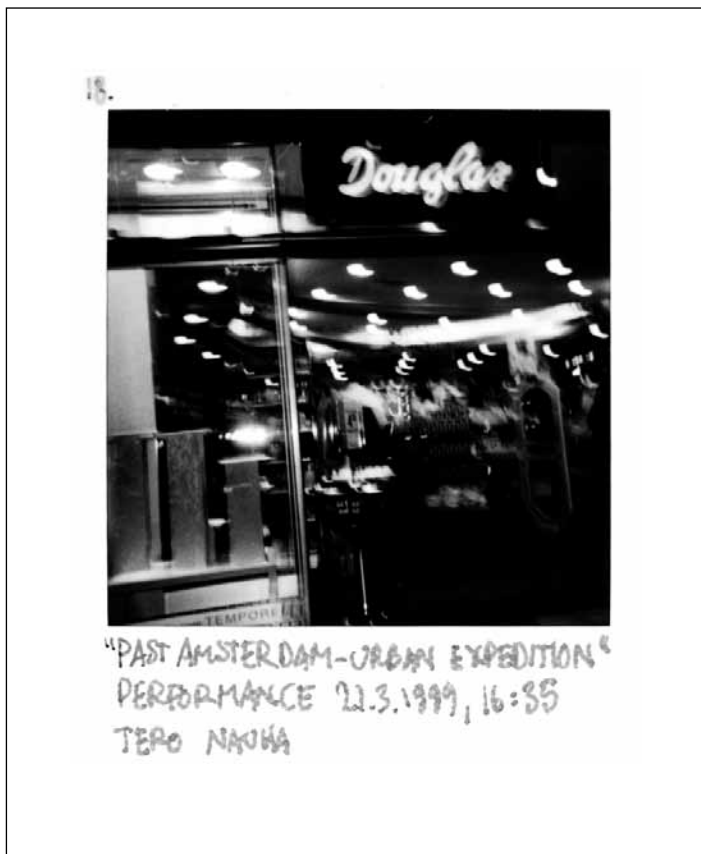
Through a few examples from my practice and from performances in which I was using various methods of obstruction, I would like to argue for both a productive and a restrictive side of obstructions. To obstruct, to build a structure in order to keep something out, is a framing tool. On the negative side it tries to block, and not release. It resembles a *via negativa*, or a system, which aims to 'purify' through obstructive rules. In performance practices it has not outright connection with pain or negative use of power, there is a familiarity with practices that might resemble austere, monastic conditions. In the workshops, or 'bootcamps' arranged by Marina Abramovic, participants are prohibited to speak, and they should steadfastly follow directions and regulations of eating, sleeping

and practice. For performance art students or members of audience her: "'[P]erformance art offers a different way of experiencing life,' Abramovic says. 'My advice is to come in pure, no drugs, TV or heavy meals from the day before!'" (Artnet News, March 30, 2009) In her case a link with a monastic practice or a religious retreat is apparent. For Arnold van Gennep and Victor Turner, such liminal rites of passage are "in-between situations and conditions that are characterized by the dislocation of established structures, the reversal of hierarchies, and uncertainty regarding the continuity of tradition and future outcomes." (Horvath, Thomassen and Wydra, 2009) In order to create a positive *communitas*, obstructive practices are to be followed. Yet, in the context of cognitive capitalism, where it seems that we are in constant transition from one liminal stage to another, what is the role of these obstructive 'militant-monastic' practices?

In a different type of practice by Lygia Clark, there were certain rules that a group would have to follow, but the outcome was not predetermined, as it would be in the rites of passage. A direction for a transforming ritual or rite is that a person is supposed to hatch out as a more defined or refined individual under the guidance of *paidagogos*, or several of them. These rites of passage with liminal stages construct a continuity of obstructive tools in the society of discipline, creating transitions from childhood to school, army, marriage, workforce and old age. In the practice of Clark there is a guide – a person showing a direction, instead, but no predefined knowledge of the result or outcome exists. If monastic type of practices were suitable for a society of discipline, what role does the incentive-based, open-ended and instructional practices have in the context of cognitive capitalism, instead?

ESCAPE INTO THE ART WORLD

In 1999 I enclosed myself in a studio in the building of Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten in Amsterdam, where I spent five days. Rijksakademie is an institution, which provides studios for 60 artists for a period of two years. This work took place in the first year of my residency. With me I had one set of clothes, a mattress, a blanket, twenty litres of water, bread, a bucket for waste and a pencil. The room was rather large, about 10 x 5 metres, with ceiling windows and two windows on the wall, which I had covered with paper, in order not to be able to see outside. There were two doors to the corridor, where I could hear people walking by. I was fasting for five days and spent my time doing nothing. Eventually, due to an excess of boredom, I started to draw and write on the walls. I wrote lists of things I could remember: names, places, bands, books, movies and so on. Due to lack of food, this event became rather painful. My original plan was to stay there for seven days but I ended up finishing two days earlier. I realized that my motivation had been quite a 'heroic' one, as I called it that time. On the fifth day, I felt already clear, but weak. I slept less, but also started to have interesting 'visions' or hallucinations, so to speak. This was of course very interesting, but more significant was the decision to let go of the control, the obstruction of seven days. The whole process had a clear connotation to a monastic isolation practice, which is a specific and effective tool for a subjectivization process. A subjectivity guided by discipline and guilt.



