



# Spectators Journey

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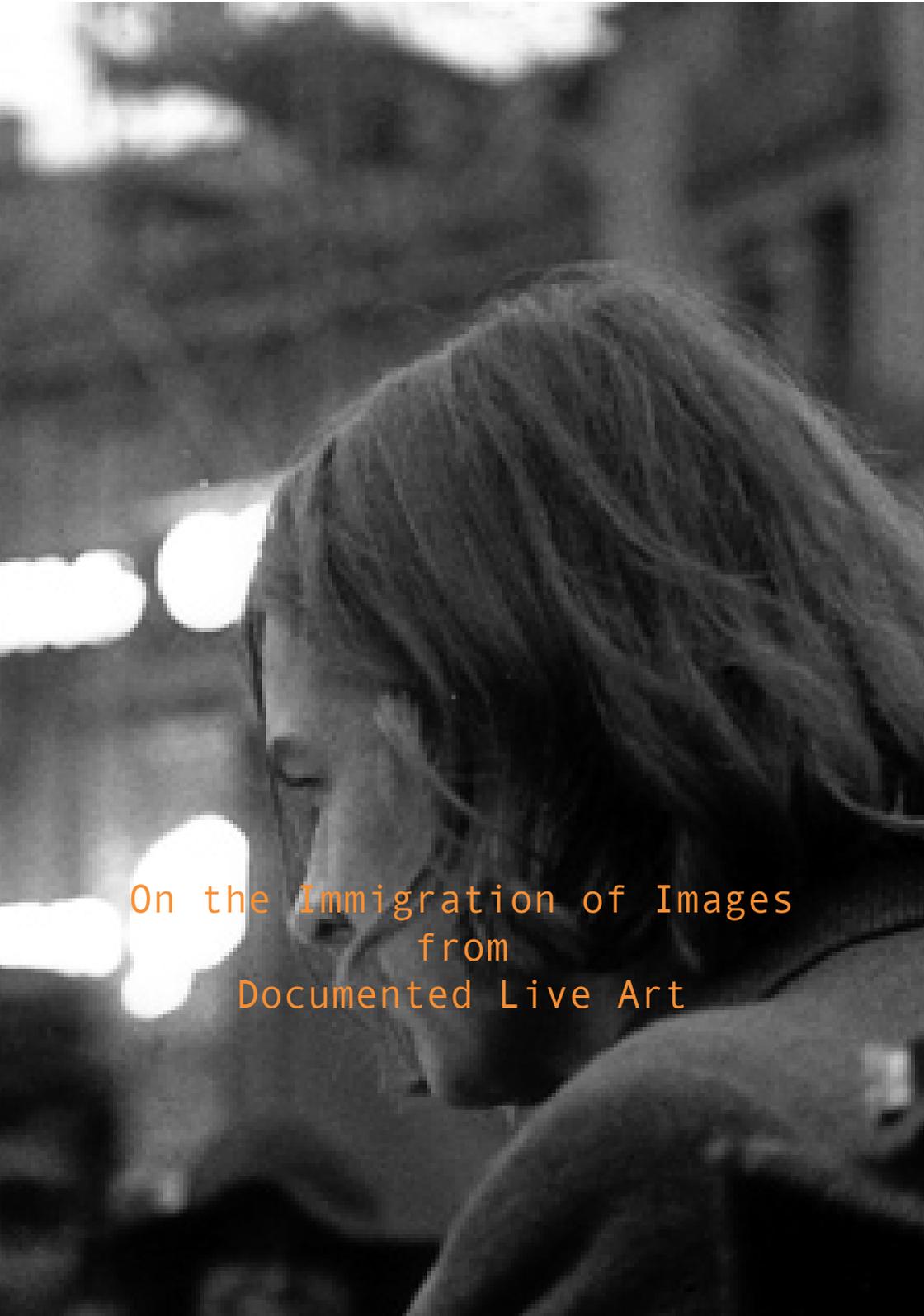
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The Heritage  
of the  
Second Wave  
Feminists.



On the Immigration of Images  
from  
Documented Live Art

# I N T R O D U C T I O N

I will attempt to map out the visual and contextual heritage of the feminist art movement of the late 60's and early 70's and the immigration of the visual material as a historical consequence of time based art. My thesis will discuss two general questions: What is the heritage of the feminist art movement in regards to the body in Live Art? How do events where we experience a documentation of an action influence our understanding of the work. Starting with the activist possibilities of Live Art and its way of communicating directly with an audience, I am proposing that with the feminists of the 60's came an art movement that attempts to not only influence the art world, but who strives to influence society. The arguments are found in the history of Live Art and its relationship to the public space.

Claire Bishop writes about the economy of the spectator and the evolution of social Art in *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*.<sup>1</sup> The theory is concerned with the relationship between artist and spectator and how this relationship evolves. I am interested to know how this relationship evolves with time, in particular in relation to Live Art that is temporary and not visible at all time. I will more specifically be looking at the relationship between the action and the spectator in the Futurists actions, the feminist performance art of the 1960's to 1970's and the Russian art activism of the 21st century. Although the themes and purposes of these three eras are different, I believe that there is something inherently similar in their way of activating the audience and space.

With the feminists of the sixties, the naked body became a general symbol of freedom and not just an aesthetic attribute. To make this argument I will compare the use of the naked body from ancient Greece to the 1960's, and from 1960's to present day. When

<sup>1</sup> Claire Bishop, *ARTIFICIAL HELLS Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (London, New York: Verso, 2012)

dealing with the politics of bodies several problems arise; what happens when the artist are using hired performers, does the relationship between artist and spectator then change? Will it be possible for the action to be independent from the artist?

The documentation of a Live Artwork holds the key to its future life. The implementation of documentation is specific to the time it is made, can therefore tell us about the political and social environment of its origin. I will examine documentation as an artistic practice in its own right, and how the documentation manifested itself. I will specifically be looking at the issues with documenting Live Art with a political agenda and how the meaning of the documentation has and will change in time. The passing of time presents a clear obstacle as the original medium of Live Art can almost never be conserved, only when we are meant to view the work through the medium of photography, film, text or sound can we without much difficulty access the work after the action has been done.

The second audience is the audience that view the Artwork in other forms then the original. Their relationship to Live Art is based on photography, video, text and stories. I am questioning if an audience has to be present for a time based Artwork to be considered as Live Art and weather it is possible for a Live Artwork to exist when not on display. In Philip Auslander's essay *The performativity of performance documentation*,<sup>2</sup> Auslander discuss to what extent our understanding of an image depicting a performative act, relates to the concept of the action itself, proposing that the concept of the action is the core of the work. For this to be accurate, the documenting image has to hold the concept of the action. The images in discussion can be divided in two categories: actions originally presented as a photography and photography documenting an action. For both categories we have to take into

2 Philip Auslander, "The performativity of performance documentation", *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art*, 28: 2006

account the impact an image can have to the understanding of an event when using images as an instrument of power over bodies and minds. For example is it interesting how representation of violence sells so well, as discussed by Marie-José Mondzain in *Can Images Kill?*<sup>3</sup>

Lastly I am questioning the impact of the documentation of an artistic activist activity. If this can only be viewed as a historical reference, or if documentation can have an activist outcome and live independent from the action. The tension between exhibition and an Activist Art makes it difficult to define as either art or activism. The artistic practice might work as a frame for the activist action; in that case an exhibition will not be the ideal place to visually communicate the project. The question is then where the ideal place to communicate the practice is. Furthermore, can a project be categorized as artistic if it doesn't fit in to the frame of art?

<sup>3</sup> Marie-José Mondzain, "Can Images Kill", *Critical Inquiry*, trans. by Sally Shifto, Vol 36, 1:2009

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WHAT IS THE DEAL  
WITH LITTLE ART

I will define all artworks that consist of the four elements: time, space, the performer's body, and a relationship between audience and performer, as Live Art.

