

# Approaching Nakedness and Its Problematics:

*A 1-1 (one with one) performance about  
being naked in an intimate, platonic way*

PETROS KONNARIS



*Figure 1: Photo by: Petros Konnaris in collaboration with the  
Mythological Institute*



# Approaching Nakedness and Its Problematics:

*A 1-1 (one with one) performance about  
being naked in an intimate, platonic way*

PETROS KONNARIS



ABSTRACT

Date: 1<sup>st</sup> October 2017

AUTHOR Petros Konnaris		MASTER'S OR OTHER DEGREE PROGRAMME Live Art and Performance Studies	
TITLE OF THE WRITTEN SECTION/THESIS Approaching Nakedness and Its Problematics: A 1-1( <i>one with one</i> ) performance about being naked in an intimate platonic way		NUMBER OF PAGES + APPENDICES IN THE WRITTEN SECTION 61 pages	
TITLE OF THE ARTISTIC/ARTISTIC AND PEDAGOGICAL SECTION A Bathing Performance The artistic section was completed at the Theatre Academy. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The artistic section was not completed at the Theatre Academy (copyright issues have been resolved). <input type="checkbox"/> Supervisor/s: Leena Kela and Julius Elo			
The final project can be published online. This permission is granted for an unlimited duration.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	The abstract of the final project can be published online. This permission is granted for an unlimited duration.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Nakedness can mean not wearing any clothes but it could also mean not having your socks on. I see nakedness as a social construct that can shift meanings depending on the context, the culture and the subject(s) being or not being naked. In <i>Approaching Nakedness and Its Problematics</i> I use personal experiences I had in Europe and Thailand, the words <i>Naked</i>, <i>Nude</i> and <i>Τίτσιρος</i> (<i>:Titsiros</i>), borrow ideas from Donna Haraway, the trans philosopher Talia Mae Bettcher, and the indigenous scholar Irene Watson to introduce the multiplicity of nakedness. I present some of the problematics of nakedness such as objectification, male gaze, exhibitionism and voyeurism, toxic masculinity, gender binaries, and normalized body images. Afterward, I present queer and feminist theories of Judith Butler, Diane Ponterotto, and Talia Mae Bettcher on how to resist those problematics. I then contextualize my work in relation to other artists, their work and the mentioned problematics.</p> <p>I continue with my artistic project <i>A Bathing Performance</i>, a 1-1(<i>one with one</i>) happening of nakedness and care, presenting my methodology, my aims, my reflections and observation. In the project, I limit the spectrum of nakedness and focus on nakedness as an intimate, platonic act. Additionally, I introduce the term <i>one with one</i> and explore performance as a meeting, a mutual, interconnected exchange with another person. I approach both nakedness and the performance as a multiplicity, a range of options and choices that one can decide how, when and where he/she/they want to experience nakedness. The written part of my thesis includes an academic text and a handwritten book: a replica of the scorebook I used in the performances in June 2017 which includes the updated version of my 30 bathing scores/proposals.</p>			
ENTER KEYWORDS HERE Nakedness, 1-1( <i>one with one</i> ) performance, intimacy, platonic, queer, feminism, performance art/live art, bathing scores, multiplicity			



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	9
NAKEDNESS AS A SOCIAL CONSTRUCT	13
<i>Τίτσιρος</i>	14
<i>Some other examples of nakedness</i>	16
<i>A Bathing Performance and the multiplicity of nakedness</i>	18
THE PROBLEMATICS OF NAKEDNESS	21
<i>Introducing the problematics</i>	21
<i>Resisting the problematics</i>	24
<i>Trans-people and nakedness</i>	25
<i>Nakedness and Media</i>	26
<i>The problematics, myself and my work</i>	26
NAKEDNESS IN PERFORMANCE	29
<i>Nakedness and queer bodies</i>	29
<i>Nakedness through touch</i>	31
<i>Naked censorship in Helsinki</i>	32
1-1(ONE WITH ONE) PERFORMANCE	35
<i>1-1: with/ to/ on</i>	35
<i>Becoming naked with</i>	36
<i>Kester and dialogical aesthetics, Bourriaud and relational art, and everyday life</i>	37
<i>Adrian Howells and The Pleasure of Being</i>	38
THE STRUCTURE OF A BATHING PERFORMANCE	40
<i>Communication</i>	40
<i>Rules/Instructions</i>	42
<i>A Bathing Performance – The Scorebook</i>	43
<i>Locations</i>	45
<i>Guest books</i>	46
<i>The discussions</i>	47
<i>The 1-1 (one with one) performance: The participants’ road to the bathing meeting</i>	48
<i>Documentation</i>	49

---

REFLECTION ON A BATHING PERFORMANCE	51
<i>Nakedness and the locations</i>	52
<i>The Bathtub: Nakedness, Memories and everydayness</i>	53
<i>Sompasauna: Nakedness as a Social and Collective Experience</i>	54
<i>The Forest: A Playful, Special, Naked Moment</i>	55
<i>The Seaside: Vulnerable, Exposed, Naked Bodies</i>	56
<i>The Participant's Home: Nakedness, Habits, and Everydayness</i>	57
<i>Reflections on methodology</i>	57
<i>Some observations</i>	58

---

CONCLUSION	61
REFERENCES	65
<i>Books, Articles, and Magazines</i>	65
<i>Performances and Workshops</i>	68
<i>Internet Material: Websites, Online Journals, Videos and Video Documentation</i>	68
<i>Interviews and Unpublished Material</i>	70
<i>TV shows:</i>	70

## INTRODUCTION

Nakedness has always been a very fascinated topic for me. My first naked experience as an adult in a public space was in Πλάτρεις (:Platres), a mountainous village in Cyprus when I was 24 years old. I was there by myself walking close to a hiking path when I decided to take off my clothes and wander naked in that area. The excitement of being naked and the risk of getting caught were overwhelmingly playful. Being naked in that situation enhanced my awareness and sensitivity of what is happening: where am I stepping, what lays around there, what made that sound. At some point, I found the Μιλλομέρι (:Millomeri) waterfall and sat on a tree watching the water falling down. I remembered of my childhood when I was swimming at the sea, taking off my swimsuit and swimming naked thinking I am a mermaid. Nakedness has always been fascinating to me. There is something everyday-like and yet extraordinary about it.

Another interesting aspect of nakedness is that people have different understandings and feelings towards it. I started working and researching with nakedness as my main topic in 2012 preparing for my project *WET (2013)*. Since then I wander and connect nakedness with qualities like playfulness, intimacy, gentleness, sensitivity, and care. In this research project in which I have been working the past two years, I was exploring the following question: *How can I create meetings where people can explore nakedness in an intimate, platonic way.* Based on this research question, I created a project called *A Bathing Performance*, a 1-1(*one with one*) performance of nakedness and care.

But what do I mean with these two loaded words: intimate and platonic? I will borrow the notion of intimacy from Julie C. Inness which as she states “[w]hen an agent characterizes an act or activity as intimate she is claiming that it draws its meaning and value from her love, liking or care” (Inness 1992, 74-75). Gestures and actions can have various meanings in different contexts and cultures. She argues that there is nothing inherently intimate but becomes intimate based on the meaning and value we give to it. (1992, 76) She continues mentioning that to transform an action into an intimate action, there should be a special relation between the two, allowing and getting access to one’s private

side of himself/herself/themselves<sup>1</sup>, and a notion of closeness. (1992, 76, 83 & 85) I can relate to what Inness proposes and I appreciate that intimacy comes from what kind of value and meaning we give to the actions, and not because is socially constructed as such.

Let us continue to the word platonic. I borrowed the meaning of the word from pop culture and the way it is used nowadays: as not sexual, or as the *Oxford English Dictionary(OED)* describes “(of love or friendship) intimate and affectionate but not sexual”. The word originates from Plato but during the Renaissance era changed into a different version, the Neo-Platonic and the way it is used today by pop culture. (Reeser 2016, viii) During this project and the way I present my work with nakedness the past years, I use the present definition of platonic from the notion of Neo-platonic. I use that definition since this is a commonly way the word performs in pop culture (Reeser 2016, vii). Even though, I frequently use this term my intention is not to produce any sex shame or sex negativity. My aim is to explore other sides of nakedness apart from eroticism. I am aware that bathing with someone can be sexual but I am interested to explore what other qualities does it have apart from that.

In the following chapters, I will discuss about my methodology, my tools, my aims, my theoretical framework and reflect what happened the past two years that I have been focusing on this project. The first chapter concentrates on nakedness as a social construct. Nakedness changes meaning depending on the context, the culture, what and how many clothes one is wearing, or better or not wearing. I share personal experiences I had in Europe, and Thailand that reflect on the multiplicity of nakedness, that nakedness can have multiple meaning depending on the person, the context, and the time. Additionally, I discuss about my home country Cyprus and explore the etymology and performativity of *Τίτσιρος (:Titsiros)* the Cypriot word for naked but also the English words nude and naked from Kenneth Clark’s perspective. I discuss about *Born Naked* an episode from *RuPaul’s Drag Race* and the queer community, and end with how I approach nakedness in *A Bathing Performance* in this large spectrum.

In the second chapter, I introduce concepts like objectification, male gaze, voyeurism and exhibitionism, toxic masculinity, and consent which all relate with nakedness and its problematics. I support my work and my methodology

---

<sup>1</sup> Throughout the thesis, I am using he/she/they and their conjugated forms, alternating their order, since I find it produces more inclusion than he/she or just they.

with queer and feminist theories and at the same time I use them in a similar way to resist the problematics of nakedness and create a safe and trusting environment. I continue to the following chapter in which I focus on performance art/live art and contemporary dance, contextualizing my work with nakedness. Additionally, I discuss how other artists comment to the problematics of nakedness and how I relate to them and their work. In the end of this chapter, I focus on *Cesi n'est pas mon corps* and the naked censorship incident in Helsinki in November 2014 and a similar non-censored situation few months afterwards with the piece *Encounter with flies* in the summer of 2015.

I then change perspective and go slightly away from nakedness, focusing on *1-1(one with one)* performance. I introduce my new term and my decision to use the preposition *with* instead of *on* or *to*. A huge influence in my understanding of performance as a meeting comes from Donna Haraway and her concept of *becoming with*. I also discuss about art theorists Bourriaud and Kester and how they feed into my understanding of performance. Part of this chapter concentrates on the notion of everyday life and performance and the relation to my understanding of performance. Afterwards, I continue and end this chapter with Adrian Howells, an artist working in a 1-1 format who explored concepts similar with me and had a great influence on the way I engage with people.

The final and last two chapters focus on *A Bathing Performance*. I start with the complex structure of the project, introducing main elements like the communication with the participants, the five proposed locations, the scorebook, the guest books and my decision for written documentation for this project. Part of this chapter, I discuss about the structure of the *1-1(one with one)* performance, the structure of the discussions, and what was my aim for having two components in this project. Moreover, I relate my methodology to the problematics of nakedness and how to resist them based on the queer and feminist theories. Afterwards, I reflect on what happened during the performance in June 2017, what observations I made. I also focus on the multiplicity of nakedness and how each location affected the way we were being naked. Additionally, I discuss about the importance of transparency in my artistic practice and ask whether the way nakedness is represented in nowadays focuses on white cis-gendered people.

My thesis borrows concepts from queer and feminist theorists like Donna Haraway, Judith Butler, Talia Mae Bettcher, Diane Ponterotto and the indigenous scholar Irene Watson. I am very grateful for the work of these theorists because they support the notion of multiplicity and the need to resist the binaries and the strict fixed forms. They provided the tools and help me frame, understand, and find words to describe this artistic research. I would also like to thank the people that participated in the discussions and the *1-1(one with one)* performances, people that shared their thoughts, experiences, and discomforts with nakedness, Ray Langenbach for shaking things up, and my supervisors Leena Kela and Julius Elo for the constructive critiques and mental support. Lastly, I would like to thank my classmates and my family especially my goddaughter Anthousa, for the support and keeping me clearheaded the past two and half years.

In the following pages there will not be any photos to support this project. I decided not to attach any pictures in the thesis as an action to resist nakedness being only something that relates to vision and gaze, but something that you can experience and be as well. Additionally, apart from this academic text, my thesis includes *A Bathing Performance – Scorebook*. In the scorebook, you will find the updated thirty bathing scores from the performances in June 2017. It was crucial for me to have a replica of the scorebook I used, and not a printed copy of it, since it produces a different relationship with the reader. In my opinion, the handwritten book could also revitalize and unwind the mind from the academic text in a similar way as the pictures would have done.

## NAKEDNESS AS A SOCIAL CONSTRUCT

I will start by saying that nakedness is a social construct. Just like gender and class, the meaning of nakedness differs depending on the culture, the context, and the subjects that one is referring to. As Talia Mae Bettcher indicates we are not born with clothes on and our status as naked is always in terms with the act of clothing. We would not need a word to describe our nakedness if we did not wear clothes. *We are naked when we do not wear clothes.* (Bettcher 2012, 321-322) I will slightly change the previous statement into: *we are naked when we do not wear enough or any clothes.* Nakedness can have different meanings and definitions depending on the situation and one could be called naked even if he/she/they are not fully naked. For example, if I go to the beach with my swimsuit, I most probably would not be called naked but I if I attend a formal dinner with the same attire then I would most likely be naked.

I will share few examples of what nakedness can be, trying to open up the multitude of nakedness. I will share what the international English language and the philosopher Kenneth Clark brings to the concept but also talk about my Cypriot roots. Coming from South Cyprus in which the main formal language is Greek but we speak in the Cypriot dialect has greatly influenced my understanding of nakedness. Additionally, I will add few examples from Thailand, and France and their relation to nakedness and how that can be linked to white domination. I then will continue with an example from *RuPaul's Drag Race* to share a non-cis gendered approach to nakedness that still includes a variety of meaning about naked bodies.

When discussing about these examples, I do not intent to generalize and state as fact that everyone in the mentioned context experience nakedness in the same way. My intention is rather to introduce in my thesis that nakedness does not fit into a normalized box. Additionally, I only have my own experience of being naked and by adding how others see this concept, I try to de-homogenize the nuance that everyone has the similar naked experiences. As Ruth Barcan, states “to speak about universality of nudity is to say everything and nothing, for the meaning and experiences of nudity differ markedly between contexts” (Barcan 2004, 3). Similarly with gender, nakedness has a very personal meaning and understanding for each individual. In this project I am interested in exploring how other people relate to this concept and how it affects my understanding and vice versa.