Past Amsterdam, 1999, Photo: Tero Nauha

Past Amsterdam was another performance from the same year. I made a 24-hour *dérive* in the city of Amsterdam, which lasted. I wandered around and every hour I took a Polaroid by facing back towards the route I had just taken. After an hour, I would leave this Polaroid at the next spot. Every six hours I made a break and went inside for coffee, lunch or just to get warm. Similar to the extreme one-year performances of Taching Hsieh, which I was aware of at

the time, there was an obstructing, structural element in this performance. Aside from Hsieh's work, I was relating my practice to the psychogeographic practices and walking projects not only by The Situationists, Hamish Fulton or Richard Long, but also the Dutch artist Stanley Brouwn, and his urban walking practices. Brouwn's works are presented only in artist book form. There might be a list of numbers on each page, registering the number of steps he had taken on a walking trip from Amsterdam to Paris. In relation to this, my practice was not known as art to people whom I met on my walk, and only by a conceptual apparatus afterwards.

In a more obscure way, Bas Jan Ader's works made a great impression on me at that time. In his final and tragic piece *In Search Of A Miraculous* (1975), he took on a sail trip from the East Coast of United States to Europe, and disappeared. His deadpan representations of emotions in his other works on video and film, were in my mind when I started my walk: "At 00:00, Monday, 21st of March I began my 24 hour walking trip without a direction in Amsterdam, from my home address, Egelantierstraat 46." (Nauha, 2010) In a similar way to *Miraculous*, my wandering took a different turn, when I got mugged twice, during that trip. First in the early morning hours, passing by the red-light district and a second time in the afternoon, in a quiet street close to the shopping area. I lost only some money, but was exhausted and discouraged – and afraid – to continue another eight hours, so I decided to quit.

There is something tragic and also ridiculous in a practice based on the idea of regulation, which always builds a conflict with ordinary life. Still, there is something fascinating in these prolonged and obsessive paths to insanity or indirect suicidal attempts. Ader's project resembles the career of Rudolf Schwarzkogler, essentially, because a myth is built around their life only to

camouflage obsession for obstructions. There were rumours that Schwarzkogler had died because he (eventually) cut his penis off in a performance, yet, the real story is more tragic-comic. Supposedly, while trying to re-enact Yves Klein's famous *Leap into the Void* he fell out the window and died. (The Essential Viennese Actionism Resource) Should I not have quitted my projects, and followed the consequences of my decisions? Isn't there always some amount of unintentional slapstick comedy in these heroic subjectivities, anticipated to become more explicit, like in the early video work "Deadpan" (1997) by Steve McQueen? In my examples the protagonist seems to fabricate a narrative of a scape-goat, but ends up being a bit more of an ass? "Your only choice will be between a goat's ass and the face of the god, between sorcerers and priests." (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004, 129)

My final example is a performance that I did with Polish performance artist Karolina Kucia in a media-art event 'Postsovkhos4' in Mooste, a small village in the countryside of Estonia in August 2004. This event was part of a series that had started from year 2001 and lasted for eight years. These events were organized by MoKS, a practice based organization on social and ecological experimentations, performance and sound art. At the moment MoKS has 5 artist residencies in this rural area of Estonia. (www.moks.ee) For this event we had created a practice during a ten days workshop, where we met each day in different places around the village and improvised without a script or spoken language. These practices lead eventually to a seven-hour performance around the village, during the final event of the festival. We wandered around in the same manner as we had practiced, with few elements with us, and without a direction. We had two meetings assigned for the audience to witness our performance. There was a significant

difference between a practice where we were not performing for the audience and an assigned meeting. The first meeting with the audience took place in the afternoon in front of a gym, where a few dozen people had gathered to see us. It felt tense, and rather pretentious, and it looked like serious performance art, and was in stark contrast with our intimate walk in the village. In the walk minor actions took place when necessary, and made it resemble a fools' procession. The intensity of this performance was not guided by an observing gaze, but with more obscure desires.

The last planned meeting with the audience took place at sunset in a cross-road, and this context made it almost mystical. There were very few people and due to lack of light it was not possible to see their faces. It was the end of our performance where we had driven ourselves into a concentrated state, which had no trace of the first encounter's sado-masochistic undertones. It was as if several hours of walking without direction or any obstructions and not communicating in spoken language had released some inexpressible joy in us, which was expressed only in some minor expressions.

In contrast to my other examples, this performance had an audience, yet we were not explicitly imposing power on people. We did not end up being the demiurges of the festival, but more like obscure and obsessed clowns. Our obsessive practice was not aggressive, since it was made possible by the collective nature of the event. We had not planned to obstruct our behaviour, but the impromptu nature of the practice created some repetitious elements.

These minor practices and quotidian performances were not meant to be seen, or on the contrary were done in the context of fine art, but were somewhat invisible. Is there an encoded direction for performative or liminal stages in a cognitive capitalist society of control, as if they were somewhat dictated part of the

subjectivization processes? If there is no redemption or transcendental meaning in these practices, then what for do they appear in this context? In *The History of Sexuality: Care of the Self*, Foucault analyses the forms of social rules and self-control, how a pleasure is found through regulations and self-discipline. (Foucault, 1998) If these rules of conduct were governed in the society of discipline by the state or the sovereign, then what form do these obstructions and self-regulations take in a control society?