Some artists take matters into their own hands and make new definitions of their work: Tino Sehgal define his works as *Situations*, where Erwin Wurm describes his works as *One Minute Sculptures* and Allan Kaprow used *happenings* to describe his works. While all these definitions do help us to understand the intention of the works as well as giving us a tool to analyze the work, they all share the same challenges when documenting, the most obvious being Live Art's nature of an event with a specific duration. I will for simplicity refer to all performance art, body art, happenings and situations as Live Art. In this thesis all artworks involving performers that have been in the contemporary art scene, will go under this category.

I have a black and white photo from Yves Klein's *Anthropometrie* performance series, hanging on my wall. When I first became acquainted with the work I learned that it was a pun on the phrase "a body of work", where Yves Klein, who was considered a painter at the time, employed female models as "living paintbrushes" for the paintings while an orchestra was playing *Monotone Symphony*, a solitary note played for 20 minutes, followed by 20 minutes of silence. In the black and white picture that I have, Klein is bending forwards holding a female model's wrist, while dragging her paint-covered body on a white surface. I never saw this as anything but funny play on words and a clever way of working with the notion of painting and the history of using female models in art, but when a friend saw the picture she saw it as a white male dominating the female body, had the picture been of a different moment of the performance where Klein was not present, she may have perceived the work differently. This made me question if there is something inherently political about the naked female or if the feminist art movement in the 1960's and 1970's are the reason that a naked female body will have political connotations.

I am interested in knowing to what extent our understanding of an historical depiction of a Live Artwork, is influenced by the events from the present time. Furthermore if the spectators' experiences influence their understanding of an artwork then other factors, such as the choice of documentation will influence the future of a Live Artwork too. Examining the impact of documentation on the conceptual understanding of a Live Artwork. By looking at the heritage of the 60's feminist art movement, I will attempt to find out if performance art should always be seen in the context of its time, or if it can be put in the context of another time.



Documentary Photograph, *Anthropometry*, Yves Klein, 1960.

T H E A C T I V E I S T  
N A T U R E O F L I V E A R T

With live art's possibility of communicating directly with an audience and its unpredictable nature, it is the perfect medium for activist activities. I will start my research in the 1960's where the nature of live art made it a perfect medium for the feminist agenda. I will also propose that this was the first time that artists actively tried to change the belief of a general public and I will attempt to find out what the heritage of feminist art is in performance art today. I would make the statement that a body, and specifically a female body, carries a specific political agenda in itself. That putting a body on a pedestal will not just be read as a study of human anatomy, but also rather contain a political message. The question if this is because of Live Arts feminist heritage, making the agenda of feminism in the sixties, a structural part of what Live Art is today.

## Public Spaces

According to RoseLee Goldberg Live art, as we know it today, began with the Futurist Manifesto (*La Futurism*, printed in *La Figaro* 1909) by the Italian poet Filippo Marinetti.<sup>4</sup> The manifesto was an attack on the established painting and literary academies; although this was more propaganda than actual production this became a trademark for young futurists in the coming years. Under the umbrella of Futurism, painters would start to employ the original ideas of speed and love of danger, and in 1910 came a joint manifesto.<sup>5</sup> The fact that painters, poets and sculptors were working towards the same goal made them all equal; the paintings were not just decorations on a stage, and the performances were not just entertainment. The futurists made no separation between art as poets, as painters or as performers. Live art is the perfect medium for activism; it is daring and it reaches a lot of people. Having it in a visual art context also means that you are able to reach a different audience than had it been only an activist action and not an artistic action.

The feminist art movement is as any other art movement a product of what has been before. Where artists like Hannah Wilke, Cindy Sherman, Valie Export, Carolee Shcneemann, Renate Eisenegger and Karin Mack were able to use the activist nature of performance to provoke actual change.

Where the futurists demonstrated the established art institutions, the 60's feminists used performance art to protest against the norms and stereotypes connected with the female body.

I would claim that the use of activism and propaganda in Live Art did not start with futurists but can be traced back to the tragedies of ancient Greece. Although Greek tragedies were not used as a

4 RoseLee Goldberg, *Live Art 1909 to the Present* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1979) P. 9-14

5 Lawrence Rainey, Christine Poggi, Laura Wittman, *Futurism: An Anthology* (London, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009)

direct tool for demonstration and activism, they were an active part of society. Although most tragedies focused on men and provided a poetic justification on the hierarchy of women, foreigners and slaves, much point to the tragedies taking a more progressive view than society in general. The creativity in Greek theater is to turn myth into theater, making it an almost religious play. The theater was a communal space where most of spectators had some part of their life performed themselves. It was therefore a part of their life and was seen as an accurate historical description. This made it a good tool to change social rules in the play.

6 Edith Hall, *Greek Tragedy - Suffering under the Sun* (Oxford: OUP Oxford 2010)

We know from *The Republic* (Plato, ca. 380 BC) that Plato complains of the dangers of the theatrical impersonation of social inferiors such as women and slaves and of feminine emotions, as well as the poet Aeschylus complains that Euripides has made tragedy democratic by allowing his women and slaves to talk as well as the master of the house. I therefore share Edith Hall's optimistic argument that tragedy, despite its hierarchical worldview, "does it's thinking in a form which is vastly more politically advanced than the society which produced".<sup>6</sup>

The political tradition in avant-garde art has continued up to contemporary art of the 21st century; especially body related art seems to be rooted in a political agenda initiated by the feminist art movement. The first "wave" of feminism began in the mid-nineteenth century with the women's suffrage movement and continued to the beginning of the 20th century when women got the right to vote. Not much feminist art was produced in this time, although several female artists rose to prominence, but the ground was laid for feminist activism in the coming years. Frida Kahlo is now seen as a feminist icon, due to her many years of portraying her body in ways that woman were not seen at the time, and the play with her gender. It wasn't until the 60's and 70's

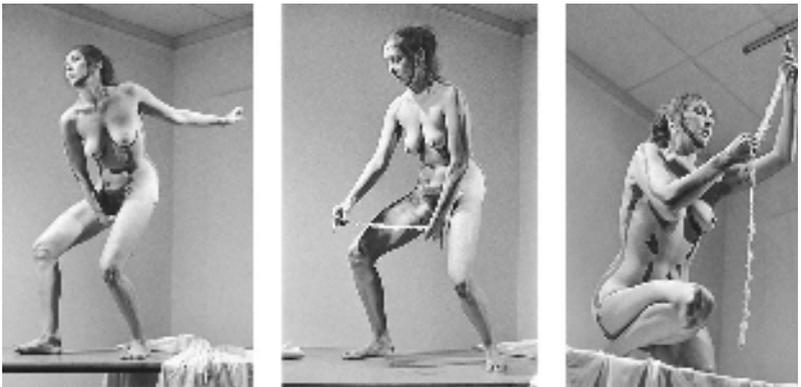
that the feminist art movement made a mark in art history, with its female performers working to free the female body of all its conceptions.

In Valie Export's *Tap and Touch Cinema* (1968), Export invited onlookers to put their hands into a large, curtain-covered box in front of her breasts and touch her naked body for up to 30 seconds, hereby demonstrating the objectification and sexualization of women in film by breaking sexist cinema down to its essence. Export protested the restriction of the female body as did so many other feminist artists at that time, amongst them Carolee Schneemann when she performed *Interior Scroll*, which culminated in Schneemann standing naked on a table and removing a long strip of paper from inside her vagina, from which she read out an imaginary conversation with a dismissive male film-maker. In her own words this was not something that she thought was shocking but rather her contributing with something that she saw was needed.<sup>7</sup>

7 Steve Rose, "Carolee Schneemann: 'I never thought I was shocking'", *The Guardian*, <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2014/mar/10/carolee-schneemann-naked-art-performance> (accessed 10 March 2014)



Film still, *Tap and Touch Cinema*, Valie Export, 1968.