Before getting deeper in the multiplicity of nakedness I will introduce Donna Haraway's concept of *situated knowledges*. Haraway opposes the notion of objectivity which threatens the collective historicity and agency, and “our ‘embodied’ accounts of truth” (Haraway 1988, 578). She mentions that

knowledge and truth are always inseparable from the context and time, location, and history. Therefore, it produces not one absolute, hegemonic, universal knowledge but multiple version of truths. This shift from one to many is what decreases hierarchy between beings and provides visibility into *others*. “I am arguing for the view from a body always complex, contradictory, structuring and structured body, versus the view from above, from nowhere, from simplicity” (1988, 589). She directs the perspective of experience from inside the body and not as something universal. I borrow Haraway’s *situated knowledges* which is how I understand the notion of multitude of nakedness: not only as an act of dressing/undressing but as a complicate situation that depends from the context and mainly the subject(s) being or not being naked.

But let us start from English, since it is the main language of this paper and of *A Bathing Performnce*. The British philosopher Kenneth Clark in his classical book *Nude: A Study on Ideal Beauty* describes what is nude, what naked, and what is the difference between the two. Firstly, he defines to be naked “to be deprived of our clothes” (Clark 1990, 3). On the other hand, he connects nude with “no uncomfortable overtone, [--] not a huddled and defenseless body, but of a balanced, prosperous and confident body: the body reformed” (Clark 1990, 3). When I first looked into those definitions, in my mind a naked person was one that is incomplete, associated with shame and unwanted exposure, and nude with empowerment and confidence. Going deeper into those definitions and what kind of meaning Clark gives to the words I realized that he sees nude as the ideal, an art form, the best representation of the human body. On the contrary, he sees naked as the everyday, the unattractive, and the faltered. What I did not grasp from my first encounter with the words is the strong hierarchy that Clark associates with and that nude is what people want to watch in art. Not naked. (Clark 1990, 3-7)

## *Τίτσιρος*

After the unease I felt from the power game between nude and naked, I decided to go back to my roots and to a word I was always drown to. *Τίτσιρος* (:Titsiros)<sup>2</sup> is the Cypriot word for naked. A word I was always fascinated by its meaning, its performance in society, and its phonetics. There are two possible trajectories for the creation of this word: the first one is from the word *τιτσίν* (:titsin), a diminutive word for meat or flesh. The other version comes from the ancient Greek words *τιθιον* + *σύρω* (:tithion + siro), which translate into *breast/nipple* + *to drag*. (Katsoyanu 2017, Armostis 30 August 2017) I was amazed to find out that the two possible etymological definitions of *Τίτσιρος*

---

<sup>2</sup>You can hear the phonetics of this word by accessing the following link [lexcy.library.ucy.ac.cy/sound/14631.wav](http://lexcy.library.ucy.ac.cy/sound/14631.wav) (Katsoyanu)

involved a feeling of embodiment. Both definitions, have to do with the materiality and the physicality of the body, not with exposure or embarrassment like the word naked, or with the ideal beauty like the word nude. I want to highlight that *Τίτσιπος* is the masculine adjective of naked, the one you would call a man. On the other hand, *Τίτσιρα* (:Titsira) and *Τίτσιρο* (:Titsiro) are respectively the feminine and neutral adjective for naked. In my mind, the words perform almost the same with the difference that *Τίτσιρα*, might have a more patronizing and sometimes aggressive undertone, and the neutral *Τίτσιρο* a more innocent and adorable connotation. The additional connotations come from the status of women and kids in the patriarchal society of South Cyprus.

Moreover, the way *Τίτσιπος* performs in South Cyprus has both a playful and a vulnerable correlation to it. These qualities come from the way the informal Cypriot dialect performs in Cyprus in relation to the official Greek language. When I was in school, talking in the Cypriot dialect was the informal way to communicate since we were taught to use the Greek language. In addition, the Cypriot linguist Spiros Armostis states that *Τίτσιπος* is used in a casual overtone and context. It is informal and is expected to be used with people from one's close environment. On the other hand, the word *γυμνός* (:gimnos), the Greek word for naked, is the official one and is expected to be used in formal situations and especially when one converses with supposedly educated, higher class people, or priests. (Armostis 30 August 2017) Based on my understanding of the interview, the word *Τίτσιπος* relates to a more intimate and close environment. I will also add to the performativity of the word a form of rebellion especially when one uses the word instead of the *γυμνός*, the proper one.

From my experience and the way I understand and perform the word, *Τίτσιπος* has a teasing quality and a naughtiness as well. Apart from the performativity of the word when it is use in 'wrong' contexts, the way people react when I talk about or am naked always make me feel like an impish boy. They imply I am doing something I should not be doing but with a touch of pleasure and joy since I am not behaving properly and 'breaking' some rules. This is the reason I many times connect it with playfulness since it can take a form of a mischievous rebellion against the norms.

Additionally, I asked eleven Cypriot friends to share what they think about the word and what qualities does it have and find out whether others have the same impression of the word as myself. The keywords that I received were:

*Natural, cute, carelessness, a sizzling and squeaking sound, free, relaxing, calm, accessible, vulnerable, uncovered, sometimes sweet and sometimes strict, someone without something, playful and innocent, sweat and fear, neutral: shifting meanings depending on how I feel, funny word, playful, teasing and non-erotic, naughty.*

Some people from the selected group, had similar approach to *Τίτσιπος* as me: as teasing, funny, naughty, and playful. Few of them also made a distinction between the Cypriot and the Greek word, saying that the latter is erotic, loaded with more meanings than the former. In addition, summarizing from what I received about the performativity of the word and the concept of nakedness, *Τίτσιπος* balances between calmness, carelessness, naturalness, strictness, fear, and vulnerability. (Konaris Unpublished Survey, 5-12 September 2017)

### *Some other examples of nakedness*

After describing from a linguistic approach what the words naked, nude and *Τίτσιπος* mean, I will move to some examples that show that nakedness is in relation to others. Irene Watson, an aboriginal theorist from Australia<sup>3</sup>, mentions, she could not trace any words in the 500 indigenous languages of Australia to describe nakedness. “Nakedness and the awareness of it came to old people through the reflection of the other<sup>4</sup> and the other’s shame” (Watson 1998, 9). Additionally, she mentions that the colonizers related nakedness with inferiority, as being backwards since clothes marked the wealth, knowledge and power. Moreover, in the eyes of the Christian colonists nakedness was seen as sexually permissive and therefore shameful. (Watson 1998, 9-11) Watson states that getting dressed was not as a response to shame “but rather a necessary act of survival against domination, and the threat of violence” (Watson 1998, 3). Here we can see the different versions of nakedness: the indigenous people view it as the natural way of being and the colonialists as shameful, ignorant, and subordinate. And because of the power relation between the two, the indigenous people were directed into the world of clothes.

Apart from the relation to clothes, the word naked changes meaning depending on the culture. Based on my short experience in Thailand in October 2016, being naked is a complicated topic. During my stay, I was asking local men from the gay app Grindr if there are any nudist areas that I could visit in Bangkok. Many of them replied that they are naked in their houses. Continuing the conversation I realized that the meaning of being naked for many of them

---

<sup>3</sup> Or as she states “the country we now call Australia” (Watson 1998, 15)

<sup>4</sup> By other, Watson means the colonizers.

was to wear their underwear, which most probably would not be the case for a Scandinavian person.

Additionally, in Thailand there is the *Naturist Association Thailand (NAT)* that promotes a “positive family lifestyle for all peoples and [--] high quality, personal, family and social values”. (NAT 2016) *NAT* was re-established by the Danish businessman Gregers Moller in 2007 after Salim Foothai introduced the philosophy of nudism and naturism in Thailand in 1937. Thai Naturism, compare to a more western approach to naturism, is focusing on sensitivity towards their members but also towards people who do not share the same nudist beliefs<sup>5</sup>. (NAT 2016) In a conversation with one of the staff members of *NAT* about naturism in Thailand, he mentioned that very few Thai people are part of the association and most of them are foreigners. Additionally, he stated that *NAT* avoids any kind of interaction with the government so they can continue promoting the Thai naturism. Additionally, throughout the whole day, he was very carefully covering himself with a towel preventing any unwanted exposure. Having this limited experience with nudity in Thailand, I feel that being naked in Thailand, especially for the locals, has a very strong political meaning. Undressing and being naked works as a form of refusing the government’s force and reclaiming the agency of oneself and one’s body. On the other hand, it can be a dominant force especially on people that do not want to be naked.

I am also thinking whether having a Danish businessman be in charge of *NAT*, introducing naturism to the locals, and defining what Thai naturism is, is a problematic act. I will borrow Rustom Bharucha’s concept that an exchange of rituals can be a form of colonisation and culture exploitation (1990, 14). Connecting the previous it seems that yes that can be seen as a form of colonization but in reverse from what Watson was mentioning before. In the case of the indigenous people in Australia the colonizers were ‘forcing’ clothes and in Thailand, *NAT* ran by Moller is ‘encouraging’ nudity. From my point of view, it feels like European nudists are taking space from locals to experience what they like which can be seen as an act of colonisation.

Similar to the concepts of nakedness and colonisation, I will add another example of the incident that happened in France in 2016. I am talking about the episode with police fining a Muslim woman in Nice, France for not removing her burkini. (The Guardian 2017) Influenced from feminism, the political scientist Farish Noor states that “once again women are not allowed to determine for themselves what they can wear and what makes them feel comfortable in the public domain” (Noor 2016). He also mentions that in

---

<sup>5</sup> By making this separation I do not mean that European cultures do not share a gentle, sensitive and respectful attitude towards people outside the nudist communities. I would like to highlight that *NAT* pays more attention to that topic because of the cultural difficulties and discomfort on nakedness in Thailand.

France there were campaigns to change the attire and the behaviour of French Muslims descents from N. Africa. (Noor 2016) Again in this example we can observe the power of authority to *the others* forcing them to undress. However, the act of not undressing is a statement towards the normalization of people and especially women's identity. The assaulted woman by staying dressed, and refusing undressing and being naked, even if the removal would be just the head scarf, can be an empowering strong movement. Additionally, this example shows how problematic nakedness can be especially if it happens in a non-consensual, forceful manner.

I will now continue to another example relating to nakedness that does not have (immediate) relation to race and culture but focuses on gender and not only on cis-gendered people. The example comes from the drag queen world, or better from the mainstream drag world and the reality TV show *RuPaul's Drag Race (RPDR)*. In the first episode of season seven the host RuPaul introduces the main challenge which is to create a resort-wear look transforming into a *nude-illusion* (RPDR, 17:40-18:00). On the runway and after the 'undressing', all of the queens were wearing different kinds of accessories like shoes, jewelries, and wigs. Additionally, some of them were wearing skin-tone leotards, others wearing breastplates and full-body leotards and one came with duct tape covering their penis. There were mixed feelings from both the judges and the contestants about what the outcome of a naked drag queen should be, criticizing the one that came out with the least amount of clothes. It is interesting to observe what nakedness could mean from different people and especially from an art form that has a strong relation to fashion, exaggeration, and impersonation. What was also fascinating to watch was the image distortion on the private parts covering the fake (?) genitals and breasts in the same way as if the performers would be fully undressed and naked. (RPDR, 23:30 – 34:00) In my understanding, the image distortion adds the meaning that they were not wearing leotards but wearing their naked body.

### *A Bathing Performance and the multiplicity of nakedness*

In the *A Bathing Performance* project I was exploring what meanings I connect to nakedness and how the participants involved relate and understand these concepts. My research question for this art project is *How can I create meetings where people can explore nakedness in an intimate, platonic way?* I decided to limit the multiplicity of nakedness into what falls into the categories

of intimate and platonic based on my current personal interests and the two year timetable of my Master's degree. There is a great amount of associations between nakedness and sex and as Barcan mentions, in popular imagination nakedness and sex are closely related (Barcan 2004, 3). My aim is to explore the range of nakedness under a limiting spectrum that the intimate and platonic produce. Additionally, since the project takes place in Helsinki the research is still limiting to the Finnish society of 2017, to the specific locations propose for the performance, and to what the individuals that participate bring to the project.

As I mentioned in the introduction, I highly associated nakedness with playfulness, intimacy, gentleness, sensitivity, and care. These qualities which I also consider part of my interests are what directed me into exploring nakedness in an intimate, platonic way. I will also add that in a personal level, being naked is still an extraordinary condition which produces sensitivity and awareness of my body and environment, but also empowerment. I believe these qualities arise from the fact that I am not naked throughout the whole day, all days of the week, but at times and especially when I want and can be. Nakedness has a beginning and an end, is framed and this is what makes it special and provide these qualities. It would have been very different experience if for example I would be living in a nudist community. Nakedness would probably become normalized and will not have the same impact.



## THE PROBLEMATICS OF NAKEDNESS

In this chapter as the title states, I will introduce some of the problematics of nakedness. My methodology in creating a trusting and safe environment throughout the communication and the process of meeting with each participant was influenced by theories of resisting the objectification, male gaze, exhibitionism/voyeurism, and toxic masculinity. Those situations are linked to idealized unreachable body images, leading into low self-esteem, embarrassment and shame, and poor, unhealthy relations between people. Nakedness has always been in friction with these topics and situations, since they provide the context in which people undress both in private and public spaces. From my perspective, those topics and their results on people's behaviors and identities limit the way of engaging with nakedness in relation to fear, shame and exploitation. This is what directs me into naming them as problematics. Furthermore, it separates people into the binary of men and non-men creating an unnecessary power/privilege of men. I use the term non-men not in a way to patronize women and queer people but as a way to introduce in my thesis the power/privilege of men over them.

In the following pages, I will share the positions of feminists like Butler, Ponterotti, Connell, Braidotti, and Bettcher concerning the mentioned problematics on gender and the importance of consent. I will continue by presenting how the media encourages the normalized body image and the singular approach to gender. I will continue by sharing what the theorists propose as tools to resist these situations with direction towards empowerment. Afterwards, I will connect those topics with nakedness. I will then move into transgendered bodies and nakedness and I will conclude by sharing how am I using the feminist tools to create a trusting and comfortable, empowering meeting to engage with nakedness. Throughout this chapter, I will also share personal experiences and observations with nakedness in relation to those issues in the present time.

### *Introducing the problematics*

Judith Butler in her book *Undoing Gender* discusses that we are the authors of our gender but our gender is always in relation to the others since it frames the context of one performing his/her/their gender. (Butler 2004, 1) However, we are inscribed both our sex and gender through birth when the doctor, the parents, and the legal birth certificate states if we are a boy or a girl and thereby we become "a sexed and gendered subject." From then onwards, gender becomes a label, a social construct, a necessity for being eligible as a subject. (Salih 2004,140) Additionally, we encounter various social and

cultural stimuli which influence our understanding of gender, and our position and role in society. However, in many cases the conventional normalized gender image can harm and sterilize one's selfhood especially if one's identity does not fit the strict binaries of gender. (Butler 2004, 1) Women are deducted agency and power, queers are being erased, and races are being homogenized to fit the white, middle-class model.