LOOP VARIATIONS (2008): THE STRUCTURE

In this case combination of obstructions would direct the performance and the place of the audience. It took place in MUU gallery in Helsinki, and lasted for nine days, in the opening hours of the gallery. There was a detailed program for the performer to follow, with different duration for each task and for each day. These tasks or events were 'Talking', which was obstructed by rules such as 'repetition', 'slowing down' or 'onomatopoesia'. 'Playing' included various activities or 'play-machines' such as 'sport', 'cars', 'quiz' or 'performance' itself. 'Kurogo' is an inconspicuous character on stage in kabuki and no-theatre. His skill is to remain unseen, though he is on stage. In this performance I had replaced a traditional kurogo character by a 'roadmanager' dressed in either black or white, but remaining as subtle as possible. For 'Writing' there was a whiteboard on wheels, which was used for writing and erasing. An internet based list *The Best 100 Movie Soundtracks*, which begins with *Somewhere over the Rainbow* by Judy Garland, functioned as material for the 'Singing'-part of the performance which was performed with the help of an effect box and a drum machine. I sang the songs, systematically from the beginning of the list, often not knowing the tune, but improvising with some random rhythm. 'Break' was a necessary part of a work-day. 'Bed-

lam’ or general confusion, was an integral part which often created a possibility to interact with the audience. My attempt was to present the abysmal nature of the world with minor tools. From Wikipedia I gathered material for the ‘*Lecture*’ part, with more than twenty lectures of different lengths. The general theme of the *Loop Variations* was work, factory and machines. Therefore, the topics of the lectures could be ‘Oompa Loompas’, ‘Auschwitz’, ‘Ford’s factory in Detroit’, ‘Cotton industry’, ‘El Lissitzky’ or ‘Soviet closed city for Cosmonauts – Zvezdny Gorodok’, among others. All of the texts were manipulated with textual tools, which have been developed by the French literary group OuLiPo (workshop of potential literature). (Mathews & Brotchie, 1998) For instance, in one of the tools, a lengthy lecture was written by following each hypertext link, that a short Wikipedia-article ‘Construction of Auschwitz’ included, and continued to follow these links, and their links, and links of links of links – not ad infinitum, but to a degree that the listener was certainly perplexed regarding what was the original subjective of the lecture.

LOOP VARIATIONS: PLAYING TOGETHER WITH AUDIENCE

These regulations or framing did not produce an impressive performance, but began to emphasize the uneasy and artificial nature of the relationship between performer and audience. Through framing as a strategy, the performer tries to convince the witness of the genuine nature of the situation; in another strategy the performer emphasizes the artificial side of it. Either way, both strategies must use the tools of framing, selection, obstruction and rules. Witnessing – or even in the more radical term, *withnessing*, as Bracha L. Ettinger contrives a new concept – anticipates something like actuality of a speech-act: ‘I do’ in the marital ceremony, an oath or judge’s verdict in the courtroom. In Ettinger’s terms,

context is no longer juridical or semiotic, but a compassionate relationship – either between analyst and analysand, artwork and artist, or artwork and audience. There is 'matrixial borderlinking', a crossing of the subjective boundaries taking place.

In the performance *Loop Variations*, there were observers both watching a game and observing an event – as witnesses and maybe wit(h)nessing as well. They were observing, watching or listening, but unlike in a theatre, the decision to leave or enter was made very easy; and if they checked their SMS or read their email, was not considered to be bad behaviour. The situation was antagonistic, but not in a clearly defined manner, because it was not clear whom they should oppose or propose a dialogic apparatus with?



Loop Variations, 2008, Photo: MUU gallery

In his book *Perform... or Else* Jon McKenzie writes about a 'lecture machine' and refers to "any system that processes discourses and practices, any assemblage that binds together words and acts, or alternatively, that works to disintegrate their bodies and erode their forms and functions." (McKenzie, 2001, 20–21) A lectern is a device to create a precarious and liminal context, in iterative forms. An obscure relation between the performer's obsessive schedule and the loose framing of the audience's place constructed an obstruction to interact in a dialogic manner. If some dialog was created for a moment, then another signal would interrupt and direct the performer to another task. In a way, this is not different than any performance practice that incorporates interactivity in the action: the performer dictates the space for it in the general context of the performance. It is a simulation of dialogue, and in this way the opposite of dialogic art as argued by Grant Kester, for instance. Obstruction creates artificiality, and as a performer I would improvise, and play to and with the audience, but still, a witness of my actions could leave any minute, even without a signal of boredom. A witness is not a wit(h)ness, in terms of performance. The framing of the audience was unclear or they had too many positions to take, for a performer to master.

SOME QUESTIONS OF A PERFORMANCE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERFORMER AND VISITOR

In a performance, a visitor enters or leaves in the middle of a scene, like a person enters a lecture or leaves in the middle of it. He or she is crossing over the frames disruptively. This seems to be a significant problem for the marketing in cognitive capitalism, as well. "In a world where social media is as influential as paid-for media, brands can't control conversations that are taking place

about them; but they can influence them if they make the right connections and create on-going dialogue.” writes Tim Bourne, CEO of a marketing company Exposure, which focuses on client servicing and strategic thinking between brands and consumers. (Bourne, 2011) A conversation is a strategy to keep the customer interested, to give him or her enough room to participate, and a high level of transparency is appreciated. This constant talking does not mean that it would be just shallow chit-chat, but a way to produce interest and value. Talking is labour.