Documentary Photograph, *Interior Scroll*, Carolee Schneemann, 1975.

Activism in Live Art is still evident today and can be seen as a protest where the freedom of the body can be used as a symbol for a general suppression. None has in my opinion been as strong as from the contemporary Russian artists, Pussy Riot and Pyotr Pavlensky. Who have both gotten a lot of attention for their activist actions and the prosecution that followed. Pussy Riot gained global notoriety when five members of the group staged a performance inside Moscow's Cathedral of Christ the savior in 2012; the actions were condemned as sacrilegious by the Orthodox clergy and eventually stopped by church security officials. The collective's lyrical themes included feminism, LGBTQ rights, and opposition to Russian President Vladimir Putin, whom the group considered to be a dictator. To Pussy Riot their art is a method to interfere directly in the object of their protest. According to Pavlensky it was the trail of Pussy Riot Trail that led him to understand the need for a more radical approach to art.<sup>8</sup> Pavlensky most famous action, Fixation, nailing his scrotum to Moscow's Red Square was a protest against the apathy, political indifference and fatalism of contemporary Russian society. He was discharged that evening, and released by the police without charge – only for them to open a case of “hooliganism motivated by hatred of a particular social, ethnic or religious group” a few days later. It is the same article of the law that was used against Pussy Riot and can carry a jail sentence of several years.

Clearly the Russian activist artists are a special case and their protests are very different from the protests of the 60's and 70's artists, but many things can be compared. The fight for equality amongst gender and sexuality and the protests against oppression can be compared, but even more I would say that the methods are comparable. The actions often take place in the public where they can not hide in the safe place of the art world, the places of the activist action is often chosen as the subject of the protest.

8 Jonathan Brooks Platt, “The body politic: how Pyotr Pavlensky's performance art is breaking the mould”, *The Calvert Journal*, <https://www.calvertjournal.com/opinion/show/3365/pyotr-pavlensky-protest-art-living-pain-sculpture>, (assessed 13 November 2014)



Documentary Photograph, *Fixation*, Pyotr Pavlensky, 2013. Photo taken by a person passing, published in numerous articles.



Export's *Tap and Touch Cinema* took place in a public space, as did the actions of Pussy riot and Pavlensky. I would even go as far as saying that Art activism only works in the public space where it is not protected by the walls of Gallery or fine arts. If Pavlensky would have nailed himself to the floor of a gallery or an exhibition planned by a curator, the art critics might have been outraged, but most likely the action would have never caught political attention. If Pussy Riot had made their performance on a stage where they were paid to be there, a trial would not have come out of it. It works because that they enter the places that they are objecting to. When an artist protests against the established art world, the protest belongs in the space of fine arts. This is also why the feeling of activism in Live Art is so strong, because that we know that it can be used as a successful tool of protest or activism if done in the right place.

## The Naked Body

The feminist art movement changed the perception of the body, by using their own body as a symbol of freedom protesting the restrictions and sexualization of the female body. With this movement the naked body became a general symbol of freedom as an inherent part of Live Art.

The interpretation of a Live Artwork is highly dependent on the political atmosphere at the time of its exhibition. Should a Live Artwork be shown twice with several years apart, chances are that the interpretation of the artwork will change as the political climate changes. A naked female body in art will in most cases provoke some kind of political reaction, most likely because of the history of feminist performance art. When we look at female nudes before the feminist art movement, the desired result was visual, rather than political. Pierre-August Renoir's *Nude on a Couch*, Titian's *Venus of Urbino* and Juergen Teller's *Vivienne Westwood nr 3* are three portraits of female nudes made by men, with different intentions.

If we look at the naked body in art, I would argue that it changes in the 1960's. To use a naked body for art was nothing new in 1960, but the intention changed. Again I will compare the use of the naked body in 60's and 70's performance art to that in ancient Greece. Greek sculptors were particularly concerned with proportion, poise and the idealized perfection of the human body, which makes them relevant to the history of the naked body in art.





Photography, *Vivianne Westwood nr. 3*, Juergen Teller, 2013



Oil on canvas, Pierre Renoir



noir, *Nude on a couch*, 1915



Oil on canvas, Titian, *Venus of Urbino*, 1534

*Kalos Kai Agathos*<sup>9</sup> is the concept of good and beauty, where the inside (moral) and outside (body) was equally important, to be a complete human you had to have both qualities. *Kalos Kai Agathos* was generally used to describe a man who has the virtues of an aristocrat or a leading citizen, including good looks, intelligence, wealth and social status. Although public shame, had you not been good citizen, was a known concept in the ancient Greek society, the concept of sin and shame that we know today was invented by Christianity. The idea of shame was in the ancient Greek society connected to communal decision rather than a relationship between the individual and a god. Shame and sin were therefore not connected to the body, which allowed for beauty, strength and youth to be celebrated as a godly figure.

Take a look at the statue *Discopolus* and *Interior Scroll* (Carolee Schneeman, 1975). For both of these works I have only photography's and additional texts to get myself acquainted with. Myron's *Discopolus* (ca 560-450 BC) is a nude male figure of a disco thrower captured in the exact moment where he is about to let go of his discos. In this sculpture Myron captures a pattern of athletic energy by giving a steady form to a moment of action, showing a perfect example of *rhythmos* (harmony and balance). Although the position is now considered somewhat unnatural and far from the most practical way of throwing a discos, the statue does hold a great deal of naturalism, showing a rather 'normal' action. We don't know how the model of *Discopolus* looked in real life, but most probably he didn't look quit as the sculpture. *Interior Scroll* took place in East Hampton, New York, 1975, where Schneemann ritualistically stood naked on a table, painted her body with mud until she slowly extracted a paper scroll from her vagina while reading from it. Schneemann has said herself that she thought of the vagina as a sculptural and spiritual form;

9 M.C. Howatson, *Plato: The Symposium* (Cambridge University Press, 2008)

...an architectural referent, the sources of sacred knowledge, ecstasy, birth passage, transformation... a spiraled coil ringed with the shape of desire and generative mysteries, attributes of both female and male sexual power.<sup>10</sup>

She goes on saying “This source of interior knowledge would be symbolized as the primary index unifying spirit and flesh in Goddess worship.” The idea of Interior Scroll was to physicalize the invisible, marginalized and suppressed history of the vulva, as the source of orgasmic pleasure, of birth, of transformation, of menstruation, of maternity, to show that it is not a dead, invisible place.

<sup>10</sup> Carolee Schneemann, *More Than Meat Joy*, (McPherson & Co Publishers, 1979) p. 234-235



Bronze, *Discobolus*, Myron, ca. 460–450 BC . The original sculpture is lost. The image show a Roman replica from 2nd century AD.

Documentary Photograph, *Interior Scroll*, Carolee Schneemann, 1975



If we look at the figures in the images of *Discobolus* and *Interior Scroll*, we see a resemblance in form. Both figures are viewed slightly from a below position, bent knees with one arm stretched to the back and the other arm placed in front of the stomach, both are naked and both in motion (one a captured motion and the other a physical motion). To compare a sculpture to a snap photography of a performance might not make much sense, but I want to focus on the two photographs as visuals with forms that can be compared, and look at them in the state that they are most often presented in Art history literature. Where *Discobolus* glorify the male nude as a symbol of beauty, *Interior Scroll* is an empowering of the female sexuality. Of course, the very essence of the two images is very different, one the ideal and the other a protest. There is also the very obvious difference of gender, where male and female always have been pined as opposites. I would argue that this is one crucial reason why politics is an inherit part of the body, and especially the naked body. Because even though I am comparing the two naked bodies, the fact that one is male and the other female is a valid point to make. The nude male figure is something very old that we as spectators have been trained to view as a form, where the nude female body free of shame is something new in comparison. I am mentioning this because it plays a role in how the naked body was portrayed in art, and why Schneemann and the other artists changed what a naked body in art meant, by using their body as an active material if protests.