One of the problematics of the gender in the patriarchal societies of today is sexual objectification. Objectification happens when people and very commonly women, are seen and appreciated only as an image, separating them from their personhood, putting attention only to some body parts and not seeing them as a whole. Ultimately, this leads women into becoming an object for the male sexual pleasure. (Szymanski, Moffitt and Carr 2011, 7-8) Objectification is connected to fragmentation and as Sarah Bartky states women experience a form of fragmentation by being identified strictly with their body and their appearance. (Bartky 1990, 25) Constant objectification happens in everyday life which diminishes women considering them as sexual beings for men's pleasure. Additionally, it encourages hierarchical situations where people act as if to own others, treating them as lesser people with lack of voice, integrity, agency, autonomy, and self-determination. (Papadaki 2015)

When a person is in a vulnerable and exposing situation, such as when naked, she/they/he can feel even more intimidating when someone gazes upon her/them/him. From my perspective, that happens because of the exposure and not necessarily because of nakedness. I believe the problem is present whether one is naked, undressing, semi-naked, or fully dressed. I will argue that being naked provides an awareness and sensitivity to our body and environment which makes people more receptive and sensitive. The male gaze and voyeurism is present even though sometimes is hiding between clothes and still produces nervousness whether one is dressed or not. In the following paragraph, I will share an experience I had with a friend to enrich this statement.

In March 2016 my friend A. and I visited a smoke sauna in Vantaa, Finland. Even though, it is not part of the Finnish tradition to wear swimsuit in the sauna, we were obliged to since it was a mixed sauna. In my conversation with A, we discussed the unease we both felt and that the swimsuit did not make her feel more secure, but rather more exposed. The swimsuit made the situation unnatural compared to the traditional way of being naked in the sauna. Additionally, it became a reason to become gazed upon more excessively due to the fact of being partially naked and not fully naked. Additionally, there

was a heterosexual couple flirting, kissing, and invading the privacy and tranquility of the space which I doubt would had happened in a similar sauna context if we were naked<sup>6</sup>.

Many nudist communities struggle with male gaze since they want to create a peaceful, tranquil environment. Notions of voyeurism and exhibitionism are highly linked with gazed upon. Voyeurism as defined by Karpman is a “pathological indulgence in looking at some form of nudity as a source of gratification in place of the normal sex act.” (Karpman found in Smith 1976, 585) Moreover, in the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, exhibitionism is defined as the sexual gratification of exposing one’s genitals to a stranger. As I mentioned earlier, being the source of stimuli for sexual pleasure is a common fear when naked or undressing, especially for women; a fear of being exploited and gazed upon. Many naturist communities explicitly state their no sex/eroticism policies in their websites with the communication with (new) members to prevent any unwanted behavior. (Naturistklubi ; Scandinavian Naturist Portal; Bare Oaks Family Naturist Park; Naturist Association Thailand) However, what actually makes the previous notions problematic is the matter of consent. Being gazed upon, being objectified, and staring naked or semi naked people as a sexual stimulus is a common act in various sexual practices, especially in BDSM<sup>7</sup>. As Pitagora states a situation or an interaction can be “characterized as an unwanted assault or a welcome physical exchange, depending on whether there exists a mutually understood psychological mindset, namely whether consent was obtained prior to the interaction” (Pitagora 2013, 28). Therefore, the exploitation happens when not all of the parties have agreed for what was going to happen but one takes advantage of the others in the situation.

Toxic masculinity as defined by the online *Urban Dictionary* is “[t]he socially constructed attitudes that men are expected to be: violent, unemotional, and sexually aggressive.” I will also add to the definition attitudes like arrogance, possessiveness, ignorance, and patronizing. This behavior is encouraged in daily life and found denser in fraternities, military, and environments open for sexual objectification. Unfortunately, this type of masculinity has already become naturalized and many people, especially men, believe that this how they should act and behave. Banet-Weiser & Milter state in their article about misogyny and social media that, because of the rising of popular feminism and asking women to become self-confident, men that indulge in toxic masculinity “perceive this as an attack on their rightful place in the social hierarchy” (Banet-Weiser &

---

<sup>6</sup> In conversation with A. S.

<sup>7</sup> As defined by the *online OED*, it is a sexual practice involving bondage, domination, sadism and masochism.

Milner 2015). The fear of losing their position in society and a random fear of potential economic loss produces more hatred and misogyny in order to validate themselves. (ibid).

Many men are ignorant and uneducated about the way they could perform their masculinities leading into the performance of dominance and sexism which is what they observe from media and older generations. B. Reis according to Mary Brady states that the way male heterosexuality is presented and performing today is fixed and impenetrable not allowing space for fluidity and the recognition of other masculine gendered representations. (Brady 2017) Brady continues by stating that the overly sexualized, dominant male ideal forces men into anxiety disorders. Additionally, men try to validate their maleness, and ultimately their identity through the exaggeration of their masculinity and by imposing themselves as better than the others. (ibid)

Media and pop culture are constantly encouraging toxic masculinity and all of the gender stereotypes and problematics. The media projects and idolizes a binary of how people should look like and behave, leading into normalized categories of macho men and feminine women. This strict binary ignores the queer cultures and anything that does not fall into the white, heterosexual, middle class supremacy. As presented by Diane Ponterotto, the cults of beauty, fitness, and thinness in everyday life force women in an unreachable journey to the ideal body. She states that “[a]lthough the normalized model of the beautiful body is obviously unachievable, it is promoted, nonetheless, as attainable.” (Ponterotto 2016, 135-138) Women should be slim, young, and athletic with fine skin, make up, expensive and sexy attire (Marie Claire; What Not To Wear) while men should be young, masculine and muscular, strong, and horny (Men’s Health; The Try Guys). Consequences of the normalized bodies, especially if one does not fit to that image, is to be considered undesirable and worthless leading into low self-esteem, shame, depression and other psychological disorders, and self-damaging actions. (Ponterotto 2016, 138-140)

### *Resisting the problematics*

Ponterotto suggests using embodiment and gendered embodiment as a tool to resist the normalized body image. Borrowing the concept from Connell and Braidotti, Ponterotto describes that gendered embodiment sees the body as a material and conceptually constructed being, as a multiplicity of lived experiences, as a numerous social and cultural connections, produced by changing bodies in relation to the gender structures. (ibid, 144) Additionally, she mentions that the media in the patriarchal societies homogenize the female body erasing other multiplicities of women identity. (ibid, 142) Both Ponterotto, Connell and Braidotti argue that shifting the perception from

the strict binaries to the multiplicity of femininities and masculinities, and emphasizing the variety of human behaviors will resist the normalized body image. (Ponterotto, Connell and Braidotti according to Ponterotto 2016, 145;).

Gender embodiment can also be seen in the form of the *hybrid body*, a negotiation between the limits and the structures of various identities and cultures. As she states:

“what can be more revolutionary than the affirmation of the right to negotiate one’s identity, to choose the when and how of one’s embodiment, to move freely within the multiple masculinities and femininities of the gender order, to ease the borders and reject the structures and strictures of binaries?” (Ponterotto, 146)

Alongside with the concept of the *hybrid body* comes the notion of location as well. The location of the subject and how he/she/they perform their gender and their identity extends the notion of multiplicity and includes race, culture, ethnicity, historicity, space and time. (ibid, 144-146)

### *Trans-people and nakedness*

This chapter until now focuses primarily on cis-gendered people, men and women and does not put much attention on the naked bodies of transgendered, intersex, and queer people. Even though, there is a nuance that with being naked we reveal our true identity and self away from the embellishment of clothes, accessories and labels, the trans philosopher Talia Mae Bettcher argues that the naked body can be deceptive. (Bettcher 2014, 399) As she states, the naked bodies are bound to a gender/sex system that defines our identity and gender status through the genitalia. The personhood is defined differently when naked and when dressed since the social systems that define and construct our identity have different visibility. (Bettcher 2012, 321) Not always the genitals express how someone defines her/them/himself which can produce uneasiness and anxiety when one is naked in front of others. This is applicable to both trans-people that did not partake a sex reassignment surgery and to non-binary, genderqueer, gender-fluid and other people. In those cases, being naked does not express the identity of the person but rather the viewer’s assumptions.

As part of my research, a trans-colleague suggested to visit *asktransgender* on *reddit.com* and ask for personal experiences people have when they share public changing rooms and showers. However, my post was not approved by the administration because it would produce a huge amount of body dysphoria. As they mentioned, people during

their transition can feel very intimidated to talk about their bodies and even more to talk about their naked bodies. Apart from feeling ashamed for even asking, I was wondering whether the way nakedness is constructed today is focusing only on cis-gendered people, not allowing space for others and other modalities of nakedness. However, I believe this topic requires other resources, more time, and a different, more sensitive research to focus specifically on nakedness and trans-people and give an inside on these issues and structures.

### *Nakedness and Media*

Nakedness and the act of being naked is highly associated with the normalized body image and who is allowed to be naked, who is not, how much, and in which context. The media stigmatized nakedness by promoting the idea that one should only be naked if he/she/they fit that category whereas the rest should just hide under their clothes and never see the light<sup>8</sup>. Nakedness is considered forbidden in the media but when it happens it is only in the frame of normalized sensuality with conventionally beautiful men and women. Nakedness has become a fearful and shameful topic even though people spend time naked in various everyday contexts.

The photographic collection of the lifestyle magazine *Down Town* is a good example of the conventionality of nakedness in the media. Every year Greek and Cypriot celebrities pose in nude to raise money for various foundations. The collection consist of muscular men in postures to accentuate their heteronormative masculinity and sexuality, and women in soft, gracious pictures. No variety of body shapes, no queerness. Moreover, the collection charges nakedness with negative connotations, limiting it for the few and worthy ones. The translated title of the collection is “70 Greek and Cypriot celebrities: Naked for good cause” implying that in other contexts being naked is something immoral but not in this case. Additionally, concealing from all of them the genitals and women’s breasts they stigmatize those body parts to promote a normalized sensuality; something to fear and to be ashamed of. (Down Town 2016)

### *The problematics, myself and my work*

At this point, I would like to discuss about my position in this field of gender and naked problematics as a Mediterranean, cis, athletic, gay man. I am quite close to the projected normalized body image which probably puts me into a more power position than others and hands me an easiness to experience nakedness. How to deal with that? At no point I

---

<sup>8</sup> Ironic!

want to be judgmental and patronizing towards others that have different positions and experience with gender and nakedness. On the contrary, I am interested to explore the multiplicity of nakedness and what other directions and possibilities there are apart from the one(s) that I am familiar with. Additionally, I am as well applying the previously mentioned tools to resist the patriarchal conditions and find my way through multiplicity and gender, masculine and feminine embodiments rejecting the toxic masculinities.

Coming back to my methodology, it was very important for me to create a trusting environment to engage with the concept of nakedness. Influenced by Butler and Ponterotto, I wanted to propose a space for multiplicity and fluidity instead of fixation, and remind people of their agency to decide the way they want to be naked and interact with the space and myself. This is what led into the five different bathing locations and proposing six bathing score for each location. The participants could propose a new bathing score if they/he/she was preferring a different one, or we could combine two or more bathing scores into a new one. This extends the thirty possibilities I suggested into endless ones since depending on the bathing location, the weather, the whole situation found there, the participant, myself and our connection, anything was possible, if we both consented to it.

Moreover, transparency was another crucial element of the performance. Through long emails, long texts, and a long video in the internet about what the performance aims, what is the performance structure, and who am I, I was aiming to present the nature of this project. (Konnaris 2017) By doing that, I wanted the participant to be aware of what is going to happen and decide if and how they/he/she wanted to participate in this project. Additionally, I was aiming to encourage people for their proposals and negotiate together our status with nakedness, intimacy, and how we would like to explore these concepts during our meeting. In a similar condition as with what Ponterotto suggests, I used those tools as a way to empower myself and the participants to explore and own our naked bodies.

What Ponterotto suggests as ways to resist the patriarchal societies and move towards gender justice is first to become aware of the current situations and our position in society. Continuing, she mentions to acknowledge and reject the fact that women are been objectified, patronized, a gazed-upon body, and deducted their agency. Additionally, to act upon your agency, renegotiate your identity, and to embody yourself and gender, whether is towards conventional beauty, against it, or something else. Moreover, move from singularity and homogeneity to plurality and fluidity, to willingly wander between masculinities and femininities and not fixate into the binaries. Those steps will produce

the feeling of empowerment, an “individual determination over one’s life and democratic participation in the life of one’s community” (Rappaport 1987, 121).

## NAKEDNESS IN PERFORMANCE

Nakedness in performance art is not a new trend but the relation is rather extensive. Artists from the 60s where undressing or being naked was part of their performance either to use their naked body as an open canvas, for provocation, for exposure. Artists like Carolle Schneemann, Ron Athey, Franko B, Stelarc, and Annie Sprinkle, and feminist collectives like Femen and Pussy Riot are just some from the endless examples of nakedness in performance art. The question where and how do I contextualize my artistic practice was always a difficult one to answer. I approach performance and nakedness from a perspective of closeness and coming together, to share a common activity with myself and others. For many, nakedness has been manifesting as a tool to provoke and to shock. However, I am interested in putting attention to the act of being naked and not gaining attention though nakedness.

In this chapter, I focus on some performances that involve nakedness and comment on the problematics I mentioned in the previous chapter: the objectification, the normalized body images, being gazed upon, and the notion of consent. Additionally, I will discuss about two performances that happened in Helsinki one in 2014 and the other in 2015 that relate with public nakedness and censorship. The examples I am providing come from performance art/live art and contemporary dance. Maybe the performances I will present do not have a clear distinction between these fields, if there is any, but I want to mention both since this is where I come from.

### *Nakedness and queer bodies*

First, I will start with Julischka Stengele a transdisciplinary artist who has been performing naked many times the past years. She is resisting and opposing the normalized body ideal by exposing her overweight body in performance. She approaches notions of the body, identity, power relations and hierarchies from a queer and feminist perspective. I will focus on her piece *Not for Oscar* which was performed during the *2nd Festival of Naked Forms*. I chose this piece since I appreciate its gentleness, subtleness, and powerful imagery. During the performance, she started sitting in the middle of the space naked kissing herself and leaving a mark from her red lipstick. After some time she invited the audience to put a purple lipstick and help leave a mark on her too. The piece was a statement to the rape culture of today. Each time a person was walking towards her to kiss her there was always discussion and negotiation about agreement and consent, where and how she/they/he is going to kiss her. (Stengele) The performance reveals notions of care, self-love, queer bodies and togetherness.