In this context, I want to consider the subjectivity of a ‘nice guy’ described by Alexander Lowen:

There are many roles that people play and many images that they project. There is, for example, the ‘nice’ man who is always smiling and agreeable. ‘Such a nice man,’ people say. ‘He never gets angry.’ The facade always covers its opposite expression. Inside, such a person is full of rage that he dares not acknowledge or show. Some men put up a tough exterior to hide a very sensitive, childlike quality. Even failure can be a role. Many masochistic characters engage in the game of failure to cover an inner feeling of superiority. An outward show of superiority could bring down on them the jealous wrath of the father and the threat of castration. As long as they act like failures they can retain some sexuality, since they are not a threat to his father. (Lowen, 2003)

Cognitive labour is social and fragmented and in that way requires collaboration with others. In the context of a lecture, something slightly extraordinary or silly may take place, before a lecture. Would not the lecturer use this chance to interact with the audience, and to be able to define a temporary, common frame? Every time the frame

is disrupted for a moment, by someone coming late. A lecture is a tense and nervous situation, which subjectivity is being coached and schooled for mastering: how to perform well in a public, precarious situation. If a lecturer is being ridiculed during her presentation, does she take it personally or as part of a healthy critique? What are the tools used to build subjectivity that can function in this environment, and the mechanisms that build a protective boundary, in order that the disruptive behaviour of peers would not affect?

In *Loop Variations*, when visitors would enter the gallery, I would do minor tricks in order for them to stay – or I would create a *performance* in order to ignore them. Nevertheless, I start to *seduce, provoke or play* with the audience and to frame their place performatively. Visitors would feel confused, because the frame of the work was not clear. “Is this a durational piece or a lecture, is he serious, or is he just cleaning after the main act?” If a lecturer or performer lacks social skills, it makes no difference how many hundreds will arrive, if there is no dialogic advantage of the situation fulfilled. In *Loop* an alarm rings on the stage or some other signal takes place, and the performer has to divert his interest into something different – no matter what he was doing previously.

3 SCHIZOANALYTIC PRACTICE

SCHIZO IN PERFO-EVENT, TAMPERE, FINLAND

What does it mean to not to be prepared? What is this schizoanalytic practice, and what does it do? To follow some fragments or refrains from a personal subjectivization process: I did not prepare myself for the event in any particular way, except by arranging a guitar, amplifier and loop-pedal in order to use them in some way. It was visible that I was nervous and taking good care of the instrument, which was borrowed. There is habit built on the use of

a device, and while picking up this loaded tool, I plugged myself in not only to an amplifier, but to a region or field with another kind of machines of subjectivization. A guitar engendered a different region on stage, than the rest of my act. The guitar is connected with a loop-box, allowing me to overlap the sound by pushing the tool. Loop is a thematic refrain in the metric pop music. The loop box constructed a collage of short, overlapping refrains, where the length of a base loop was approximately 10 seconds.

I WITHOUT A SCRIPT

Watch the crevices made by the runoff, and from them determine the direction of the flow. Then find the plant that is growing at the farthest point from your plant. All the devil's weed plants that are growing in between are yours. Later...you can extend the size of your territory by following the watercourse from each point along the way. (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004, 12)

This rather poetic way of describing the deterritorializing nature of refrains, or flows of desire, is what I would like to propose as a background for my experimentation with schizoanalytic practices. It functions like I would try to expand my boundaries, without need for transgression or breakthrough, but to experiment with the contour between machines, subjectivities and devices.

It is a tense and nervous moment to stand in front of an audience, and know that you should start 'to perform'. Without a script and no intention of creating interactivity between the audience and me: it is an actor's nightmare. I am afraid that I will freeze, blank or eventually run away from the stage. Richard Schechner writes on the performer on stage, that there is not-I and also no-

not-I. I am aware of these minor differences between an identified subjectivity that I call my everyday self and something else, which is not a role. This minor inconsistency between the build-up of repetitious refrains of multiple subjectivities, which enter the stage, is what I am interested in. It is as if the record of subjectivity has a moment of stutter, slur or dyslexia. Good performance skill means to prohibit this inevitable minor threshold to take over or disturb an act. A skilled performer may insist that he is very 'natural' on stage, but at the same time, he conceals a style and his eventual development of skill. The commodity nature of performance act is a skill intertwined with the act itself. In my three public schizoanalytic practices, there are already amounts of minor events that are repeated. If construction of style would be consciously kept away, then it would become a refrain, as well. Repetitions, refrains are the building blocks of subjectivization.