*Allegory of the Painted Woman* (2012-2015) by Alexis Blake, performed in Rijksmuseum 2015, deals with the exact issue of the historical representation of the female nude in paintings. If we in art history had not already gone through a demonstration against the restricted body, works like *Allegory of the Painted Woman* would have been read very different. Everything is a reaction

of something that had already happened, and nothing would look the way it does if it wasn't for a prior outcome in evolution, but the naked body as a tool of protest can for the most part be traced back to the 60's feminists to a point where the body doesn't have to be nude. The performers are dressed in gray, making a direct reference to the stone and marble sculptures in the museum. The sharp poses that the two performers make carries a clear demonstrative effect, as they become images of female strength.



Myron, *Discopolis*



Documentary  
*Allegory of the painted Woman, A*



by Photograph,  
Alexis Blake, 2015, Rijksmuseum



Schneemann, *Interior Scroll*

When looking at the documentation of *Allegory of the painted Woman* (2015, Rijksmuseum), we can view the photos for their form and esthetics and enjoy them as would we be looking at the paintings referenced. The two women are in white tank top, gray sweat pants and white sneakers giving the performers a contemporary look. In the first photo the two female performers are standing back-to-back, one leg slightly bended and one hand on the chest. In the second picture the two performers are bending backwards, one leg lifted in a bended position and the other stretched slightly above the floor, one arm stretched backwards. Both bodies are in motion seemingly in balance at this specific moment. The contemporary clothes, the title of the piece, and the history it follows, makes this a work that is not just about the formalities of a painting but a protest against the standardized portraying of female beauty. This is what I would call the heritage of feminist performance art.

Blake is not performing herself in this particular presentation but is working with musicians and dancers that are experts in their tasks. When *Allegory of the painted Woman* took place in Rijksmuseum 2015, it consisted of two female dancers, and four musicians. It is worth noticing that whereas the gender of the dancers seems to have a certain importance, the gender of the musicians does not.

Although the view of the body, in particular the female body, has changed several times since ancient Greece we still value youth, strength and beauty as a possession of high value. In *Allegory of the painted Woman* Blake breaks down the physical movements of portrayed beauty and grace, as has often been the theme in paintings of female nudes.



Alexis Blake, *Allegory of the painted Woman*.

## The spectator as part of social political structures in Live Art.

In *Artificial Hells* Claire Bishop describes the history of artists in an attempt to rethink the role of the artist and the work of art in relationship to society in various forms of participatory art. Bishop focuses on three moments that, according to her, carried a significant importance: 1917 where the artistic production was influenced by Bolshevik collectivism, 1968 where the artistic production was focused on a critique of authority, oppression and alienation and 1989 that marked the fall of socialism and celebrated as the end of a repressive regime in the beginning of the 1990's.<sup>11</sup> Bishop maps out the consequence in the art world of a Western Europe gradually reducing the welfare state and the introduction of free market and capitalism in Eastern Europe, as an initial optimism that would turn into disillusionment when faced with the reality of privatization, arguing that freedom from the regime had been delivered as depending on the expanded consumer freedom. The result of the contradictorily times of 1989 made the impact on the artistic production less straightforward, resulting in exhibitions exploring a collaborative working process and cultural heritage, rather than targeting specific communities. Bishop introduces the term 'project' after 1989 as an attempt from the western art world to replace art as a finished object with a post-studio, research-based, social process that can extend over time and take multiple forms. Although this could leave the public feeling left out and unwelcome, as this had more to do with the artists own experience than that of the audience, this approach did open up to viewers from many levels of society.

The tendency of hiring outside expertise to take part in an artwork is described by Claire Bishop in *Delegated Performance: Outsourcing Authenticity*, where she talks about the act of hiring

nonprofessionals or specialists to be performing on behalf of the artist, following instructions given by him or her. This was a big shift from the performances known from the late 1960 and 1970 where the performance was typically expressed through the artist's own body. By hiring performers, the artwork would mirror the actual economical situation where companies in the 90's started to outsource labor, to either achieve cheaper or more skilled labor. The artists did not only comment on the political and financial situation in their work, but the art world adapted the situation of its time and used it as a tool or method. This suggests that we can read about a specific tendency of the time by looking at the artworks, it also differs from previous performances that worked as a reaction rather than adapting certain methods.

I will be looking at the specific part of Bishop's text where she discusses artists that tend to hire people to perform their own socio-economic category,<sup>12</sup> on the basis of gender, class, ethnicity, age, disability or profession. In the beginning of the chapter I made an assumption saying that because of the 60's feminists, identity politics have become a structural part of Live Art. I will start by discussing the tendency of hiring non-professionals to perform an aspect of their own identity, called live installations. Examples of this tendency is Annika Eriksson's *Copenhagen Postmen's Orchestra* (1996) and British artist Jeremy Deller's *Acid Brass* (1997) who both invited bands to perform recent pop music in their own respective style, or Elmgreen & Dragset's *Try* (1997), where they hired, gay men to walk around in the gallery listening to headphones. Bishop emphasizes the fact that this work was primarily developed in Europe and was a break with the more direct identity politics that were crucial in America.

As an example, Bishop analyses the Italian artist Maurizio

<sup>12</sup> Bishop, ARTIFICIAL HELLS, p. 490-492

Cattelan's project, *Southern Suppliers FC*, from 1991.<sup>13</sup> Cattelan put together a football team of African immigrants, who would play local football matches, all of which they lost. On their shirts were the fictional sponsors, RAUSS (German slang for 'get out'), the name of the project *Southern Suppliers FC* were also a hint to the debate at the time of hiring foreign football players to play on Italian teams. Cattelan's points out a sharp contrast in status made between the high-status immigrants who came as star soccer players and working class-immigrants. Bishop offers an analysis of the visual outcome, the word Rauss combined with photography of the all-black Italian football team that would circulate in the media. As she says this seemed to have blurred E.U. fear of being of being flooded by immigrants from outside 'fortress Europe' - Interesting enough this a fear that have only grown stronger in the 27 years that have passed. Bishop calls *Southern Suppliers FC*;

...a social sculpture as cynical performance, inserted into the real-time social system of a soccer league.

The critique at the time was that Cattelan was not straightforward in his political message.<sup>15</sup> Even though the performance lime-light was shared, it was highly directed by Cattelan, using a sport as a popular point of reference rather than a democratic focus of collaboration. It is, in fact, not uncommon for artists making this kind of Live Installations to use the very structures they are criticizing. The mere structure in this specific field is vulnerable to critique, as the whole structure is made from one person (the artist) directing a group of people of a certain socioeconomic category (performer). Does the artist use a group of performers usually seen as a minority, the artist will just be pointing at a tendency by reproducing it, as was the case with Cattelan's *Southern Suppliers FC*.

<sup>13</sup> Bishop, *ARTIFICIAL HELLS*, p. 493-496

<sup>14</sup> Bishop, *ARTIFICIAL HELLS*, p. 221

<sup>15</sup> Francesco Bonami, *Maurizio Cattelan* (London: Phaidon, 2003), p. 58

The same critique can be used on many of the works by Santiago Sierra, who often displays low-paid workers in his installations. Sierra work has shifted from hiring low-paid workers to produce his installations to displays of the workers themselves, showing the economical situation on which the installations depend. One of his early works were *250cm Line Tattooed on 6 Paid People*; six unemployed young men from Old Havana were hired for 30USD in exchange for being tattooed. He has been heavily criticized for repeating the inequalities of capitalism and western culture in the world, hereby contributing to a society of financial and social inequality. Sierra insists on making the payment to the workers part of the work's description.

We can in the same way question the method of objectification of your own body for a feminist cause. The language is often that of objectification, showing the restriction by acting restricted. When you objectify your own body, do you then play by the rules or oppose them? Do you go by the tendencies or do you take possession of your own body? What Schneemann did when using her naked body in *Interior Scroll* was to contextualize her body in a way that was not just sexual.