Stengele with her practice, and especially with this piece, takes authorship of her body, de-erases it from oblivion which is what media, and the normalized ideal body image

performs. By presenting her body, she put attention to it and re-claims its existence in the world. Additionally, engaging with the performance through the video documentation, the dialogical approach, the statements and discussion about consent directs the attention to the rape culture and how to take ownership of your decisions and body. Watching video excerpts from the documentation of the performance I am drawn to the way she communicated with the audience: one by one, approaching each situation as unique and equally important both for her and the participant. Continuing, her position in the performance works as an educator as well. Both for me and for the audience, seeing live the discussion about consent. The audience experience the necessity of negotiating, agreeing about, and taking care of the situation and the people involved in it.

In a similar note to Stengele, the Austrian choreographer Doris Uhlich in her piece *more than enough* (2009) questions the stereotypes of physique and the ideal body types in contemporary dance. In the early stages of her career she has been rejected and criticized by being overweight which is not acceptable in the dance field. In one part of *more than enough* she stands alone on stage, wearing only heels covering herself with baby powder performing her so called *flesh dance* in baroque music. She starts shaking body parts making the powder transform into a soft cloud around her. (Uhlich) Similarly with Stengele, she rejects the body normativity of everyday life and the contemporary dance world, reclaiming who should be able and allowed to dance.

Afterwards, Uhlich created a workshop which led into various performance versions called *More Than Naked*. This is how I first met Uhlich, and I am happy to be a part of the first generation of dancers performed in this piece. Both the workshop and the performance was focusing on the physicality of the body but especially of the physicality of the flesh. We were exploring how does the flesh moves, shakes, wobbles, sounds, and feels both individually but in teams as well. I appreciated how many times I felt powerless in my own athletic skin because it was getting very exhausting and difficult to shake my flesh since I did not have much to shake. On the other hand, the more overweight, not-fit participants/performers were able to focus on different parts of their body/flesh and have a greater variety and range of movement. Uhlich shifted the dynamic and put attention in a different physicality and materiality of the bodies. (*More than Naked* 2013)

I will continue and end the queer nakedness with another piece called *sexy MF*, directed by Ana Borralho & João Galante. This piece has been performed multiple times in various countries and each time they selected local performers through a workshop they led. The piece is about eroticism, social gender identities, and strong seductions. The performers are sitting next to each other in sofas, naked with make-up portraying the other sex/gender. In front of them there are empty sofas with headphones. The audience are

invited to sit in front of the performers where a play of flirtation, strong sensuality and attraction is happening. The audience can sit in the sofas and get involved in the erotic game or stay behind and become a voyeur. The atmosphere was quite intense and steamy! (*sexy MF* 2016)

I watched this performance in Helsinki as part of the Side Step festival 2016. Even though it had a strong impact on me, I am not entirely sure how I feel about it. It is one of those pieces that raises a lot of questions and discussions after its performance whether people like it or not which in that sense makes me appreciate it. On the one hand, it provides visibility to non-binary people, even though I do not know if this is how the performers define their gender identity. Additionally, it opens up the notion of sexuality and other sexual practices. The audience become voyeurs, and the performers exhibitionists but in a frame that all of them consent to be there. On the other hand, the maybe-non-binary performers become exoticized enlarging the notion of otherness.

This performance reminds me of Bettcher's comment that the naked presentation of the body might not be the true identity of the person, since the genitals might not express the correct gender identity of the person. (Bettcher 2014, 399) The performers in their seductive play were both hiding and revealing their genitals while continuously flirting with us. The gender identity became a mystery which is a social and political comment to the immediate assumption of what the other person's gender is. However, I also believe there is gender appropriation: both what men are, what women are, what non-binary people are. My impression of the piece was that they did not move beyond the gender stereotypes but rather recycling what is already a problematic.

### *Nakedness through touch*

After discussing about the visual presence of queer bodies, I will continue by approaching nakedness as not only something you can see but also something you can experience through other senses as well. Touching a naked person can be equally problematic and related to objectification in the same way as gazing upon a naked body. However, as María Puig de la Bellacasa mentions, seeing and vision have been the main forms to attain knowledge in the modern world. Therefore, she welcomes touch as an alternative way of engaging with knowledge politics, a way of "thinking from marginalized existences". (2009, 298-299) Additionally, she introduces Donna Haraway's concept of *situated knowledges* and argues that touching can provide a way to experience each other as an individual and not as a generalized version of humans. (2009, 299)

Valie Export's *Touch Cinema* is one of the classics of performance art that involves a touch-experience of nakedness. It is a street performance with her wearing a cardboard

box in front of her torso asking people passing by to touch her breasts. This piece is a statement towards the women sexual objectification and exploitation in the patriarchal society of the 60s. (Export 1989) Export was covered without visually exposing any so called indecent body parts such as genitals or her breast. However, her naked torso became visible, or rather touchable, through the hands of the audience. Her nakedness became acknowledged and perceived only when the hands were touching her. Export first performed the piece in 1968 and then re-performed it for multiple times and has been reenacted by various artists, but I will stand to the one of Boryana Rossa. Rossa had double mastectomy due to breast cancer and her reenactment was empowering female breast cancer survivors. She states that “women like me experience great depression mostly because of the superficial and stereotypical understanding of femininity and sexualized female image related to the presence of a breast” (Rossa)

*Hand* was a performance for one person at a time, a collaboration between the Cypriot choreographer Lia Haraki and myself. This piece was similar to the notion of gay glory hole since the audience was placing his/her/their hand in a hole through a black curtain where they could experience through touch the naked body of another person. Even though, I was the one performing naked, we did not publicize my identity and gender so that it would not become personal but have the feeling of touching a body and not my body. The performance was mostly pre-choreographed but with space for adjustments depending on how the audience was reacting through his/her/their hand. The audience was invited to experience a journey to my body’s texture, a duet between our hands, an acknowledgement of the physicality and materiality of the body. By removing the sight from the equation since they could not see me at all, it became an experience about touching, care, embodied communication, and coming together. (*Hand* 2014)

### *Naked censorship in Helsinki*

The following is a very dear example of artwork/situation because I have been discussing about it in many many different places with various people and I feel it became part of me. In November 2014 Dries Verhoeven was invited to the festival *Baltic Circle* in Helsinki with the piece *Ceci n’est pas...* It is a performative installation which happens over a series of days with different people being in a glass box in a central public square. In the last phase of the installation named *Cesi n’est pas mon corps*, an 83-year-old woman would sit in a chair naked wearing only her heels and a mask copying the face of a younger woman. (Verhoeven) However, the Finnish police denied access to the performance because of public nudity which ended up with the performer wearing underwear during the piece. The police claimed “public obscenity” on the grounds that

the woman's nakedness would have offended people passing from Lasipalatsi square. Finland has been the only country so far this piece has been censored which I, and other Finnish people, think is ridiculous since supposedly Finland is quite open about nakedness. (Baltic Circle)

In August 2015, few months after the incident with *Baltic Circle* there was another festival called *Streetlevel* with a very similar situation that was not censored by the police. Beate Linne, a 38-year-old woman at the time, in *Encountering with flies* was standing still in a box full of flies and was visible through the net that was keeping the flies in the box. The performance was happening in the public square Kansalaistori in Helsinki. If I simplify the performances to see the differences, on one hand we have an 83-year-old naked woman with high heels and a mask in Lasipalatsi, and on the other, a 38-year-old naked woman with flies in Kansalaistori. What made the latter decent and what the former obscene? Was the supposed obscenity coming from the age of the performer? Are people used to seeing young naked women around the media and the image of the old naked female body would produce anxieties? Or did the flies acted as a piece of clothing to see Linne as dressed and proper? Watching a video excerpt from the performance the audience and the passers did not seem offended, or at least I did not feel they were. (*Streetlevel* 2015)

In my interview with Katri Kainulainen, the organized and curator of *Streetlevel* and her partner Maximilian Latva, I asked about the performance and how they manage not to have Linne's piece censored. She replied that when they informed the police about the performance they left out the fact that she was going to be naked. They informed Linne about the situation relating to the incident with *Baltic Circle* and they decided to continue with it. During the performance, police came over, stayed in their car for a while but did not engage with the festival. In their opinion, Linne as a beautiful young slim woman was not considered obscene but the naked body of an old woman became offensive and affected the decision of the police officers. Latva stated that for example if in the box was a naked man it would have been different and probably more threatening to the visitors. We discussed about the power and the authority of the police officer who can decide whether the situation is considered offensive or not. The situation succumbs to the eye of the beholder and in this case the Finnish police. In the end, we all agreed that the main reason Verhoeven's piece was censored was because of the performer's age. (Katri Kainulainen & Maximilian Latva 22 September 2017).

The censorship incident is very interesting especially since it happened in Helsinki: the city I am working and having *A Bathing Performance*. The artists and projects that I presented relate in some way to my work, my interest and how I approach nakedness.

Many of them have affected the way I work with nakedness and how my interests have been formulated. Especially Ulich and Haraki with whom I had collaborated for many years have influenced the notion of fun and playfulness, touch and care, and naturalness of nakedness. Even though *A Bathing Performance* is a performance for one audience member at a time I only mention one 1-1 piece that involves nakedness. However, in the following chapter I approach on a discursive and artistic level the 1-1 performance and how I relate it to my artistic practice. Then I will also discuss about Adrian Howells who is another artist from the live art field that explores similar concepts with me in a 1-1 format.

## 1-1(ONE WITH ONE) PERFORMANCE

### 1-1: *with/ to/ on*

While exploring the concept of performance with one person, I arrived and created the term *1-1 (one with one)* to direct the focus on mutual exchange and multidimensionality. In the summer of 2016, I ended up with the book *It's all allowed* about Adrian Howells and his intimate performances. In the book the writers, the editors, and Howells use the term *one-to-one*, or *1 to 1*. (Heddon and Johnson 2016, *passé*) I was intrigued by the use of the preposition *to* since I was familiar with and personally using the term *on* and *1 on 1* to describe the performances for one audience member at a time. Afterwards, I decided to explore in a linguistic and etymological perspective what those two terms/concepts describe. *Merriam Webster* defines *one-on-one* as:

1. : playing directly against a single opposing player
- 2.: involving a direct encounter between one person and another
- 3.: involving two people who are dealing with or competing against each other directly<sup>9</sup>

On a similar note, *OED* mentions that *one-to-one* which in North America is the same as one-one-one, means the following:

1. : denoting or referring to a situation in which two parties come into direct contact, opposition, or correspondence

In my understanding, both dictionaries and both terms propose an opposing relation between the two subjects. It is one conflicting, against, or competing against the other. When the prepositions are used individually in sentences they produce a one dimensionality and a hierarchal power relation between the two subjects. A nail *on* the wall. A nail *to* the wall. A nail *with* the wall. These three sentences and the prepositions *on*, *to*, and *with* suggest a different relation between the nail and the wall. *On* and *to* have a notion of dependency, possession and I might say aggression. On the other hand and in my understanding, the preposition *with* connects the nail and the wall, suggests they are with the same status and there is a mutuality coming from it. Exploring these prepositions, I decided to introduce *with* to my project since it proposes to see the meeting

---

<sup>9</sup> The 3rd one is the definition for the “English Language Learners”.

as a mutual exchange with multi-dimensionality and not with only one direction but many.

### *Becoming naked with*

The notion of *1-1(one with one)* is also related to Haraway's notion of *becoming with*. Haraway uses this term in a similar way as Timothy Morton does with *interconnectedness* (von Froreich 2016, 12 ), to describe that we are always in relation to others. Whether others are humans, animals, plants, weather, materials, concepts and ideas. *Becoming with* proposes to move beyond the human exceptionism and the notion of individuality by learning to pay attention to and respect others, our companions. (Haraway 2008, 19 & 23) She adds to the notion of *becoming with* that when engaging with others in any way, there is also a responsibility to them. She sees the world as a huge web of connections that produce an interconnected history and future (Haraway 2008, 34-37).

What is similar to the notion of Haraway's *becoming with* and the *1-1(one with one)* performance I am proposing is that the meeting is always in relation to the other person and ultimately what meanings we attach to nakedness. Additionally, it explores the meeting not as two individual experiences but as a collective embodied one. That does not mean that there is only one singular meaning and experience but that our experiences are interwoven and affected by each other. "To be one is always to become with many" (Haraway 2008, 4). Continuing, both the notion of nakedness and the structure of *1-1(one with one)* performance requires to both pay attention to, respect, and take care of the other in order for this coming together to be consensual and not problematic. From my understanding, what the *one-with-one* concept adds to the performance is an activation of the participant. It is a meeting with two people and both of us need to take responsibility of the situation, according to our individual needs, wishes, and expectations.

Even though, Haraway introduces this concept to move away from the human domination over other beings, I am focusing mostly on humans and not so much on non-humans. I do think that other beings influence the meeting and the way we experience nakedness, but in this part and in my thesis, I concentrate on how the two people involved in the situation are interconnected. It is about *becoming naked with* the others in the situation. Having said that, in the following chapter when I discuss about what happened during the performance, I will mention how other beings such as the location, mosquitos, weather, and drunk people affected the meeting and the meaning of nakedness.

## *Kester and dialogical aesthetics, Bourriaud and relational art, and everyday life*

The way I approach the notion of performance in this project borrows from Grant Kester and dialogical aesthetics as well. He developed an “aesthetic and theoretical paradigm of the work of art as process – a locus of discursive exchange and negotiation” (Kester 2004, 12). In these types of art works, the artist is seen as a facilitator, supporting the space and the ground for interaction and communication. The participant becomes a co-artist since he/she/they are an important part of the creation too. The artwork focuses on the dialogue and the conversation between the artist and the visitor(s). (Heddon and Johnson, 19-20) On a similar note, relational art and Nicolas Bourriaud explore the notions of art and performance focusing on human interactions and the social context. Additionally, he sees the artwork as a network of patterns and forms; a moment or an object to produce sociability and interactions. (Bourriaud 2002, 18-24)

Throughout my performance, the discussion is a crucial aspect of the performance and so is the negotiation, the exchange and the agreement for a common ground. The communication both before and during the meeting are part of the methodology to open up to each other and create a trusting environment. The participants also have an important role, agency, and responsibility in the creation of the meeting which transforms them into a co-artist and also a user of the already existing structure. The way I approach this project is as a meeting where we come together with one person at a time in a specific location and decide together how we want to engage with nakedness. The meanings each of us gives to nakedness, even our mood, wishes and expectations, and history are part of the negotiations and how we perform our naked body and how we interact with each other.