NO FUTURE FOR MEANING

'DNA', 1980's no-wave band from New York, led by Arto Lindsay gave me an impulse to use a guitar as a tool in this performance and to find some ways to explore the idea of glitches in a performance context. DNA, among other no-wave bands created a small body of work, songs that usually lasted about a minute, congested in a maximum amount of information. The dissolution of structures is a sign of annihilation of meaning or an attempt to experiment with meaning, in their case the structure of a song. An improvising performer often tinkers his tools, in a similar manner to a craftsman. No other person can use his tools properly, since they are customized for a singular use, or vice versa, a generic tool is used in a singular manner. A detournement of tools is an arduous operation, and in the context of cognitive capitalism complexities are of a dif-

ferent magnitude, than for an experimental drummer. It is more difficult to personalize software, than it used to be to personalize a welder's toolbox in a factory. In the present context, one must obtain or *purchase* an application to create one's own, pimped up computer, Android or iPhone. Nevertheless, artists often trust the possibility of doing otherwise, as noise-artist Yasunao Tone claims, when he argues that "[A] new technology, a new medium, appears, and the artist usually enlarges the use of the technology. [...] The manufacturers always force us to use a product their way, [...] however, people occasionally find a way to deviate from the original purpose of the medium and develop a totally new field." (Tone, 1997, 43) Isn't that exactly the same practice that is being deployed in a 'cloud power', for instance? That our singular skills, location, devices, experience are being utilized more effectively in 24/7 work environment? In my research I will touch upon the aspect of experimental music and performance and their relation with detournement of devices and their applications in performance and quotidian context.

ON STAGE AND MEMORY

There is a sense of split taking place in performance, which feels soft. It transforms my relationship with my body, space and people. I turn around softly, and slightly upwards; make a soft sound between my teeth. What is this swirling gesture, which is not beautiful, and why is it disrupted instantly, followed by a new stub of development? I cut to produce minor refrains, glitches and slurs, which are about to become discernible and simultaneously let them go. I am scratching the floor with my nails, twisting my face, making grunts and noises. While being aware of what I am doing, there is still uncertainty of what is going on. I do not want to entertain, but neither to deny that completely, either. I am conscious

and blurred at the same time. The performance seems extremely tense, as if my mental capacity would be in very high-pitch mode.

I am feminine and light, on my tiptoes, I reach up, as if a dancer; I notice a construction-site lamp in the ceiling and touch it, rattle it, unscrew it, but let it be unfinished; abstracted, I twirl around on my toes, my sight blackened; a short moment of amnesia; no direction and I am on the floor, scratching it, with anger, pushing towards the audience, my bum in the air: I am comical; I am not sure if I am convincing at all in what I am doing.



Schizoanalytic practice, 2010, Photo: Rik Stavale

Improvisation is an inquiry of the nervous refrains and obsessions that take place in everyday life, but remain unnoticed. On stage these refrains become highly congested and out of context, when in contrast in the everyday life context, with appropriate duration, they are merely minor digressions. A performance is about the relationship between performer, audience, context and other machines. Is it then about expression where content is fully conjoined with the form of expression? What else is there to do on stage without a skill, except just to perform?

I am not sure if affect is the correct concept to describe what I am working with? If the action itself would be simultaneously judged both poorly and amateurish, and entertaining at the same time, would this justify the connection with affect and the minor, in some ways? A noise is something, which has a tendency to become aesthetically defined as being without an aesthetic quality. A member of the audience criticized this lack of respect for the dramaturgy: "You should have trusted your body more!" It seems to me like an inquiry for a foundation or some development in action. If improvised or noise music is able to cross boundaries installed between pleasure and contingency, then why does there still seem to be a requirement of some skill or meaning in performance art? Noise as a cluster of sounds is categorized as 'pop music' rather than serious music, people who make it are 'musicians' and not considered as composers. Noise is popular, entertaining and quotidian – made for fun, pleasure or pass of time.

RUPTURE IN LOGIC

Every act creates its internal logic of reading, a front and back region of a system. A performance cannot have the same status as background music, unless the performer's intention is to create *muzak*. A performance demands to be watched, and socially wit-

nessed. Even relational art projects are to be participated in, and are constituted by a need to linger in immanence. Without some signification this seems not to be possible. Still, a large amount of information flows by without being recognized and a-signified codes are at play, simultaneously. If schizophrenia is considered a state, where the subject is not able to create coherent meaning of the world, then I would say that a performance practice at hand is artificially schizoid, since the performer is aware of the machines around: lamp, amplifier, guitar, people, floor, etc. The performer is not playing mad, nor becoming mad; he is not trying to give some form for the unordered matter of quotidian experience – nor looking for a syntactical signification for them, neither. Is this a search for some deeper structure of the matter, then, as the Surrealists or the Lettrists? As if there would be some code to decipher, a dream analysis of performance art, a key to Borgesian library? If performance is seen as a production of signified meaning, then just clowning around and being messy is a meaningless and bad performance, which only confuses the signification process. This logic asks the performance to have a structure and idea and that a performer should practice his skills.