The group *Girl Squat* is fighting for their right to be as sexy and undressed as they like, while using the classical rules of beauty, and still be taken seriously in the current feminist debate. The three girls Nikita Klæstrup, Ekaterina Krarup Andersen and Louise Kjølsten are not considered artists but thinkers in the debate of feminist activism. *Girl Squat* recently broke of the group to focus on individual projects, but have since 2016 been arguing that also feminine, naked women and with classical good looks should be taken seriously.

The project has resulted in numerous photographs (taken by Ekaterina Krarup Andersen), lots of interviews, articles, a podcast, and a book.<sup>16</sup> Their approach has made them vulnerable to critique from both sides; the feminist saying that they are damaging the feminist cause, and the other letting them know that they are a object of their desire. *Girl Squat* has not promoted themselves as an art project, but as a social media. However if we look at the photographs, the way we view them are in the same way as if we would view a Cindy Sherman (I am well aware that Sherman is more critically acclaimed). Though the project *Girl Squat* is social, the result is often visual. The word 'project' has in the past been used for many different types of art; collective practice, self-organized activist groups, trans-disciplinary research, participatory and socially engaged art, and experimental curator activity. *Girl Squat* is first and foremost social, their main goal was not that of an art piece but of activism attempting to change the minds of the viewers and debating their course. As a visual technique Andersen draws inspiration from paintings and sculptures of female nudes, the photos carries much resemblance to the visualization of the triple goddess. In common Neopagan usage the three female figures are frequently described as the Maiden, the Mother, and the Crone, each of which symbolizes both a separate stage in the female life cycle and a phase of the Moon, and often rules one

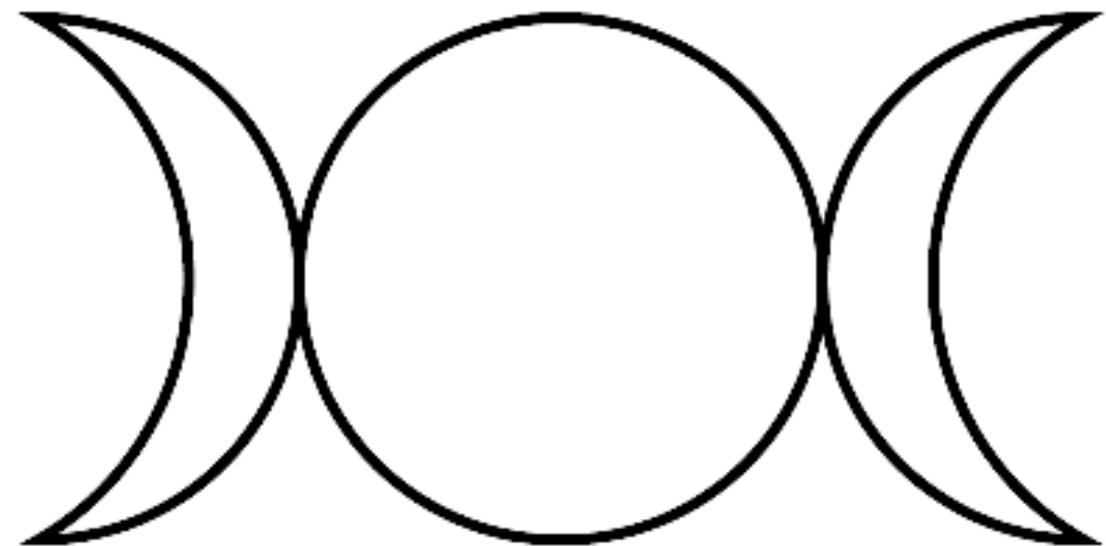
16 Ekaterina Andersen, Louise Kjølsten, Nikita Klæstrup, *Ludermanifestet* (Copenhagen: Lindhardt og Ringhof, 2017)

of the realms of earth, underworld, and the heavens. The figure of the Triple Goddess is used to aim critique at societies' roles and treatment of women and has often been used as symbol of life and strength.

The group does (as have become normal in today visual language of activism) use the internet as the public space framing the action. The fact that the use of imagery has become an important part of visual activism makes it possible to reach a larger audience and use the imagery depiction in art history as a focus point of your references. What in many people's eyes are pornographic, are for Andersen a celebration to the female figure and strength using the visuals that we connect with pop culture, superficiality and fragility and insist that the issue is in the reader not the subject, that beauty and strength go hand in hand. Andersen tests our own vanity and how we look at images.



A. Photography from Ludermanifestet, *Girl Squat*, 2017



B. Symbol of The Triple Goddess



C. Oil on Canvas, Peter Paul Rubens, *The Three Graces*, 1630-1635.

Image A will for most people resemble an underwear commercial or something from a mens magazine. The three women are posing in sensual ways usually to be seen when seducing costumers. The colors are light, calm and damp; all visuals usually ascribed to female aesthetics. The image has clear resemblance to those of female pop singers except for a few things: Andersen (who is also the photographer) is visually pregnant and the image is made from an aesthetic purpose of the three girls and not the viewer.

Image B shows the Triple Goddess symbol of the waxing, full and waning moon, representing the aspects of Maiden, Mother, and Crone. The concept of Triple Goddess exist in many religions, cultures and mythologies, the essence of a triple goddess is a goddess with three aspects, or in some cases it may even be represented by three separate individuals who are linked together and often appear together.

Image C is *The Three Graces* painted by Rubens between 1630 and 1635. The Three Graces, who originates from Greek mythology; Aglaia (Radiance), Euphrosine (Joy) and Thalia (flowering), was believed to be children from an affair of Zeus. They served Aphrodite, the goddess of love, and it is said that they were never bored. The Three Graces was and is still the perfect image of female youth, beauty and hope. Rubens painted the figures from a marble sculpture which is why the skin is so white and radiant. The Graces were at the time seen as the ideal beauty and it is interesting to observe the shape and language of their bodies, that are very different from the beauty standards of today that *Girl Squat* works with. When we compare the three images, you can see how *Girl Squat* draws references from thousand of years of female depiction.

*Girl squat* can only do what they do, because of the times they are living in. They are exactly saying that the interpretation of the object has to be changed not the object itself. They objectify their own bodies and insist that this does not mean that their bodies are for sale, they still belongs to them. We need to remember that *Girl Squat* is a project that at no time is defined as an artistic project, which, however, I would suggest that it actually is. Bishop uses 'project' as an indicator of the artists renewed social awareness in the 1990's, and describes a successful project as something that allows the worker to integrate him/herself into a new project afterwards, as a generator of new projects. The flexibility that lies in this art form and in particular within the labor of the artist is according to Bishop a direct consequence of withdrawal of manual skills, resulting in long-term projects that is closer to that of a service than visual object. It is hard to determine what is an artwork (project) and what is a social project, so we rely on the argument: *if the artist says so*.

When showing this project-based art form in an old format (exhibitions) there will be a conflict between these two models. Often, for example, there is barely any object to look at, and the role of the audience is severely limited. Bishop brings up the example of 'culture in Action', as an experimental exhibition striving to democratize the production and reception of art. However the participation and spectatorship of art are mutually exclusive as they expect very different things of the audience, showing how project and exhibition are mutually exclusive. In a 'project' the focus will often be on the spectator; in that case the spectator will be the subject and in some cases even the object. If an exhibition is not the ideal place to visually communicate the project then what is the correct place for it? There might be a difference between the presentation of a project and a historical reference of it (which I would claim is the case for most exhibitions of social projects).

The desired effect on the spectator will not happen in a gallery setting, because of the way we are trained to look.