To see performance as a meeting, a *becoming with* another person also blends the notions of performance and everyday life. Just like the 60s, the Fluxus movements, Alan Kaprow’s happenings, and Joseph Beuys’ statement *everyone is an artist*. The questions what is a performance and why, is also present in this project. The question is transformed, for example, into why a meeting in a sauna or bathing with another person in a bathtub is considered a performance? From my point of view, the framework of the performance is what makes it one. I relate to what the art historian Anna Dezeuze said: “the artwork takes the non-artwork as its subject matter and simultaneously makes a point about how this subject matter is presented” (Dezeuze 2006, 144). Similarly, we have a meeting in the sauna, or a casual conversation about nakedness in some location that can also be a quotidian ritual. The meeting puts attention to and comments about the status of and our relation to nakedness in everyday life. Additionally, I purposely use

different everyday acts as an entry point and produce familiarity and accessibility to the participants to find their way to/through nakedness. The reason I hold on to the status of a performance is because the framework of a performance makes the meeting safer and more trusting than if it would be just a bathing meeting with a stranger.

### *Adrian Howells and The Pleasure of Being*

Now that I have discussed about my aim and intention with the 1-1 (*one with one*) performance I will moved to a performance by Adrian Howells in which he explores similar concepts with my artistic practice in a *one-to-one* format. *The Pleasure of Being: Washing/Feeding/Holding*(2010-2011) is a performance for one person at a time in which Howells bathes the audience-participant, covers them in a towel, feeds them chocolate and holds them. It is a 30 minute performance where the audience can be bathed naked or wear a swimsuit. Before entering the performance, the audience-participant<sup>10</sup> reads the instructions and the clear description what is going to happen. Howells is dressed waiting for him/her/them and provide them these services. (Heddon and Johnson 2016, 67)

*The Pleasure of Being* is very similar to *A Bathing Performance* since both explore notions of care, intimacy, bathing and to a certain extent nakedness for one person at a time. Based on his experience and the comments from the audience-participants, Howells describes his performance as a piece about giving care and pleasure to the audience while being a caring person. (Johnson 2016, 112-115) From my perspective, what is different in my approach from Howells is the notion of multidimensionality and service. Howells to a certain degree sees himself as a martyr as a person that constantly gives, and offers services, takes care of others but do not receive any. Even though, few times participants suggested to offer their services back to him, he refused by saying that “the experience is about you” (ibid, 116). In *A Bathing Performance*, I do not see the performance as a service towards each other but as a meeting with a mutual exploration of these concepts through the act of bathing. I see myself as a facilitator and there to support the participants wishes and needs but also mine too. And as Heddon and Johnson state regarding the dialogical aesthetics “[t]o be open to what is said, to hear openly, is to be open too to the transformation of the self” (Heddon and Johnson, 2016, 20).

Howells, according to Heddon and Johnson directs the audience to partake to challenging and intimidating situations that make the participant vulnerable and exposed. “The risks, Howells asserts, are worthwhile when intelligently designed and

---

<sup>10</sup> This is term Howells used for the audience members of his performances (Heddon and Johnson 2016, 27).

held, and can be coped with by even the most exposed of participants” (ibid, 31). From my point of view, I do not, or I hope I do not pressure people to do something they do not want to. I do not believe it is my decision how one should engage with an intimidating topic, especially if he/she/they is a stranger to me. Whether a meeting is worthwhile or not is up to the participants to decide depending on what meanings do they link to the word.

The notion of *1-1 (one with one)* performance also resists some of the problematics of nakedness as discussed in the previous chapters. It invites people to be an active member of the meeting that have similar responsibilities with me, with the main task to take care of themselves in the current situation. It is an invitation for a mutual exchange and exploration trying to refuse/erase or better minimize any hierarchical structure between the two of us: to *become naked with* the other. The participant has the opportunity to select, change and/or propose how to engage with nakedness and the related concepts in a way that feels comfortable and exciting. It reminds them of their agency, empowering them to take responsibility of their actions and self in the particular situation.

## THE STRUCTURE OF A *BATHING PERFORMANCE*

In this chapter, I will introduce the structure and the main parts of the project *A Bathing Performance*. Before going deeper into what happened in June 2017 and explore the various happenings, expectations and insights this project brought to me, I will share what I was proposing as structure and some of the main components for the performance. A huge part of the project and a personal concern I had was how to attract people into this very specific type of performance, how to inform them about it and how to involve them with the exploration of nakedness. Because of its complexity, the communication was a crucial aspect, especially to reintroduce my concept of nakedness away from the problematics. In the following pages, I will discuss about my communication of the performance but also about important elements of the project such as the variety of the performance's locations, the guest books, the scorebook with the bathing proposals, and my decision for no visual documentation but a text-based one. I will continue and conclude this chapter, by sharing the importance of the discussion in this project and the structure of the 1-1 performance.

*A Bathing Performance* is divided into two parts: The first one is the discussions about nakedness and related topics and the second one is a 1-1 (*one with one*) performance that invites one audience member at a time to have a bathing meeting with me. It focuses on creating a gentle and safe environment to explore one's nakedness in an intimate, platonic way. There is a strict and rather complex structure connected to the bathing happening with selecting where and how to perform the bathing. However, the multiple options keep it more protected, playful, open, and inviting. The proposals work as suggestions and as a space for the participants to experience nakedness in the way they feel excited and comfortable.

### *Communication*

As I mentioned earlier, having a clear communication about what was going to happen in the performance and the discussions was a crucial aspect of the project. By openly sharing the aim and the structure, the participants would know if and how they want to engage with nakedness and intimacy. Ultimately, it is a matter of consent and awareness of what the participants are agreeing to or what they are concerning of agreeing to. I decided to have long texts on the internet and email communication that would describe the structure and the aims of the performance. My aim was to prepare the audience about what is going to happen, trigger some thoughts about the possibilities of the performance

and the multiplicity/potentiality of nakedness. A vital part was to inform that I will not pressure or force people to undress and become physically naked if they do not want to. On the contrary, the main purpose is to explore and to find a way how to engage with nakedness in a way we both feel comfortable.

During the promotion of the performance, I regularly used the statements “a happening of nakedness and care”, and “to explore nakedness in an intimate, platonic way” (Konnaris 2017). By using the words care and intimacy it does not become intimate by default but rather is a proposal for a direction to see the performance. This relates to what Inness proposes, that intimacy depends of the meaning and associations we connect with the action, and not because is socially constructed as such. (Inness 1992, 76) From my point of view, by agreeing to join the performance and share a private side of ourselves there is a notion of exposure even if we do not physically undress but explore nakedness in other ways. Additionally, by exposing ourselves we give access to the other to participate in a personal and private moment with us. Moreover, there is a form of intimacy that does not involve the other but is directed towards our own self. I, and I assume the participant too, expose myself to myself and I give my permission to be part of this meeting and what is connected to it. I take care of myself and the other by not going further from what we can handle and transform intimacy into intimidation.

A huge part of my process was to find the right words to promote the performance and my aims. The word nakedness is loaded with the problematics I mentioned in the previous chapter and many times is associated with fear and intimidation. Since my intention was not to objectify or use anyone, I needed to find ways to promote my aims, showing that I am aware of the problematics but without emphasizing too much on them. If I would accentuate the problematics then the performance would have been all about them and not exploring other aspects of nakedness and its multiplicity. In my texts, I was avoiding sexually loaded words/phrases and words that could direct into something else than a performance about platonic exploration of nakedness and care. For example, in the texts I switched the phrases (1) *naked discussions* into *discussions about nakedness* and from (2) *a meeting with nakedness* into *a happening of nakedness*. Even though, in my mind all of the above express the same which is (1) to talk about nakedness and (2) to meet and explore nakedness, for some people can be misleading especially if they have not engaged with me and my work. “Are we going to talk about nakedness or are we going to talk while being naked?” is a question I received from a colleague when she read my first draft text. Therefore, I was being more sensitive about the meaning of words and which of them are more neutral and describe practically when, where and what is going to happen in this project. In this way, I provide awareness and transparency about my aims and intentions.

The whole communication and PR of the performance was happening in a casual, friendly tone. I decided to use the internet as a way to communicate and not for example a phone call, a letter, or a meeting in person, to give space for the participant to explore, digest, and get ready by themselves/himself/herself for the performance. For many what I am proposing is a very intimidating meeting: being naked with a stranger in the context of a 1-1 participatory performance. For that reason, I wanted to give time and space to the participant to shift their/his/her mentality and state of being, if needed. Additionally, from my experience in Finland, booking online a ticket for a performance is very common and people have regular access to the web and their emails which does not add any extra pressure. On the contrary, it gives the time to both me and the participants to prepare. Additionally, since the meeting and the whole bathing performance is about intimacy and closeness, I and maybe the others too, needed to have time apart from each other before and after the meeting. In this way, the aloneness shapes the coming together and gives space for individuality as well.

### *Rules/Instructions*

Throughout the email communication I was also introducing the rules/instruction of the bathing meeting. Apart from that, I was stating them both orally and by asking the participants to read them from a paper, during the 1-1 (*one with one*) performance. Below you will find the *Rules/ Instructions*:

- *The performance is an exploration of nakedness in an intimate, platonic way.*
- *The score is there as a suggestion. The interpretation and performance is up to you.*
- *We do not do anything to intentionally harm or assault the other.*
- *If you have a question please ask.*
- *If at any point, you want the performance to stop, say “**I would like to go home**”.*
- *There will be no recording of this performance.*

The rules, which were influenced by Julius Elo and his workshop *Body/Power*, were structuring and framing what was going to happen. They were introducing, how to interact with each other, how to interpret and use the scorebook and remind that there will not be any recording of the meeting. I decided to have this document printed in a white A4 paper instead of handwriting them in the score book to separate the two, put similar attention to each one, and make it more official. Additionally, the safety phrase *I would like to go home* was present in case someone wanted the performance to stop. This

phrase embodied an action to leave the situation, of going away, whether it was happening in *The Forest*, at *Sompasauna*, *The Seaside*, or in *The Bathtub*. However, to have a similar impact when the performance was happening in *The Participant's Home*, I switched the safety phrase into I would like to go to the forest. (Elo 2016)

The rule document also acted as an agreement between us. Since I decided to be very casual, warm, and friendly throughout the communication it was important to have a clear structure to balance the atmosphere between casualness and strictness. Having a more formal document which I introduce both orally but also give time to read individually, is one of the elements that frame the performance and highlights the structure. Additionally, the document contextualized nakedness and the intimate meeting in the present space and time. It presents the need to provide a trusting and safe space between us, away from any assault or harm that many times nakedness is associated with. The necessity to have the agreement is only because nakedness can be problematic and produce a mistreating relationship.

### *A Bathing Performance – The Scorebook*

Another important element and material of the performance is the scorebook, a collection of thirty bathing scores. Scores or as they were called in the 60s, Fluxus or event scores are proposals, instructions, or descriptions of a performance. Usually are in the form of text, handwritten or typed, but some were just images. (Friedman and Smith 2002, 1-2) My aim with the bathing scores and the scorebook was to provide a range of how to engage with nakedness, intimacy, and bathing and as I mentioned numerous times, explore the multiplicity of nakedness. They were influenced from concepts of nakedness, washing, playfulness, gentleness, and care. Additionally, the location and the relation to the space and the environment was also affecting my understanding on bathing, nakedness, and intimacy and therefore the scores. The series of actions I chose were coming from my understanding of everyday actions, like bathing, sunbathing, talking, visiting the sauna, swimming, undressing, listening to music and singing, and coming from my background in dance, actions like swaying, staying still, dancing, and connecting through an object.

I decided to have scores in a more instructive, descriptive, written language than an abstract one. I wanted to have freedom and options on what to do but directed the scores and structure them in a way that does not feel chaotic. The writing tone was casual and inviting rather than imposing. My aim was to have clear instructions so that the participants will not get anxious what they should do when performing the score. I wanted to direct our focus on sharing the space and engaging with nakedness, and not thinking

what should we do. The meeting could be very intimidating and stressful for people, therefore in my mind, not having clear instructions could produce more anxiety. Additionally, I used the personal pronoun *we* to produce a feeling of togetherness and that we were both in the same situation. I would perform the same scores as the participant and I follow the same rules and instructions. Moreover, the use of *Let's* provides a feeling of encouragement and invitation. The performance of these words and the tone were shifting the feeling of scores from strong dominant instructions into suggestions, invitations and proposals.

Some of the scores had more playful tone, others more explorative and others more intimate. However, the reader goes through all of them and the feeling each one creates passes to the others, influencing and merging with all. I had a variety of scores proposing various situations so that the participants can select the one that feels most comfortable at the current time. Having always a score that does not involve undressing was part of my methodology to not force it but have it as an invitation. This was also a way to create a more trusting environment. Additionally, the score works as a written agreement, as a statement on what we approve doing during the performance and how we interact with each other.

Through the scores and the score book, the multiplicity of nakedness open up. Even though, we only perform one score, even if it is a combination of others, all of the scores come to life in the readers mind and imagination. (Buuck 2016) When we perform a score, the score receives a physicality and materiality. However, by performing the score we limit it into our actions deleting other possibilities of how we could perform the score. On the other hand, when we read a score there is the consideration of what-ifs: what if we would perform another score, how would I feel during that score, and so on. The possibilities are endless since the imagination can lead us anywhere. The score works as an entry point for what performing naked could be.

I decided to handwrite the scores in a small A6 sized, brown paper book to be more personal and more immediate but still with a clear structure; more fragile but also more tangible, like an artifact. Additionally, handwriting and having smudges in pages, produces the feeling that during the meeting mistakes are allowed. In the middle of the performance month, I decided to slightly change the format of the book to look less fixed and absolute but more like a fluid, updatable one. I cut the book into five smaller parts, one for each category/location. Each part included the six scores and some empty pages for people to add themselves new scores, or at least give the possibility to add one. Each part was connected by staplers which made it easier for me to update them if needed. The five smaller parts of the book were inside the thick brown cover. There was playfulness

and anticipation coming from the not-trapped notebook. It was vital to have an updatable book since the performance was about fluidity, multiplicity and adapting to our desires and needs to the current space and time of the performance. While the performance was happening and I listened to the participants' comments I felt that updating the scorebook was important to have a well round structure and possibilities/scores. By doing that, I promote more intensely the idea of multiplicity since each score can affect and influence each other even by staying next to each other and sharing the pages of the same book.

For the written part of my thesis, I decided to include a replica of the book instead of coping and merging it with the rest of the academic text. In this way, the book holds its materiality and identity as individual. It was a thorough and thoughtful process of exploring how the scores should be presented to the participants and in what form. I was exploring if I should describe them orally, ask the participants to read them from a book, from printed pages, from email, or from a text message. Additionally, the relationship one has with holding the book and the six smaller parts of the book puts more attention, precision, and intensity to the words and therefore to the actions and the engagement with nakedness. It was a vital part of the performance and the research with that materiality therefore it was important to keep it as such for the written part as well. The scores that are now in the scorebook were last updated in the end of June 2017, after the end of the performance period.