In my argument, performance is not comprehended as a conveyor of meanings, since ontology of subjectivity has no solid ground to build upon. Meaning is purely contextual, subject to power and artificial by nature. Sound artist Nicolas Collins describes his process of rewiring CD players control chips, and the instant when he came across a 'mute' pin in the circuit board: "With this pin removed, the CD player never shuts up, and one can hear the sound as the laser 'scratches' (a magnificent, cartoonish, ripping noise) or 'pauses' (fast looping rhythms, possessed of a peculiar stutter and swing)." (Caleb, 2003, 49) This, of course,

fits nicely with the description of a person's 'loopy' performance, someone who has a 'one too few screws' attached. In her performance *Rhythm 2* (1974) Marina Abramovic

[...] took a pill prescribed for catatonia, a condition in which a person's muscles are immobilized and remain in a single position for hours at a time. Being completely healthy, Abramović's body reacted violently to the drug, experiencing seizures and uncontrollable movements for the first half of the performance. While lacking any control over her body movements, her mind was lucid, and she observed what was occurring. Ten minutes after the effects of that drug had worn off, Abramović ingested another pill – this time one prescribed for aggressive and depressed people – which resulted in general immobility. Bodily she was present, yet mentally she was completely removed. (In fact, she has no memory of the lapsed time.) (Abramovic, 2010)

Chemical alteration of the brain functions like a device, as if an 'empty pin' has been chipped off. If it is the chip or the pill, that is the central question here, then what kind of machines is this device able to produce? Devices, which are present in a singular context, alter subjectivity on both quotidian and minor state. Kafka's use of the German language and being a Jewish, minor subjectivity in Prague is a tinkering of the device of a proper language, in order for that language to being produced as minor.

In schizoanalytic practice, I am trying to present *how I am build*, without any pharmacological or hardware alterations, but as a normal guy embracing the trust, that anybody can do this. The disturbing and incoherent nature of the performance is constructed by the compressed nature of the act and by obscene forms of expression.

It is a cognitive capitalist performance by nature of being glitchy and loopy. In this performance I am not in control, nor do I 'trust my body', as if I would have opened some part of my mental and social circuit-board for audience to gape into; an apathic wiring of the subjects circuit board, and a-signified by nature, opened up. Am I natural or artificial; I, not-I or not-not-I; it is not a relevant question. It is neither an *Anatomy lesson of Dr Nicolas Tulp* nor a regular check-up of a vehicle. If a certain affective machine, for instance a guitar or loop-pedal, or laughter from audience is plugged in, some action results, but not in any causal order. There is no clear interactive response. These 'devices', which circuit information around in a subjectivity (and between subjectivities, objects, temporalities and contexts) and a way that a causality or signification process is not discerned, is an implicit argument, that no structure is to be found, though some apparent repetitions take place. Subjectivity is not a machine, nor a binary system, but still part of a live network with a phylum of machines and other subjectivities as such.

HOW TO END?

The sound of a guitar is an affect accumulator – in itself emptied out, but able to join the affective plugins of both the performer and viewers in a pronounced way. It is an affective repetition machine, and in my case amplified with an electronic loop box. To disappear into the sound is a conspicuous desire – a guitar *is* a refrain *is* a song. In the canonized performance of rock'n'roll, a guitar is a transgressive promise, which is never to be fulfilled, thus it is both an-archic, yet saturated in capitalistic axioms. There is the whole martyrology of beautified stars for every generation, but they nevertheless have not changed the codex of stage-practice itself. Repetitive strategies of commodification construct tragic, singular

events as farce, later on. A singular, haphazard and fragmented event will be given a compartmentalized form. In capitalistic stratifications, any part is compatible with some other.

Why did I need a decisive ending to the performance and following desire for a snappy ending; to pick up a guitar and make the end funky? Practice like this doesn't fulfil a redemptive promise, nor overcome a canon of rock music. If these devices are introduced to the event, they seem to construct a trapped and repetitious movement in it. I recognized this failure of transgression, which often retroactively will show performance in comical or sad light. Stretching and trying out where exactly the boundary is and what is the subjectivization process in this specific event; what are the matters and substances in these repetitions? Beyond the familiar aspects of subjectivization some alien substances appear as well, therefore a change will eventually take place, but as a type of accumulation, rather than purification. Paradoxically, a practice like this, which momentarily gives the subjectivity a sense of relief, will show itself later on as an accumulation of perception. To practice more does not liberate or clarify, but engenders more contamination.

The libidinal energy is not unlimited, and cannot overcome all of the structures that it is facing. There is no exit, no transgression, which would not eventually meet a wall. Nevertheless, this process of groping and searching is the process of schizoanalysis, which is not build upon hope for redemption, nor despair under the yoke of lack. Flows, which are functioning in certain machinic contexts, construct a route towards understanding the processes of collective subjectivization, as well. It is not a process in search of the new, but a display of refrains and the state of contamination, which subjectivity has obtained.

4 PERFORMANCE REVISITED

EASY PERFORMANCE PIECES

A seminal performance on video by Dan Graham, *Performance, Audience, Mirror* (1975) in which Graham himself is positioned between the audience in front of a wall to ceiling mirror, is being reproduced by Iain Forsyth and Jane Pollard in their video-piece *Performer. Audience. Fuck Off*. (2009). In his performance Graham keeps talking to the audience, and describes his feelings, physical sensations or contemplations. He is describing members of the audience, their behaviour and habitus, or what he personally feels about them, as well. After a while, he turns towards the mirror and describes the dramatic change the mirror produces to his overall perception. Forsyth's and Pollard's version of Graham's work is part of their project of re-enacting radical performance's on video such as *Corridor* (1968) and *Contrapposto* (1968) by Bruce Nauman or *Walk-over* (1973) by Vito Acconci. They perpetuate their share on re-enactments of 'classic' performance art, which has been going on in the past ten years, most notably by Marina Abramovic and her series of *Seven Easy Pieces* (2005), where she carried out re-enactments of performances by Bruce Nauman, Vito Acconci, Valie Export, Gina Pane, Joseph Beuys and her own performance pieces, as well. It would be easy to discard both Abramovic and Forsyth&Pollard as commodifying the radical avant-garde by fancy pop-video aesthetics or by extensive production for the market. How much worth would this 'critical' attitude to respect the avant-garde really have? In a short description in TimeOut London works by Forsyth and Pollard are defined as: "Similarly, *Performer. Audience. Fuck Off* from 2009, in which comedian Iain Lee delivers a mildly excruciating stand-up routine to an audience face to face, then in a mirror, um, mirroring a 1975 performance by Dan Graham, alters content without adding much to the ideas surrounding the original." (Time-