*Girl Squat* has been very successful partly because of the frame of the project and the visuals as a result of their activities. Primarily using social media they use a public platform where the visuals aren't that much different than of so many others in the same place. They then add other elements, like a certain text on their t-shirt, a caption or a debate about sexual harassment. The project is efficient when the agenda of the artist, the visuals and the spectator clash. Why I would call *Girl Squat* an artistic project with a socio political agenda, much like the feminist performance art of the 70's.





Photography, Nikita Klæstrup, Ekaterina Krarup Andersen and



by Louise Kjølse, *Girl Squat*, published in *Ludermanifestet*, 2017.

# F U N I F E S T A T I O N S M A N I F E S T A T I O N S

I would claim that the way we choose to document artwork ends up defining the work after a certain amount of time has passed, and therefore it has a big effect on the work's future life. Documentation is specific to its time and the way it is kept can therefore say something about the political and social environment of its origin. In this chapter I will examine documentation as an artistic practice in its own right and study how the documentation manifests itself. I will specifically be looking at the issues with documenting live art with a political agenda and how the meaning of the documentation has and will change in time. We can by looking at art history get a pretty good idea of what documentation was used at what time, and what has been efficient.

## When Performing becomes documentation, performing without an audience.

When addressing Live Art in an art historical context we soon run in to an issue of documentation. The notion of time offers a clear obstacle as the original medium of Live Art can almost never be conserved, only when we are meant to view the work through the medium of photography, film, text or sound can we with out much difficulty access the work after the action has been done (I will discuss this phenomena more later).

The notion of time in Live Art is of great relevance to the form and concept of the work. While the duration offers a clear structure, the historical time and political era of the work offers a historical context that will be relevant to the understanding of the work when looking at a bigger pattern. This is the reason why a live work will live on in a historical context, a performance is often specific to the body of artist creating it, which means that when the artist is no longer there the piece can only exist through documentation. In *Art After Modernism*, Hans Belting brings up the point that where paintings and sculptures seem to survive through physical evidence of their existence live works seems to be depending on theories which might be the problem of documentation.<sup>16</sup>

The secondary audience is the audience that was not there physically for the live action but has seen documentation of the work. For most people an artwork will be seen on a different medium then the original. Paintings, sculptures and photography's can be viewed long after the artist is gone, but live works do (for the most part) only exist as a time-based medium. Duo to the amount of information available it is fair to assume that a big percentage of the combined audience (both first and second), will be part of

The University of Chicago Press, 2003), p. 85 - 95 S.T., "The fine art of human interaction", *The Economist*, <https://www.economist.com/blogs/prospecto/2012/07/tino-seghal> (accessed 12 July 2012)

the second audience category. This raises a new question: does a performance only exist when it is on display?

One artist that have taken performance documentation to the extreme is Tino Seghal; in an interview in *The Economist* Seghal said

...visual documentation can never capture the live interactive experience and it runs the risk of displacing the real work with secondary representations of it. Photographs are two-dimensional, I work in four dimensions.<sup>17</sup>

Even though Seghal's does not permit photography he still has a second audience. If the second audience is the audience becoming acquainted with a work in its original state then the second audience in this case is the people who have heard stories about Seghal's work. They work like a mythological story where the image you get from Tino Seghal's work is as strong from the story as it is in real life. I have heard people telling me about "this is so contemporary" from so many different sources that I think I have seen it, I have heard people singing "this is so contemporary, contemporary, contemporary" so many times that I think I was there seeing the uniformed guards sing - at least that is what happens in my head. In my mind children are dancing in the entrance as well, I think I heard someone tell me that. I have also heard about the same work with elderly people and children. Some scientists believe that evolution has wired our brains for story telling after thousands of years with storytelling as the primary information source. When a person only have access to a work through story telling, this work becomes mythological, they also hear it from the viewers perspective making the first audience an active part of the work. Seghal has a long list of demands when he sells a work; for one, a person that Seghal has trained must install the work. This means that when he dies, and the person he trained dies, the

works of Tino Seghal can never again be shown. The mythological effect of Seghal's way of not performing can be seen with the works of the 70's where the performer would perform themselves. The works live on because we know the historical impact of them.

We also have to take into account now that most of the second audience is online, where there before were a physical photography in a larger collection, we now have internet and computers, most artworks will be seen as images on a screen with no prior explanation. When Roland Barthes in *The Death of the Author* argue that the text no longer belongs to the author, but to the reader and how he/she interprets it,<sup>18</sup> we can draw parallels to the spectator and the artist.

If the author is the first audience then the reader is the second. Barthes took it a bit further, saying that all writers borrow from various experiences and knowledge that they have obtained through other texts:

The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centers of culture.<sup>19</sup>

Although Barthes was talking about texts, this is a theory that can easily be adapted to visual arts.

What I will discuss is not the origin of a work, but rather the weight of the interpretation added by an audience. Barthes argues that to put a author to a text is to limit possible interpretations. The explanation of a text is in the readers interpretation not the authors.,The Critics of *The Death of the Author* theory claims that the author is always present and that understanding the life and inspiration of the author will broaden the interpretation and stay 'true' to the intention of the author.

18 Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author", *Image Music Text*, essays selected and translated by Stephen Heath (London: Fontana Press, 1977), p. 142-148

19 Barthes, "The Death of the Author", *Image Music Text*, p. 146

I would claim that once the author is gone and enough time has passed, the interpretation will happen according to the knowledge of the current time, and not the time of its origin, making the meaning of a work change. It can also happen that the collective understanding of a certain situation is so strong that an interpretation will always be in a certain way. Let us take Barthes' argument that most signs are only meaningful because we have attributed meaning to them.<sup>20</sup> We can transfer the same theory to images; if the meaning of an image will change then the collective understanding of a work will change. When a work has been published it does not belong to the artist anymore, because that it is out of his/her hands to direct the reading of the work.

With Live Art this concept presents a whole new problem, when the majority of an audience is not present for the live action; can we even talk about the existence of the work when it is not on display? Depending on the nature of the action, the work can exist independently of an audience, but that does not mean that the action cannot be viewed from the medium of photography, story telling or something completely different. The documentation will therefore be both the result of the action, and the action in itself.

I have previously argued that *Girl Squat* could be categorized as an artistic project, I will say that the photographs are the result of a performative action. This kind of political project allows for the project to be bigger than the visuals, why this project is relevant to discuss in regards to the performativity of the work. There is a clear performativity in the work where the members of the group interact directly with the spectator. The part of the project resulting in photography is often shared on social media where the members of the group have direct correspondence with the

20 Barthes, "The Death of the Author", *Image Music Text*, p. 147

spectator, when there are being commented on the images. The theory of the dead author does not apply to this project (this might be because the project is still new in a broader historical context), but it could also be that the girls challenge the spectator habits and expectations, by constantly changing the spectators' perspective. I would say that the theory of the dead author only applies when we do not know the intention of the artist. With the social conscious projects or artworks the artist often goes to great lengths to make their view known, the interpretation will therefore belong to them long after they have given it to the public.

*Girl Squat* is, as already mentioned, a relatively new project (2016-2018). It is therefore possible that the physical products that has come as a result of the project will stand alone after some time has passed. Images is still the medium that can reach the biggest public the fastest, it is therefore fair to assume that the images of *Girl Squat* is the product that will live on independent of the bigger project. The book, the podcast, the interviews and the articles will still be experienced, but by fever then the images on their own. However when we look at Live Art from the 60's and 70's they are viewed in the context of a movement, the photographic documentation of an action does not stand alone, but is put in to a historical context.

Barthes is right about the fact that additional knowledge from the view of the spectator will be added, as time passes and the spectator gets a different perspective. I think that for the Live Art the death of the artist means that the success and influence of a work will influence the spectator, as the spectator will have a prior understanding of the subject. Of cause this only applies if a project/art work has been successful.

Photography, Nikita Klæstrup, Ekaterina Krarup Andersen and Louise Kjølse, *Girl Squat*, published in *Ludermanifestet*, 2017.