### *Locations*

The variety of the locations I was proposing for the performance was also supporting the idea of multiplicity. I had five different proposals for the location of the performance providing the opportunity to select what is the most suitable place to engage with nakedness. The five locations were *The Bathtub*, *Sompasauna*, *The Forest*, *The Seaside*, and *The Participant's Home*. I chose these locations to open up the range of what the performance can be, varying between public and private, everyday and intimate, urban, or natural locations. I was curious to explore how the bathing meeting and the concept of nakedness would change in different locations and what other possibilities, problematics and discourse will surface. In April 2017 as part of my preparation I included some tryout performances. During those tryouts, there was an option of having the performance at my home as well which was not part of the performances in June 2017. In conversation with my colleagues and one of the tryout-participants, inviting someone to my home to have a shower together sounded too intimidating and suspicious. Therefore, I decided to remove that option so it will not be misleading and transfer a suspicious quality when visiting the other locations as well.

A week before the 1-1 performance I sent an email in which I introduced the locations among other elements of the performance. In the pdf document about the locations, I was describing the atmosphere and how the place physically appears both in text but also by having a picture of the location. Additionally, I shared some important aspects of the space that the participants should know before selecting the location such as the warm water in the camp shower and the self-serviced sauna. Similarly with the scorebook, I was constantly updating the document to grasp as much as possible the environment and the atmosphere of the location. As the performances were taking place new information about the spaces were forthcoming which were affecting the location, our meeting, and ultimately the relation with nakedness. For example, I added that in *Sompasauna* is possible to engage with drunk people, and at *The Forest* with mosquitos since their strong presence was influencing the meeting. This is something I will talk more in depth in the following chapter about what happened during the performance in June 2017.

My intention with the document was to be as transparent as possible about how the place is and what are potential risks or elements that might produce any unease. Another main part of this document was to mention the possibility of other people being present during our meeting/performance. It was important to have options of locations that included other people and options that we would be alone since I did not know the participants preferences. In my initial plan I would have had only one location, a private apartment but in conversation with colleagues I realized that could be intimidating. Meeting a stranger alone in a private place, especially a private apartment could create unease for many people and could feel safer and more protected if the meeting was happening in a public space.

### *Guest books*

The guest books epitomize the multiplicity of nakedness and the multiplicity of the project since they provide a look into all of the performances. In this way, the guest books do not normalize the project into one singular notion of the performance, of nakedness, intimacy and care but share glimpses of people's experiences. The guest books were used in the last part of the performance, when both the participant and myself were writing our reflections and what happened during the previous parts. Having it like that, the documentation was integrated with the process and not a distinct part of the project. In the guest books, I had available some questions that could work as entry points to the writing that the participants could decide if they wanted to follow or write freely their thoughts. The proposed questions were: "What did I experience? What has happened?", "Choose 5 words to describe your experience.", "What were you expecting and how do you

feel afterwards?”, “Any thoughts on nakedness coming from the performance?” and “How does the space influence/affect the concept of nakedness, intimacy and care? What kind of nakedness does the space allow/provide?” (A Bathing Performance - Guest Books) At this point, the two different guest books, the one I used and the one of the participants hold our memories and thoughts of all the performances.

### *The discussions*

After mentioning some of the important parts of the performance, I will continue about the structure of the project and why I choose both a 1-1 meeting and a discussion format for my Thesis Project. Nakedness and intimacy as well as touching and exposure can be very intimidating topics especially in the frame of a *1-1 (one with one)* participatory performance. Exploring those themes in *A Bathing Performance* I knew that the amount of people interested to participate would be quite limited. Therefore, I decided to add some discussions to my project to attract more people and talk about nakedness and related topics. Additionally, I wanted to give the opportunity for people to interact and get acquainted with me, my presence and my direction with this project, prior to the 1-1 performance. The discussions were a less intimidating way to engage with nakedness which could allow people to make a step closer to my work.

My first exploration with the discussion in this format, happened with the piece *Nakedness is* at the *New Performance Turku Festival (NPTF)* in 2016. During those discussions, I was amazed by people’s interest to talk about nakedness and the other perspectives people brought. We discussed about personal experiences with nakedness, issues that bother us, things we like about nakedness but also about what is the current situation with nakedness today. Additionally, there were people that came to meet with me and decide whether they wanted to participate in the performance in the swimming pool or not. The discussions worked as an introduction of myself, and my work with nakedness and more specifically what is going to happen in the upcoming performance. (*Nakedness is 2016*)

The discussions in *NPTF* had a similar format and concept with the ones in *A Bathing Performance*. There were two discussions happening, one in the 1st of June as a starting point and the second one on the 30th of June as a closing one<sup>11</sup>. Both discussions happened in the apartment in Latokartano, Helsinki, the one I used for *The Bathtub* space. I sprat small papers with questions and thoughts about nakedness and related

---

<sup>11</sup> I was planning to have four discussions on the 1<sup>st</sup>, the 10<sup>th</sup>, the 20<sup>th</sup> and the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2017 but due to the excessive work of the 6<sup>th</sup> International Lapsody festival 2017, I decided to focus only on two discussions.

topics in the main room's floor. In between those small papers there were fruits, biscuits, nuts and tea to accommodate our discussion. We were sitting on the floor having an indoor picnic and a casual, informal discussion about nakedness. The notes were triggering thoughts and initiating the discussion. Some of the notes' texts were:

“Is NAKEDNESS gender-based?”, “Places you SHOULD/SHOULD NOT be naked: ”, “When does nakedness become offensive?”, “I like being naked when...”, “Naked alone VS naked with others”, “Nakedness and men/women/trans/queer”, “Naked in public VS Naked in private”, “When do you feel comfortable naked?”, “Naked as an act of care”, “Nakedness through touch”, “When I think of nakedness I think of...”, “Who cannot be naked?”, “What does it mean to be naked?”

The themes that I wanted to relate and discuss were nakedness in relation to gender, nakedness and playfulness, intimacy and care, naked in public and private space, the definition of nakedness, exhibitionism and voyeurism. I had no expectations about the conversations but sharing a common space and discussing about nakedness. There was no need/wish from my perspective for being academic, or extremely theoretical. I wanted to create a self-directed conversation in which the notions that needed to be discussed will come up from the participants.

### *The 1-1 (one with one) performance: The participants' road to the bathing meeting*

I could divide the performance into two main parts: the communication before the meeting and the meeting at the location. The first part started right after the partaker booked the day and time for the bathing performance. It was when both the participant and I received an email to confirm the participation and mention how we proceed after that. We started with some flickering of anticipation, excitement, worries, and imagination from what the email and the booking might produce. Continuing with the communication, I sent a personal email introducing what is going to happen in our meeting, what they needed to bring with them, what I would provide, a brief explanation and some examples of performance scores. The main material of this email was the pdf-document about the locations. The participants were asked to select one, or propose a new one and reply back to me two days before the performance.

After the email communication, we met at the selected location. If they chose *The Bathtub*, *The Forest* or *The Seaside* I suggested meeting in a specific place close by the locations and walk together to the space. For *Sompasauna*, they could join me for heating the sauna before, and if they decided to have the performance in *Their Home* I met them

directly there. My intention was to have some time in person before the 1-1 performance to get accustomed to each other's presence. Before the bathing happening began, I introduced my aims, my intention and the rules of the performance. Afterwards, I share the *A Bathing Performance - Scorebook* and ask them to read the six proposed scores and decide what they want us to perform. Then, we got ready and performed it. When the performance of the score ended and we got dressed and moved into writing our reflections on the guest books. Concluding, was the separation. If we met at *The Bathtub* they were leaving the apartment, at *The Forest*, *The Seaside* and *Sompasauna* we were walking together heading to civilization, and at *The Participant's Home* I was getting out.

We decide together how we want this meeting to take place depending on our wishes, needs, expectations and mood at the current time. An important aspect for this project was to start from the beginning and (re)invent what would be the best options to explore nakedness and its multiplicity in an intimate, platonic way. The variety of five locations, the proposal for thirty different bathing scores, and the option to propose something else yourself can still be limited but it definitely opens up a whole different range of possibilities from a one singular option. The continuous communication about what is going to happen prepares the participants what they are going to experience and ultimately there is a more trusting environment. Additionally, shifting the need and urge for visual documentation into written one accumulates the effort for a trusting non voyeuristic environment. Moreover, the discussions expand the possibility of people that could participate and shift the nuance that we can only engage with nakedness only by undressing. After giving some insight to the structure of the project, I will continue with what happened, what we discussed and what worked and what did not.

### *Documentation*

I will continue and end this chapter with another important part of the materials/elements of the performance which is the lack of visual documentation. Because of the very sensitive nature of the performance I decided not to have any video or photo documentation and find other ways to record the performance. This project is about a meeting between two people and to explore together nakedness, intimacy, and care. One of my intentions in the performance was to shift the perception of nakedness into something you are and not only something you see. If I would include another person, or even just a tripod with a camera to record what happens it will add voyeuristic and exhibitionist elements which is the opposite I wanted to produce.

The performer Victoria Gray states that “[d]ocumentation in an institution works on behalf of the artist and operating within criteria adopted by academic assessment boards

and research panels” (Reason et al 2011, 157). She continues that the documentation can potentially simplify the complexities of the artistic practice (2011, 158). I can relate to the previous statements since I needed to find my way through the regulations of the University of the Arts and Theater Academy, my institution at the time. It was very crucial for the project to accompany it with a documentation method that was not misleading from and attacking the performance, something that would have happened if I selected the proposed video documentation. A video documentation with naked people sharing an intimate moment would become a voyeuristic document. And for whom? Even the potentiality of someone watching the videos creates a different approach to the performance from my initial idea.

The time before the performance, I was exploring what would be the best way to record the *1-1 (one with one)* meeting that fits the *A Bathing Performance* project. As Efva Lilja states, the form and context of the documentation should be a representation of “the method and insights gained through both the process and result” (2015, 65). I decided to have the guest books as a form of text-based documentation which would be more relevant and give a better overview of the whole project. As I mentioned earlier, the guest books provide a glimpse of all the performances and a thorough understanding of the performance and what are the qualities of nakedness coming up from this project. Additionally, I see the participants and my memories as another form of documentation. Even though memories and thoughts are immaterial and not stable as form they hold excerpts of the performances, the ones that had an impact on us, if any.

## REFLECTION ON A BATHING PERFORMANCE

In this chapter, I will reflect and discuss what happened in *A Bathing Performance* in June 2017. My aim is not to generalize and put everything under a singular notion but reflect on what happened and what kind of meanings and experiences were produced. I will first start with some numbers: I had twenty-three performances: two tryouts that happened in April 2017 as part of my preparation and twenty-one performances in June 2017 that resulted from the booking system. There were seven performances in *The Forest*, six in *The Bathtub*, five at *Sompasauna*, two at the *Participants' Homes*, two at *The Seaside* and one at my home. There were four cancellations due to weather and sickness. Eight of the participants were from my close environment, ten were from my work/studies circle, and five that I did not know before meeting for the performance. A lot of people asked me how many women and men participated but since I was not asking what their gender is I can only assume. Therefore, I will only talk about specific gender in situations where the participant clearly states his/her/their gender identity.

Apart from the *1-1(one with one)* performances seven people visited the discussions, five during the 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2017 and two in the 30<sup>th</sup> of the month. All of them but one partook in the *one with one* meetings too. Many of the topics that I already discussed in the previous chapters were present in the conversations. We talked about the fluidity of nakedness in relation to culture, context, and clothes, and whiteness. We talked especially about the privilege of cis-gendered white men to be naked since the patriarchal society favors them. The discussion was focusing on the notion of the other: non-white people, and non-cis gendered people, the fetishizing of the other, and how nakedness is closely associated with the genitals and seeing the genitals of the others. Another topic was about legal systems and regulations in some countries regarding nakedness and whether one is allowed to be naked in his/her/their apartment or not. Additionally, we discussed how different is to invite someone for sauna and invite him/her/them for a shower. Some of the open questions that were brought were “when does curiosity become voyeurism?”, “When is nakedness normalized and when naturalized?”

The second discussion was mostly a reflection of what happened during the performances and had a more personal note from the first one. The themes of this discussion were floating between our experiences in the one with one meetings, the guestbook as documentation, and the transformation of the performance into memories. Additionally, we discussed about the multiplicity of nakedness and the different atmosphere of each location. Similarly with the first discussion, part of the conversation

was about the flexibility of the concept of nakedness and the relation to sex shaming. I shared the fact that no trans people or people of color participated in the performance in June, wondering whether the notion of playful, fun, intimate, positivist nakedness is a white cis-gendered privilege.

In the end, the discussions worked as a supplement, a framework for the one with one performances. The first discussion produced the space for what is forthcoming and the last one as a reflection of what happened. It would have been better to have at least one more discussion in the middle of June and explore how these similar topics and my understanding of them changes through time. What the discussions brought to my research was a reminder of notions of privilege, power relations, whiteness and otherness, shame, curiosity vs voyeurism, and the notion of identity in relation to nakedness. Additionally, it created a space to meet and interact with other without being physically naked but still reflect on those issues. It worked as an introduction to the participants about my research but also a meeting to get acquainted with each other for what is going to happen in the following step.

### *Nakedness and the locations*

The feeling of the space was appearing during the performances and was not very vivid before. In the beginning, the collection of performance scores for each location were very similar to each other. In my mind, I was producing bathing scores to fit the model of a shower room and then adjusting the scores so they would practically fit each site. As the performances were going through, I became more attentive to the location and the meaning of nakedness it provides. Therefore, I was updating the scores to portray my understanding of nakedness for each location and allow myself to get influenced from what the space could offer. Part of my methodology was also to treat each site with care as with the participants. The following reflections about the notion of nakedness in each of the locations are coming both from my experience during the performances and from the text-based documentation, the notes/comments the participants and I left in the guest books. Before introducing the locations and their relationship to nakedness, I will include comments of all of the participants that selected that site trying to put attention in all of the performances individually and to each of the participants. But first, I will start with a comment from the tryout performance at my home:

*It's not about looking/being looked at the body. It's about what the body or bodies can do" from J.*

## *The Bathtub: Nakedness, Memories and everydayness*

*“The experience was quite casual and relaxing. Kind of going for a cup of coffee with a friend. People should do that more often because it’s enjoyable and affordable” from M.*

*“Experience was direct from my childhood when bathed and washed with my parents” from M.*

*“I tried to keep an open mind what was coming, but I couldn’t help picturing Petros dancing around naked and forcing me to participate. Luckily it turned out to be the opposite. And it was great!” from A.*

*“I decided to go more into peace and tranquility mood. Take this as a ritual moving from my body issues and shyness” from V.*

*“Somehow getting naked was the easy step, after that, touching each other’s body was also quite simple. But it didn’t free me at all from my fears” from A.*

*“The time in the tub (being in water together, caring through washing, the normality of nakedness) made me wonder about the effect that it might have as a popular habit.” from T.*

During the performances in *The Bathtub*, notions of everydayness, the normality of being naked, and personal experiences were circulating. We shared personal stories, past experiences, and memories we had in the bathroom and especially in the bathtub. Moments we were washed by our parents, some with grandparents, some include the siblings. Most of the times the memory of being taken care of was present, embodied through the act of washing and transformed into taking care of oneself and someone else. Talking while performing the selected score, made the situation less intimidating, less confrontational with nakedness. Nakedness became a means to express care to the other, because it directed the attention to storytelling and our memories. A medium to introduce parts of our self to the other. The intimacy was performing and present by sharing parts of ourselves to the other. Additionally, coming together in a bathroom, a room we regularly use by ourselves, sharing a small space and getting physically close helped to become even more intimate.