out London, February 10, 2011) Performance art still suffers from the requirements of authenticity or originality, it seems.

In his video Graham is performing in an unskilled manner and he is building up a somewhat charged atmosphere with the help of his singular charisma. In Forsyth's & Pollard's version, which is not a homage, but an adaptation of this device; their 're-enactments' are not replicas, tributes nor covers. It seems that a performer is entering a device, in connection with heterogeneous machines that set certain limitations or allow experimentation with. In this version, performer Iain Lee states clearly that he has a time-limit, he is performing in order to fill a timeslot, rather than going on as long as it takes, whereas Graham in the original performance seemed to perform as long as it feels appropriate – yet, I suspect that the length of the video tape was a decisive factor, as well. Lee is following a script, notated in action by Graham.



Performer, Audience, Fuck Off, 2009, Iain Forsyth & Jane Pollard Courtesy the artists and Kate MacGarry, London.

It seems that in both cases a performer is trying to speak a truth, or to report, if not reveal something essential. In two other video-works in this exhibition *Publisfear*, *Walking After Acconci (Redirected approaches)* (2005) and *Walking Over Acconci (Misdirected Approaches)* (2008) where, following the structure of Acconci's video *Walk-Over* (1973), the hiatus of the continuous monologue alludes that what is left unsaid, is in fact the truth, something we cannot speak about should be left unsaid. What is the continuous talking hiding, then? Nervousness of the performer or anxiety of the audience? Is there truth concealed in these unsaid words? In my reading, in contrast to truth, this monologue, which is sensible and humorous, but nervous, creates a place to exist. Everyday chatting is not a negation of silence, but layered with infinite interrupted conversations. In this case it is not the silence of hiatus, which a performance cannot tolerate for long, but the unprepared monologue, which builds a tension. Iain Lee does not give a chance for silence, but keeps talking, which obviously and admittedly distresses him. It is not a dialogue, but a monologue, and seemingly amusing for the audience, as well. Is this pleasure sadistic by nature; to observe a person trapped in a device of a script, which does not allow him to step back; to have a moment of contemplation regarding what he just said, but is he forced to tell everything that comes to mind? He cannot trust the skill of using implicit hiatus as in the context of a stand-up and he is not intoxicated, which would release him from the responsibility of his behaviour. Nevertheless, within some tight regulations, he is free to do what he pleases and to use the opportunity to release stress by talking, created by the performance situation. He may insult the audience, or he might also seduce people to like him. It is not a site for manifesting a truth, but to perform tactically

with language. He creates a reflection of his own actions, but it is not as if the inner dialogue would have become audible to others. His subjectivity or subjectivization is not suddenly revealed, but another device is being inserted in the context.

What is the nature of this device? At some point of watching the video on a large projection, my attention frays and I feel bored. Almost at the same moment in the video, Lee pays attention to this own boredom, as well. A coincidence nevertheless, but still a link to some possibility of an *enunciation of collective speech*, no matter how accurate it might sometimes be. This device at hand is a 'performer-audience-mirror', which Graham has tinkered. The audience's body-heat, attention and anticipation are part of the event. These are rhythms and refrains of subjectivity, which are not bounded within individual borders. What is the link between these rhythms and refrains, or even paranormal states of a performer's perception? We are able to recognize very rapid changes of register in speech: from truthful to cynicism, insult to embarrassment. This is also true on the subliminal level, with unclear or a-signified matter, as well. These rhythms of imperceptible and a-signifying affects are what I will present in my research.

Alien refrains seem to make odd appearances, as Lee at one moment describes in the video "What the fuck is this? [He makes a sign with his fingers] I have never done this movement before – maybe when I was six." He is hypersensitive in observing his movements and speech, as if the control mechanisms would be the main drive of this device, as if feedback of this machine would have an a-signified and partially autonomous nature. Is this an icon of a politician, a virtuoso of a kind, exemplified by Paolo Virno in *Grammar of Multitude*: "If the entirety of post-Fordist labour is productive (of surplus-value) labour precisely because it functions