## The weight of an image

According to Jon Erickson the use of black and white photography in classic performance documentation enhances the photograph's reality effect, whereas a color photo inserts itself as an object in its own right; "*There is a sense of mere utility in black-and-white, which points to the idea that documentation is really only a supplement to a performance having to do with context, space, action, ideas, of which the photograph is primarily a reminder.*"<sup>21</sup>

Let us look at how a live work can manifest itself when not on display; we can have a script, a video, a scenery, a photo or a memory. Though none of these will show the original form of the work, some will be more accurate to the atmosphere than others. Using photography provides the obvious problem of a snapshot, where only one specific moment will be documented. Another problem presented here is the politics connected to the body and therefore live art. Performance artists mostly used this kind of documentation in the 60s and 70s. The documentation of Yves Klein's *Anthropometry*, works as an example of documentation through a snapshot of the performance and the remains that survive after the performance.



Documentary Photograph,  
*Anthropometry*, Yves Klein, 1960.

21 Jon Ericson Variations: Performing Distinctions, (1999, PAJ: A Journal of Performance)

There is a big difference in viewing an image in the context of the time it was made and in the context of the time you view it. In *Can Images Kill* Marie-José Mondzain claims that images stand halfway between fiction and dream,<sup>22</sup> that this perspective allows us to question the paradox of their insignificance and their power. We know that images are made for manipulation and control; it is a visual that at the same time can be used to prove a point or as evidence of certain activities, while being openly edited and manipulated with. Why else would the discussion of photoshopped images still be relevant; we expect them to be accurate but know that they are not. Furthermore, images have become an industry in itself, which gives the image an economical interest.

In the fall of 2017 a case erupted where 1000 kids under 18 have been accused of sharing children pornography on social media, after footage of a 15 year old girl and a boy was shared on Facebook more than 1000 times. The interesting thing here is that the action of the two young teenagers is not illegal but sharing the footage is. The 1000 young teenagers have been accused under § 235 the, who spread pornographic visual recreations of persons under 18 years, gets punished with a fine or up to 2 years in prison. This is a big deal because it emphasizes the difference between action and reproduction. Images only exist in the action, but it is not the action we judge rather the reproduction. Mondzain talks about images as an instrument of power over bodies and minds, and about how representation of violence sells so well and are source of great profit.<sup>23</sup> Perhaps this is why so many shared the violent footage, not because of a profit but online popularity. This is of course a very different case as different laws are applied to the privacy of two people and to art works which are often staged and planned. I would argue that the way we judge and view visual context is the same. We don't judge the action but the object that is the visual content even if their status

22 Marie-José Mondzain, "Can Images Kill", *Critical Inquiry*, trans. by Sally Shifto, Vol 36, no 1:2009, p. 24.

23 Mondzain, "Can Images Kill", p. 6

is fundamentally problematic. As Mondzain points out images appear as a sensitive reality that can simultaneously be seen and known, but the action in itself is not an object. This creates a problematic when we look at documentation of Live Art, if the documentation is judged as an object and not the action the meaning of the artwork will get lost.

## Documentation as a Performative Act.

Let us consider two important photos of Live Art; the documentation of Chris Burden's *Shoot* (1971) and Yves Klein's *Leap into the void* (1960). It is well established that the image showing *Shoot* is performance documentation, but what is *Leap into the void*? Is it a staged photo? A staged documentation? When Yves Klein made his famous work *Leap into the void* (1960), he did not really jump unprotected out of the window as the photo suggest, but Burden really did get shot in his work *Shoot*. In *The Performativity of Performance Documentation* Philip Auslander raises the question of what difference it makes to the conceptual understanding of these images, that one performance 'really' happened while the other did not.<sup>24</sup> In his analysis, Auslander categorizes performance documentation as either *documentary* or *theatrical*, where the documentary category represents the traditional way of which the relationship between a performance and its documentation is perceived. Auslander uses the assumption that the documentation of the live event provides a record of it to be reconstructed as well as serves the purpose of proving its existence. The connection between performance and document is therefore completely dependent on each other, not able to say which comes before the other or which is the 'original' work. Even though the documentation of this category is assumed to give an exact record of the performance, this will be fragmented and incomplete (as pointed out by Kathy O'Dell).<sup>25</sup> This is the category that Burden's *Shoot* belong to as well as most of the performances made in the 60's and 70's.

The Performed Photography that includes Cindy Sherman's photographs of herself in various disguises, most of the performances by Sigurdur Gudmundsson, Candice Breitz most recent work *Love Story* (2016), plus many more, belongs to the theatrical

24 Philip Auslander, "The Performativity of Performance Documentation", *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art*, 28: 2006, p.1

25 Kathy O'Dell, "Displacing the Haptic: Performance Art, the Photographic Document and the 1970s." *Performance Research* 2, 1:1997, p. 73-74.

26 Auslander, "The performativity of performance documentation", p.2

category, all examples of performances staged only to be photographed or filmed. In this case, the documentation is the only space where the performance exists. Klein's *Leap* belongs to this category, as this was an event mainly arranged for the camera. Klein had only invited photographers and close friends (mainly to act as proof of the event) to view the performance. He jumped several times to get the right expression on his face, and where it on the picture looks as if he is jumping with out any security there in fact was installed a net for him to fall to. When developing the photo Klein layered two images on top of each other to create the elution of him falling to the ground.

I will return to the question: What difference does the fact that the image of Burden documents something that really happened while the image of Klein does not, make to our understanding of these images in relation to the concept of performance documentation?

According to Auslander there is no difference if we look at the historical constitution of these events as performances. The identity of documented performances as performances is not dependent on the presence of an audience, and therefore studio fabricated performance documentation cannot be dismissed as performance because of its lack of an audience. Rather Auslander suggests that performance art is constituted through the performativity of its documentation, which is equally true for both Burden's piece and Klein's. The same argument can be used to define Cindy Sherman's photography's as Live Art with only the camera as first audience, the work might be presented through photography, but there is a performativity in the action of producing the photography. That the action is captured for photography doesn't make it any less performative; the live action needs the photography as the photography needs the action. It is

27 Amelia Jones, "Presence" in Absentia: Experiencing Performance as Documentation", *Performance Art: (Some) Theory and (Selected) Practice at the End of This Century, Art Journal*, Vol 56: 1997, p 11-18

possible to experience a work without being physically present for its presentation. Amelia Jones writes about performances that she has not attended herself. The problematic of writing about live works that you have not physically experienced is that you have to approach body artworks through their photographic, textual, oral, video and/or film traces. Jones argues that the problematic of not being physical present is logistical rather than ethical or hermeneutic.<sup>27</sup> When not present one has to approach the through photography, textual, oral, video and/or film traces. Jones argues against that being present gives you the privileged relationship to the historical 'truth' of the performance, and that the artists needs and intentions should be held higher than the intuition and responses of the person viewing the documentation.

Without knowing the artist you can assess the work without being entrapped in the artists idea of what the work is (or was) about. This is also in line with the dead author theory; The documentary traces of a work can be put as high as the artists intention. This knowledge should not be privileged over the documentary traces. Either way there is no guarantee for the audience to have any knowledge of the intention of the artist, or the audience might have a deep historical, political, social and personal context for a specific performance. What is "the real" is a subjective question, as it refers to the experience of the spectator. If a spectator can experience a performative documentation, as that of Sherman or Klein, then a spectator will also be able to experience the documentation of a live action.

Most often Live Art become meaningful in later years, as it is difficult to identify the patterns of history when in the middle of it. In the case of Live Art, the spectator often experience the actions in relation to other performances or political social happenings at

the time. This give the documentation an advantage compared to the original work as the relationship between body/subject to its documentation is in the era of where it takes place. I have experienced Schneemann's *Interior Scroll*, through a series of black and white photos, as have Jones. My knowledge of this work comes mainly from an art historical context. I did not experience the work physically but I understand the work, and I know the relevance of it.