## *Sompasauna: Nakedness as a Social and Collective Experience*

*“I am surprised of how comfortable and not ‘stiff’ it felt to bathe in a sauna with a total stranger” from L.*

*“Talk about privilege: This place has the potential to be barely safe, for us. For others it may not be safe at all” from O.*

*“How absurd to have clothes on your body [in the sauna], I thought and sensed through sweat how heavy clothes can be. The only part which was not dressed, my face, was becoming really present and I could notice that this part could act normally, by sweating and breathing” from A.*

*“I felt comfortable being naked around P. in this context. I felt a little intimidated by the other men in and around the sauna. Most of our visit I was the only woman (assumed). It’s not a comfortable position. In my experience, as a female in a male-dominated environment, anything unpleasant or dangerous could always happened” from M.*

*“What I really appreciate in this experience with you is the easiness of being together, being naked. Now after this experience I feel calm and energetic at the same time. Maybe my relationship with nakedness also changed a bit, that is not so “charged” state of being anymore, but again bit more everyday way of being together” from L.*

*Sompasauna* was triggering the political and social aspects of care and nakedness. The sauna is a self-serviced, public sauna, free for everyone, rather than a closed, private space only for us, the two people participating in the performance. Therefore, other people could come and go during the performance without any restrictions. For few years now, *Sompasauna* has been a trendy place to be, without formal rules, like a hippie community. At times, there is a lot of drinking happening which I was not aware to that degree, the previous times I visited the place. The drunk people were not present at all times or during the whole performance but when they were, I was less comfortable and my attention was wandering to them as well.

The space made me think of fear, privilege and that even though I am being respectful towards my companion, it does not mean that the surroundings and the other interactions will create a safe and trusting environment. The meeting and the notion of *1-1*(one with

one) performance felt like a bubble, a private intimate bubble which many time was bursting or absorbing the surroundings. The feeling of nakedness was changing depending whether others were there or not. Sometimes it was cozy and meditative, relaxing and casual, having the question of who am I caring for and how. Nakedness was even more a collective experience in this site, not just between the two of us, but interconnected with the rest of the sauna visitors as well.

### *The Forest: A Playful, Special, Naked Moment*

*“I realized to be naked is not about seeing/being seen but also/or moreover (?) an experience, something you feel, go through, a state of your body” from P.*

*“I felt now that we made a ritual in the forest that makes showering more meaningful, but also lighter. A small amount can be and feel plenty. Future showering is transformed.[--] Nakedness doesn’t feel like exposing privacy or revealing something. It just feels connected” from G.*

*“It had a sort of ‘next to each other’ intimacy, instead of a ‘totally entwined’ intimacy” from J.*

*“If you make it easy, nudity can make you happy” from J.*

*“I don’t like to write much but I want you to know that this is so beautiful, thank you so much.” from E*

*“It was a quite nice experience, sitting under the tree next to a friend while water comes down on us. It’s a connecting experience like Finnish sauna, just different ritual” from M.*

*“Nakedness in the forest was a playful experience. Bathing is practical way to get naked. I felt that we were one person for the while being [--] Now I feel relaxed, fresh and sensitive” from J.*

All of the performances I had in *The Forest* were playful, exciting, and extraordinary! We were walking to the specific location to have the bathing, holding the camp shower filled with warm water and the banner with a poster of the performance. I felt like a scout

having his first adventure. There was an absurdity to this situation which created an extraordinary feeling. I was thinking how often will one go to bathe in the middle of the forest with a stranger in a cold summer's day in Helsinki. This feeling is what produced the playful, adventurous, atmosphere. Additionally, the small risk of getting caught was strengthening the fun aspect of nakedness. Just like *Τίτσιπος*; a bit naughty! Intimacy and care were produced by sharing this special moment with another person. Having a short journey to a 'secret' place in the forest sharing our private moment in a public space. Nakedness and undressing worked as a form of letting go, becoming more sensitive, aware and present on what was happening during that meeting. In my understanding, nakedness enhanced the qualities I previously mentioned: the playfulness, the journey, the exhilaration, the absurdity.

### *The Seaside: Vulnerable, Exposed, Naked Bodies*

*“At some point a boat was passing very slowly and the guy kept staring, and that made me very aware of the problematics and other side of being naked. Coming from our talks during the performance, I think (female) nakedness should be reclaimed from sexualized industries and societies (ALL PRAISE TO THE BODIES THAT WE HAVE!!)” from H.*

*“I was so horrified by the brutal landscape [--] I didn't feel relaxed or optimistic at the prospect of a bathing experience adjacent to this noisy place” from K.*

Unfortunately, I had only two performances in this location which made it difficult to grasp the notion of nakedness in the space. Having said that, this area made me think of exposure, and leaving our bodies bare. The location is found in Kalasatama, an industrial and construction area, very close to *Sompasauna*. It was not a very peaceful area even though there were not much sounds. Boats were passing by every now and then and there is a view to Korkeasaari zoo island. It was not as inviting to be naked as other sandy, more private, more 'organic' beaches would be. Nakedness was relating to the notion of exposure but also of will: wanting to be naked and to enjoy the water and the sun on the naked body but with a fear of being watched. Just us and the openness of the horizon, vulnerable and exposed to others' gaze. Intimacy translated into togetherness and care: being together in an exposing location, taking care of our bodies and each other in it.

## *The Participant's Home: Nakedness, Habits, and Everydayness*

*"It was nice I could decide what we do. I wanted to wash and been washed by you. I needed someone to draw my lines with touch. [--] I liked to be in that kind of situation without sexual intention. Just me and you. Our energy and touch" from H.*

*"There was relaxedness- my awareness of my old body-no longer beautiful in my mind and the struggle to come to terms with the changes and age. All there! But also a sense of sharing a moment of time, carved only of the time and the instrumentality of daily life. And an opportunity to let go of the roles [--]. When the clothes are off what really is the difference, knowledge as garment?" from R.*

This location was a surprise to me, a space I was invited, an unfamiliar space, one out of my control. *The Participant's Home* contrary to the rest of the mentioned sites, is not a specific location but a category. At this point includes two different homes but it could have been more homes if they were more participants selecting this as a location. I assume it has different meanings for me and for the participants' since we relate differently to the space. It is an opposite situation from the previous ones. In this case, I am the one that has not been there. Additionally, I assume that the participants spend a lot of time there since it is their home, their bathroom and they already perform their own secular rituals. The space is influenced by their actions, their habits and vice versa. Being in that familiar space affects more than the previous times how they perform the selected score in their bathroom. Inviting me to their home to share a private moment in their home was what transformed the meeting into an intimate one. The notion of everydayness was even more present in the Participant's home than in *The Bathtub*. Nakedness was more like a means to an end; to perform our bathing.

### *Reflections on methodology*

Based on the feedback from the participants and the comments on the guest books, I feel that the performance achieved most of the times to create a trusting environment. Having said that, there were critiques about the status of nakedness in nowadays such as the male dominated societies and how many women are being watched and stared, and exploited when naked. Most of the participants felt comfortable being around me during the performance and one of the participants commented that I was supporting them to experience their own selected version of platonic nakedness. The dialogical approach

during the performance was breaking the ice and was one of the elements of the supported and trusting space. I was not always the one initiating the discussion and many times they were just awkward sounds, face gestures or playful eye contact that were connecting us through the bathing. Talking and sharing personal experiences directed the attention away from our naked bodies focusing on the person and their stories. Nakedness became a mean to share private sides of ourselves.

During one of the performances in *The Bathtub* we did not have any casual talk to direct the attention away from the naked body which produced more intimidation. The participant chose a score (#6 *One sponge, two bodies*) that involved a lot of touching which I believe is one of the most physically and emotionally intimate scores. There was some nervousness and it took some time for both of us to rest and indulge in the physicality of the action, of moving the sponge from one body to the other, from one body part to another. Sometimes the practicalities of the score, how for example to wash one's back while we both hold the sponge were adding to the unease. However, even with the stiffness that we were feeling, we were introduced to the other person's body in a more physical and material way than a discursive one. Because of this awkwardness during the performance and after the writing, we had a discussion about what happened and how we felt so we would not depart in a too fragile and vulnerable energy. The conversation was focusing on the nervousness of the performance and the non-talking. The participant mentioned that the situation was scary even though he was feeling secure with me, because he was facing his fear of closeness and intimate platonic touching. Is it a problem if the performance is not a smooth situation but involves awkwardness and uneasiness? From my point of view, it is important to have space for negative emotions as well since they are part of how nakedness is in nowadays. Additionally, it creates a hierarchical position between the emotions belittling feelings that are more difficult to process.

### *Some observations*

Another meeting that was lumpier than most of the others was one at *The Seaside*. Unfortunately, I only had two performances at this space and after this performance I realized that I was not fully transparent and communicating clearly the environment of the site. The participant was not fully aware of the industrial area of Kalasatama and the construction area close by, and there was a miscommunication about where we were going to meet before walking together to *The Seaside*. She was feeling intimidated, unsafe and unquestionably not fully trusting me and what is going to happen in this performance. Comparing the descriptions of each location this one was probably the one that could be reworked so that the text and the image would fit better the nature of the location. It is a

matter of consent: the participants should know what are they agreeing on which unfortunately in this situation I did not entirely achieve. In the end, we had an interesting and thorough discussion about nakedness and its problematics, whose responsibility is to protect who, the legality of nakedness, other intimate performances and performances involving nakedness.

This performance made it clear how crucial is to be transparent and give efficient information about what the performance is going to be. Even though many artists would disagree with me about the necessity of being straightforward, I personally feel is important in my work to inform clearly about the meeting and what it involves. Additionally, since the performance was presented as an exploration of nakedness and care, it was vital to have this notion of care even though at that location the nakedness would be about exposure and vulnerability. After experiencing that performance, I would have definitely need to update the description of the location. I would have informed about the construction side close by and the hardness of the rocks. In the future, I will also ask another person to read the descriptions and then visit the locations with me and made changes to the text accordingly, so my definition of the space will not be one-sided but more well-rounded.

An important act of the performance was the removal of my glasses even though most of the times might not have been noticeable. I cannot see clearly when I remove my glasses which shifts the attention that being naked is something you are and not always something you see. From the perspective of the participant, not being seen at least by me, removes the notion of voyeurism and being gazed upon, and from my side I lose some of the control that vision provides me, I become more vulnerable. During the past years when I was performing naked I was usually wearing either contact lenses or my glasses throughout the performance. Having my full vision, was producing more security and control of what is happening during the performance. The act of removing, in part, my vision and the connected control, I was able to experience a different version of meeting with people which was about coming together, sharing stories, and being naked and vulnerable together.

An observation from the performance in June was that the participants were only white cis-gendered people: no Asians or people of color or trans people. Only one Filipino colleague visited the tryout performance because I specifically invited him to explore the structure of the performance and how does it work with people that are intimidated by nakedness. The fact that no trans or people of color participated might have happened because I did not reach them while promoting and advertising the performance. Maybe this performance and the way it was formulated and structured, focuses on and was

directed towards a more Euro-centered audience in which the notion of nakedness is different than for example in South East Asia. Additionally, it expresses the way nakedness is constructed nowadays and that it concentrates on whiteness and cis-gendered people, erasing any other expressions and modalities of nakedness and refusing the performances of other naked bodies.

This performance and the duration of the project the whole June 2017, was physically and psychologically demanding for me even though it was about nakedness, care, and comfort. During these performances, we created a special moment with each participant, we shared an extraordinary meeting. Observing my relationship with nakedness and how it changed throughout that month, I realized that during the end, nakedness became a form of labor, a habit, a repetitive action. The constant undressing, sharing special moments with each of the participant and becoming naked with them was unexpectedly overwhelming. My feeling of nakedness shifted from playfulness, gentleness and comfort into work, tiresome, obligation and habit. Even though I appreciated all of the meetings with the participants the ratio between time and performances was demanding especially because of the time needed to prepare and digest what had happened.

## CONCLUSION

Nakedness can mean not wearing any clothes but it could also mean not having your socks on. Based on the Cypriot word *Τίτσιρος* it can be playful, fun, exciting, and naughty. According to Kenneth Clark it can be exposing and vulnerable or gracious and arty (Clark 1990, 3-7). In some cases in Thailand it can mean wearing underwear, and when one has no clothes can be seen as politically owning one's body. Irene Watson mentions that for the indigenous people in Australia the realization of nakedness came with the colonizers, blending it with shame and subordination. (Watson 1998, 9-11) Talia Mae Bettcher states that the naked body is not always the natural body since genitals are not always presenting the correct gender identity for all individuals. (Bettcher 2014, 399)

Nakedness has multiple meanings depending on the context, the person being or not being naked and many times the others watching the naked one. I presented a glimpse of the large range of the definition of nakedness and presenting that it is a social construct. Nakedness is different in various cultures and contexts and this is what makes it fascinating: to explore the fluidity of nakedness and what does it mean for me but also for others. Borrowing and adjusting Haraway's concept, this performance was for me a way to explore *becoming naked with* others. Having said that, not undressing and refusing being naked could be a form of resistance and taking ownership of one's body and what he/she/they can wear, when, and how.

The way nakedness is presented today in the media is through a normalized lens. Athletic, slim, masculine men and passive, gracious, feminine women should be naked but not the rest. The patriarchal society of today plays with the problematics of objectification, male gaze, toxic masculinity and constantly projecting these normalized ideal body images, and how people should behave. The way the media and the gender stereotypes construct each other create all these problematics, fears, body and sex shaming, and unhealthy engagements with each other. My methodology borrows queer and feminist concepts and theories from Butler, Ponterotto, Haraway and Bettcher to resist these problematics and produce a safe, trusting and comfortable environment during the performance. By resisting the fixed, strict binaries of how people should behave, it creates visibility to queers and people that do not fall into the stereotypical categories of men and women. Additionally, it opens up the multiplicity of identity, gender and gender embodiment; to see the body as a material and conceptual construction with many lived experiences, the social and cultural connections, a being constantly changing.