in a political-virtuosic manner, then the question to ask is this: what is the *score* which the virtuoso-workers perform? What is the script of their linguistic-communicative *performances*?" (Virno, 2004, 64) A stand-up comedian may symbolize a politician and cognitive worker, because he works without a script, following affects and a-signified codes of deterritorialization, but there is still a difference between the straightforward act on this video and a skilful politician, which makes me doubt the analogue of Virno's virtuoso. Lee seems to be intentionally mixing different realms of speech: intimate, artificial and public, whereas the skill of a politician, however improvised it might be, still keeps the different realms under control. Virno continues: "I maintain without too many reservations that the score performed by the multitude in the post-Ford era is the Intellect, intellect as generic human faculty. According to Marx, the score of modern virtuosos is the *general intellect*, the general intellect of society, abstract thought." (Virno, 2004, 64) A performer has a skill, because he is not ranting like a preacher or madman in the corner, for whom all of the realms would have become fully confluent. He has a skill, because this is not a performance of letting go, but a rehearsal of control. The skill of a good performer and politician is to keep the different regions in control, to strategize their use – to use hiatus, dramaturgy and choreography on emotions and affects. A politician or cognitive worker never works without a script, in fact. Nevertheless, the script is not linear nor a score to follow in a certain tempo, it is an improvised script under control.

What if the audience would not laugh at the performer on the video? What if they would not understand or like him? It is not an intimate performance, because performer and audience are constantly tense and aware of their boundaries being stepped over.

A performer has an ineffable right to transgress borders, and it is desired that no-one feels safe. A statement of "here is my border" is implicitly announced, but no transgression or emancipation takes place. A performer is sensible, and in that sense like a politician, he is skilled. He can make people laugh at him, to be on his side, and when he wants. Laughing functions as a signal of confirmation, a comic relief and a sign of control; laughing not at him, but with him, when the protagonist dictates that to happen.

TACTICAL LIFESTYLES

A good performance is not given only by smiling at people, giving compliments or talking about things one thinks are interesting to others. On account of the mimetic nature of social behaviour, it is common to automatically search for a confluence on common ground. A mimetic performance is similar to Iain Lee's performance, because it does not ask you to believe in a performance, but just to perform. In his book *History of Shit* Dominique Laporte argues that when sanitation was introduced in the beginning of industrialism a refining of language from foulness simultaneously took place. (Laporte, 2000) In cognitive capitalism we are not learning way of conduct, but etiquette of performance. Dialects or defects are not wiped out, but airbrushed or enhanced. A skilled performance is an improvisation in the style of a stand-up comedian or MC: natural-like, yet stylized and extremely skilled in its loose manner. "Fuck Off" becomes a strong, but stylized expression of subjectivity. Cynically, we all fuck off.

Language is being used as a tactical device in cognitive capitalism, as a device to make-believe in the subject. Tactics instead of disciplinary actions. As a performer, he no longer knows, what he is talking about, but he is still talking. Unless, as de Certeau writes:

"[A]fter having long considered themselves experts speaking a scientific language, they have finally awoken from their slumbers and suddenly realize that for the last few moments they have been walking on air, like Felix the Cat in the old cartoons, far from the scientific ground". (de Certeau, 1988, 8) If a performer in quotidian or professional contexts would be exposed as an impostor, then this would prove that improvised tactics of a performer are not about telling the truth in public space, but are a practice of perpetual lying between each other.

WHAT IS SCHIZOANALYSIS?

The context of this work is cognitive capitalism and capitalist, immaterial labour. My question is, what kind of subjectivities are produced for this device or apparatus of neo-liberal capitalism; what kind of obstructions are necessary; what are the repetitious modes that function in this context; and what kind of glitches appear? A shift from industrial Fordism to cognitive capitalism, and so-called immaterial labour, has taken place. In the discourse of contemporary art, this context is parallel to an 'ethical' turn, as Jacques Rancière has argued, or as a performative turn, according to Jon McKenzie. My research will investigate these particular shifts in epoch, which have created different kind of devices, *dispositifs*, and different production of subjectivities, in turn. How does performance – both as a form of art and a quotidian event – function in this particular context?

From my artistic practice and my interpretation of schizoanalysis – which was a way of practice constructed by Félix Guattari in his practice as a clinical psychoanalyst in the Clinique La Borde, an activist and a philosopher – three apparatuses or devices take significant place: loops, obstructions and glitches.

In the relationship between capitalism and production of subjectivity, what kind of obstructions (not repressions), loops (or repetitions) and glitches of subjectivity are taking place in cognitive, neo-liberal capitalism, which are different from the Fordist, liberal capitalism? What kind of performances are construed and constructed, when no universal foundation for subjectivity are to be found? What are the regulations, obstructions, minor events, machineries, loops, refrains and glitches that take place in this singular situation of global, neo-liberal capitalism? Neo-liberal economy, with no state intervening individuals enterprises, unless a crisis is apparent, still requires an increasing amount of administration, in order to provide a freedom for the individuals to perform. Neo-liberalism aims to produce a freedom for us to be free: freedom is constructed!

NOTES

- 1 According to Lacan, the Other is located in the outside of the subjectivity, but never gets a proper name, but may take a form of an evil eye, fascinum, as well. The Other is differentiated from other, situated in Real.
- 2 OuLiPo is a heterogeneous group of writers and mathematicians established by Raymond Queneau. Other members of the group has been such writers as Georges Perec, Harry Matthews and Italo Calvino.

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IMAGES

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Past Amsterdam, 1999, Photo: Tero Nauha

Loop Variations, 2008, Photo: MUU gallery

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Performer. Audience. Fuck Off, 2009, Photo: Forsyth&Pollard

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TEATTERIKORKEAKOULU
TEATERHÖGSKOLAN

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