In the previous pages, I also introduced some performances and artists that comment in some way to these problematics. My work has similarities to Stengele's dialogical approach, care and gentleness, Uhlich's playfulness and fun. I presented works like Export's *Touch Cinema* and a re-performance by Rossa, and Haraki's *Hand* to support that nakedness is not only sensed through vision but an embodied state: something you are and experience. Additionally, Howells had a huge impact on the way I approach and communicate with people since we wander around similar topics of 1-1 performance, care, comfort, and nakedness.

*A Bathing Performance* was influenced by the notion of multiplicity, proposing many options on what the performance could be and what we can do during our 1-1(*one with one*) meeting. The option of the five different locations and the thirty, bathing scores open up the notion of nakedness, even though the thirty proposals are limited to nakedness as an intimate, platonic act. The way the performance was constructed with the communication and promotion of the project, the presentation of the five locations, and the straightforward approach were targeting an open, transparent, consensual, structured and casual meeting between two people. Borrowing from the queer and feminist theorists I mentioned, I created the 1-1(*one with one*) performance that focuses on exploring nakedness and care, and notions of multiplicity, dialogical approach, consent, and remind people of their agency to select, propose other options, or even say no. Additionally, Haraway's *becoming with*, influences my understanding of performance as a meeting that is produced by both me and the participant and does not have just a one-dimensional perspective. My decision to use the preposition *with* instead of *on* or *to* represents my intention with the meeting as a multidimensional mutual exchange. The meeting is produced by both us, the participants engaged in the performance, but also with the others, humans and non-humans that are present in the situation.

After my performances in June 2017, I verified the importance of transparency in my work so people could know clearly what are they consenting to. Another observation was about the way nakedness is projected in the media and probably in my performance as well. The fact that no trans-people or people of color participated might have happened because I did not reach them or maybe the formulation of the performance, was towards a Euro-centered white cis-gendered audience. This is unfortunate since it ignores other modalities of nakedness refusing the performances of other naked bodies.

From my point of view and after working on this project for more than two years, a research focusing on nakedness in various communities and minorities would provide an interesting inside on the multiplicity of nakedness. This way the white heterosexual supremacy would be threatened and shaken up since it will provide visibility to other

modalities of nakedness, cultures, and identities. Another link to nakedness, that unfortunately I have not touch and would be interesting to explore, is the relation to religions. Religions are closely related to behavior, body, shame, morality, and culture and would be interesting to explore how they affect the way people experience and relate to their and other naked bodies. Additionally, my research focuses on one spectrum of multiplicity the one that focuses on care, intimacy, gentleness, comfort, and platonic meetings and the related problematics with nakedness. My decision to work on that area of nakedness leave outside other possibilities such as violence, pain, confrontation and sex.

In a future stage, I would like to continue my work with nakedness and participatory performances. I am interested how performance as a meeting changes when it does not involve one person but a small or a greater group of people. How would the notion of *becoming naked with* would change and how to produce a trusting and safe environment when the interaction becomes a network of exchanges. Additionally, I am interested in finding ways in promoting *A Bathing Performance* and explore what are the differences and similarities when a *1-1(one with one)* performance takes place in different cultural contexts. This type of performance limits the number of people they would be interested or dare to participate and I am curious how to open it up without making it simplistic, tasteless, and general. What was very interesting to follow during my research was the impact the location had in the meaning of nakedness and I am interested in exploring what does it mean to be naked in other sites as well. How would, for example, being naked in a frame of a performance change the experience if the location is a public square, a hotel, a friend's home, a stadium, a rowboat in the middle of the sea.

I would like to end my thesis with few of my comments from the *A Bathing Performance - Guest Books*. These are observations I had and written down during the performances in June. These thoughts capture how I was feeling during that time but also how I am feeling right now that I am focusing on and ending my writing. I finish this project having the memories of bathing with twenty-tree people in the forest, in a bathtub, in the sea, in the sauna, at people's homes.

*The bathing and meeting with people makes me feel more energized. Even if I was super tired in the beginning, I again feel refreshed and energized. I think it's the excitement and this special, extraordinary moment we created.*

*It was a different bathing care from what I expected. The situation with the other people in the sauna made me think of tolerance of care, but care for who and from whom? Made me think of being in a bubble that I should burst.*

*Travelling through the stories I heard, and through my past stories. Creating images through memories. The closed eyes allowed for being naked but not seeing the nakedness.*

*I somehow feel it's hard to write something more now. I will stop.*

## REFERENCES

### *Books, Articles, and Magazines*

*A Bathing Performance – Guest Books*. 2017. Petros Konnaris et all. Private Collection of Petros Konnaris.

Banet-Weiser, Sarah & Milter, Kate. 2016. “#MasculinitySoFragile: culture, structure, and networked misogyny”. In *Feminist Media studies* 16(1): 171-174.

Barcan, Ruth. 2004. “Nudity A Cultural Anatomy”. Berg. New York.

Bartky, Sandra Lee. 1990. “Femininity and Domination: Studies in the Phenomenology of Oppression”. Routledge. New York and London.

Bettcher, Talia Mae. 2012. “Full-Frontal Morality: The Naked Truth about Gender”. In *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy* 27(2): 319-327.

Bettcher, Talia Mae. 2014. “Trapped in the Wrong Theory: Rethinking Trans Oppression and Resistance”. In *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 39(2): 383-406.

Bharucha, Rustam. 1990. “Chapter 1: Collision of Cultures: some Western interpretation and uses of Indian Theater” In *Theater and the World. Performance and the Politics of Culture*, 13-41. New York: Routledge.

Bourriaud, Nicolas. 2002. “Relational Art”. Translated by: Simon Pleasance & Fronza Wood, with Mathieu Copeland. Press du reel.

Brady, Mary. 2017. “Afflictions Related to ‘Ideals’ of Masculinity: Gremlins Within”. In *Contemporary Psychoanalysis* 53(2): 196-208.

Butler, Judith. 2004. *Undoing Gender*. New York and London: Routledge.

Clark, Kenneth. 1990. *The Nude: A Study in Ideal Form*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Dezeuze, Anna. 2006. "Everyday life, 'relational aesthetics' and the 'transfiguration of the commonplace'". In *Journal of Visual Art Practice*, 5(3): 143-152.

Down Town. 2015. Magazine. "70 Gimnoi Kiprioi kai Ellines: Gimnoi gia Kalo Skopo". 13-19 December 2015.

Export, Valie. 1989. "Aspects of Feminism Actionism" In *New German Critique*, 47: 69-92.

Friedman, Ken & Smith, Owen & Sawchyn, Lawren, eds. 2002. "The Fluxus Performance Workbook". Performance Research e-Publications.

Haraway, Donna. 1988. "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective". In *Feminist Studies*, 14(3): 575-599.

Haraway, Donna. 2008. "When species meet". University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis.

Heddon, Deirdre & Johnson Dominic. Eds. 2016. "It's All Allowed: The Performances of Adrian Howells". Live Art and Development Agency. London.

Inness, Julie C. 1992. "Privacy, Intimacy and Isolation". Oxford University Press. Oxford.

Johnson, Dominic. 2016. "Held: An Interview with Adrian Howells". In *It's All Allowed: The Performances of Adrian Howells*, ed. Deirdre Heddon & Dominic Johnson. Live Art Development Agency. London.

Kester, Grant H. 2004. "Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art". University of California Press. California and London.

Lilja, Efva. 2015. "Art, Research, Empowerment: On the Artist as Researcher". Regeringskansliet. Stockholm.

- Noor, Farish. 2016. "The Burkini Debate in France: Triggering Painful Colonial Memories" In *RSIS Commentaries*. Nanyang Technological University. Singapore. Accessed 4 September 2017. <https://dr.ntu.edu.sg/handle/10220/41413>
- Papadaki, Linda. 2015. "Feminist Perspectives on Objectification". In *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Accessed 10 August 2017. <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminism-objectification/>
- Pitagora, Dulcinea. 2013. "Consent vs. Coercion: BDSM Interactions Highlight a Fine but Immutable Line". In *The New School Psychology Bulletin* 10(1): 27-36.
- Ponterotto, Diane. 2016. "Resisting the Male Gaze: Feminist Responses to the 'Normatization' of the Female Body in Western Culture". In *Journal of International Women's Studies* 17(1): 133-155.
- Puig De La Bellacasa, Maria. 2009. "Touching technologies, touching visions. The reclaiming of sensorial experience and the politics of speculative thinking". In *Subjectivity* (28): 297-315.
- Rappaport, Julian. 1987. "Terms of Empowerment/Exemplars of Prevention: Toward a Theory for Community Psychology". In *American Journal of Community Psychology* 15(2): 121-148.
- Reason, Matthew et al. 2011. "Performance, documentation and the archive within the institution". In *Scrapbooks, Snapshots and Memorabilia: Hidden Archives of Performance*, ed. Glen McGillivray, 149-171. Peter Lang AG. Frankfurt am Main.
- Reeser, Todd W. 2016. "Setting Plato Straight: Translating Ancient Sexuality in the Renaissance". The University of Chicago Press. Chicago.
- Salih, Sarah & Butler, Judith, eds. 2004. *Judith Butler Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Smith, R. Spencer. 1976. "Voyeurism: A review of literature". In *Archives in Sexual Behavior*. 5(6): 585-608.

Szymanski, Dawn M. & Moffitt Lauren B. & Carr, Erika R. 2011. "Sexual Objectification of Women: Advances to Theory and Research". In *The Counseling Psychologist* 39(1): 6-38.

Watson, Irene. 1998. "Naked people: rules and regulations". In *Law Text Culture* 4(1): 1-17.

### *Performances and Workshops*

Elo, Julius. 2016. "Workshop: Body/Power". Personal Notes. Theater Academy, Helsinki, 20 January- 5 February 2016.

*Hand*. Choreography: Lia Haraki, Performance: Petros Konnaris. Premier: 15 December 2014, The Performance Shop. Nicosia.

*More than Naked*. Choreography: Doris Uhlich, Initial Dance Group: Zinzi Buchanan, Neil Callaghan, Paige Culley, Mihaela Alexandra Dancs, Andreea Maria David, Lucia Di Pietro, Stefanie Eisl, Aleksandar Georgiev, Tova Gerge, Katharina Hölzl, Ofelia Jarl Otega, Costas Kekis, Petros Konnaris, Lilach Livne, Milan Loviska, Aloun Marchal, Andrius Mulokas, Katarzyna Szugajew, Andrew Tay, Doris Uhlich & Thales Weilinger. Premier: August 2013, ImPulsTanz.

*Nakedness is*. Performance: Petros Konnaris. New Performance Turku Festival. Dates: 6,7 and 9 October 2016. Turun Uimahalli/ Kirjakahvila.

*Sexy mf*. By: Ana Borralho & João Galante. Performance: 6 February 2016.

### *Internet Material: Websites, Online Journals, Videos and Video Documentation*

Baltic Circle. Festival's Website. Accessed 5 January 2015.

<http://balticcircle.fi/en/poliisi-sensuroi-ceci-nest-pas-teoksen-paatoskohtauksen-baltic-circle-festivaalilla/>

Bare Oaks Family and Naturist Park. Website. Accessed 25 August 2017.

<http://www.bareoaks.ca/index.php/about-bare-oaks-family-naturist-park/policies-regulations.html#behaviour>)

Buuck, David. 2013. "How to make us flux: Scores/scripts/instructions" *Jacket2* Online Journal. Accessed 4 September 2017. <http://jacket2.org/commentary/how-make-us-flux-scoresscriptsinstructions>

Katsoyanu, Marianna et al. 2017. *Cyslang* Online Cypriot Dictionary. Accessed 21 January 2017. <http://www.cyslang.com/>

Katsoyanu, Marianna et al. Online Greek Cypriot Dictionary. "Lexologiki Vasi Dedomenon tis Kipriakis Dialektou" Cypriot Dialect Database. Accessed 21 January 2017. <http://lexcy.library.ucy.ac.cy/Lexicon.aspx>

Konnaris, Petros. 2017. Artists's Website. <http://petroskonnaris.com/a-bathing-performance/>

Marie Claire. Website. Accessed 20 September 2017. <http://www.marieclaire.com/>

Men's Health. Website. Accessed 20 September 2017. <http://www.menshealth.com/>

Naturist Association Thailand (NAT). Website. Accessed 15 October 2016. <http://thailandnaturist.com/>

Naturistiklubi. Website. Accessed 1 April 2016. <http://www.naturistiklubi.fi/en/>

Rossa, Boryana. Artist's Website. Accessed 10 September 2017. <http://boryanarossa.com/deconstruction-of-valie-export/>

Scandinavian Naturist Portal. Website. Accessed 25 September 2017. <http://www.scandinavianaturist.org/>

Stengele, Julischka. Artist's Website. Accessed 10 September 2017. <http://www.julischka.eu/>

*Streetlevel Helsinki 2015*- Beate Linne. 2015. Video Documentation of Performance on Vimeo. Accessed 25 September 2017. <https://vimeo.com/138729429>

*The Guardian*. Article. “French police make woman remove clothing on Nice beach following burkini ban”. Accessed 3 September 2017.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/aug/24/french-police-make-woman-remove-burkini-on-nice-beach>

*The Try Guys* 6(5): *The Try Guys Get Photoshopped With Men's Ideal Body Types*. BuzzFeed Video, YouTube. 15 May 2016.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dLNTb2zfh3Q>

Uhlich, Doris. Artist’s Website. Accessed 1 July 2012.

<http://www.dorisuulich.at/en/projects/6-mehralsgenug>

Verhoeven, Dries. Artist’s Website. Accessed 5 January 2015.

<http://driesverhoeven.com/en/project/ceci-nest-pas/>

### *Interviews and Unpublished Material*

Katri Kainulainen & Maximilian Latva interview notes 22 September 2017. Interviewed by Petros Konnaris. The Private Archive of Petros Konnaris. Helsinki.

Konnaris, Petros. “What does the word Titsiros mean to you”, Unpublished survey, Translation: Petros Konnaris, 5 -12 September 2017. The Private Archive of Petros Konnaris. Helsinki and Cyprus.

Spiros Armostis email interview 30 August 2017. Interviewed by Petros Konnaris. Translation by Petros Konnaris. The private archive of Petros Konnaris

von Froreich, Harriet. 2016. *DONNA HARAWAY: IDEAS OF BECOMING-WITH*. Essay on Performance Theorist for Performance Studies. Theater Academy, Helsinki.

### *TV shows:*

*RuPaul’s Drag Race(RPDR)* 7(1): *Born Naked*. World of Wonder, Netflix. 2 March 2015.

*What Not to Wear* ALL EPISODES. TLC. Premiered 18 January 2003.