The Tate modern has Tate BMV live performance, where they present live performances in an online space. Emily Roysdon presented her work *I am a Helicopter, Camera, Queen* on May 31 2012 in the room next to the turbine hall, followed by a Q and A where online viewers could write in questions. The only physical present audience was the camera, the camera is not a performer the camera controls our gaze. We the audience see everything through the eyes of the camera, the camera is the first audience and we the second, but this is as much a performance as anything we would see live and it is in line with how we get most of our information anyways. Within the problematic of how to keep the documentation as close to the performance as possible. Here the documentation and the view of the performance the same. But does it then make a difference if it is seen live or after? I would say that when viewed live, that will be the original performance and anything viewed after that is documentation even though it is the same footage viewed on the same platform. To argue this I will go back to Auslander argument of the photography being treated as a piece of the real world, rather than a substitute for it. To make this argument Auslander quotes Helen Gilbert and her statement the fact that the photograph as not only representationally accurate but ontologically connected to the real world, is what allows the photography to exist as an object in its own right, not only a substitute for it.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Auslander, "The performativity of performance documentation", p. 1

I am making the assumption that there is no difference in the objectification in a photograph and a video as documentation. The relationship between performance and photo camera is the same as the relationship between performance and video camera. The question of the relationship between action and photography in Kleins' *Leap* into the void is the same as the question of the relationship between *I am a Helicopter, Camera, Queen* and the video available. *I am a Helicopter, Camera, Queen* works both as a performance and as what Auslander calls performative documentation. If we agree with the traditional way of defining a performance as an event having an autonomous existence prior to its documentation, then the live works at Tate are something else, a video in its own right rather than a performance. But whether audience or not, both are staged and planned and we need not forget performance dependence on documentation to attain symbolic status within the realm of culture. In that case what is the origin of *I am a Helicopter, Camera, Queen*? Is it the shown footage, which is all we are presented? Or is it the room and what happened in the room? Were the first audience the performers and we the second? In an interview given after Roysdon talks about how it was important for her to work with volunteers and create a space for viewers, creating an experience for the performers as well.

## Documentation as activism

We have established the activist nature of Live Art and covered the impact of imagery. I will in this chapter discuss the activist possibilities of documentation. We have established that a performative activity can have an activist effect when performed in the right place. Likewise can an image have an atavistic effect, which we lately have seen on social media, where a big part of social movements take place. Images are a big part of this type of activism and serve the same purpose as the physical performative activities and social media used as the public space. An example of an efficient movement using images on social media, was the movement of Turkish woman posting pictures of themselves laughing under #direnkahaha as a protest to a speech given by the then debuty primeminister in 2014.

Although this was not an artistic process they used images to protest and to tell a story. The woman were told not to laugh in public, so they reacted by laughing on an even broader public space: The social media. Likewise has the movement of body positivity largely taken place on social media. From an artistic point of view, this platform can be used as the red square was used as the framing of Pavlensky performance's, or that the lecture of Schneemann was the frame of her performance. Social media is the frame of the images by Ekaterina Krarup Andersen.

The trouble with social media as the frame of activist behavior is that it works as both a public space and a gallery space. Would one make an exhibition shown in a gallery space with the photography's of Ekaterina Krarup Andersen they would function as an historical relevance or a suggestion to a discussion, rather than the direct effect they have when shown in the frame of social media. Bishop points out the issues of social projects tending to

photograph very badly, and the images conveying very little of the contextual information. Where the participatory art challenge the passive spectator, that has been the tradition of art viewing.

*Interior Scroll* does not have the same effect now as it did because we see it in a historical context. The images of Andersen ask for the participation on the media they are presented on and does therefore hold the same provocative effect as *Interior Scroll* did. I would say that the success of a participatory or activist work lies in the expectation of the spectator, when you frame a work in a way that does not ask for any participation from the viewer it loses its effect. This is where the question of documentation as an activist mean becomes tricky, it is not that an image of a performative action or what I previously have called performative documentation can't have an effect, as seen with Cindy Sherman, but the question is whether or not it is possible to view it as anything but a historical reference. The actions live on in the documentation when the story of the action is still alive. The performance of Pussy Riot is still relevant, because that the consequence of their actions still are relevant.

# C O N C U S I O N

Art, in particular Live Art, is often specific to its time because of its social engagement, but that doesn't mean that the Live Art can not be relevant or experienced in a historical context. The feminist art movement that broke out in the 1960's is still relevant today due to the political discussions going on. This doesn't mean that the performances like *Interior Scroll* has the same shocking effect as in 1975, but the concept of the performance can still be experienced. We all know that no activity is independent from previous activities, or the activities that will come. The same goes for the feminist art movement, although the protests were new at the time (or at least new as a recognized art movement) the methods of involving the spectator derives from methods of protests and the evolution of performative actions in the first half of the 20th century.

The activist Live Art is, as its name suggest, a form of activism framed within an artistic practice. It is based on actions that aspire to make a change beyond art. To do this efficiently there need to be a direct relation between artwork and the targeted audience. The activity will therefore often take place in a public space where the action cannot be hidden by the 'secure' frame of art. They enter the places that they are protesting. When an artist protest the established art world, the protest belongs in the space of fine arts. This is also why the feeling of activism in live art is so strong, because we know that it can be used as a successful tool of protest or activism if done in the right place: Schneemann performed *Interior Scroll* during a film festival, although it was a scheduled performance she performed something different from what was expected, Pussy Riot staged a performance in Moscow's Cathedral of Christ, Pyotr Pavlensky at the red square, the futurists staged their events in theaters and *Girl Squat* on social media. They all perform in the space of the public they are targeting. The tradition of activist activities in art is therefore more about

the relationship between artwork and spectator than the artist.

This tradition of using Live Art as a means of activism has resulted in the body being a general symbol of freedom; this I would argue is in big parts because of the feminists. With the feminists the body became a subject in itself, where it previously had been used as an accent.

The use of a body doing the thing being protested, has been criticized many times. Whether it is objectifying your own body as the critiques have often been for *Girl Squat*, or create a financial system like Sierra. In both cases it is using a system rather than abusing it. When *Girl Squat* creates images of them posing sexual they challenge the perspective of the spectator. When Sierra paid six men a minimum wage to get tattooed, he used his possession to illustrate a power structure.

The heritage of the feminist art movement is exactly this: the political body. It is the idea that all bodies have a story and all bodies is a vessel for its time. If a live work has nothing to do with identification at any sort, the type of body chosen still changes the impact and concept of the work – in this is the political impact. *Girl Squat* has been very successful partly because of the frame of the project and the visuals as a result of their activities. Primarily using social media they use a public platform where the visuals aren't that much different from many others in the same place. They play with an esthetic already known but changes the agenda. The project is efficient when the agenda of the artist, the visuals and the spectator clash. Why I would call *Girl Squat* an artistic project with a socio-political agenda, much like the feminist performance art of the 70's.

In my own practice I am concerned with the immigration of subjects through art history in particular with in the economy of

beauty and female figure. I strive to make non-event performative actions in Live Installations that deals with infinity in a time specific work. Centered around imagery of young girls that have affected me and my way of looking at the female body, I employ the bodies of my performers to extreme objectification. There is therefore a theoretical possibility of an eternal setting, being viewed as a still life.

The other part of my practice is in the political agenda already subscribed to different bodies: What does age, gender, weight, sexual orientation and race mean to the perception of the spectator. The simple choice of framing either of these bodies defines the story being told, the neutral body doesn't exist.

Barthes argues that most signs are only meaningful because we have assigned meaning to them. The same can be applied to all visuals, we add the knowledge already attained to any visual we see. Because of this, the spectator will get a different perspective as time passes.

For Live Art, the end of the artistic activity does not imply the end of the influence of the works, it will still have an impact on the spectator because the spectator will have a prior understanding of the subject. Of course this only applies if a project/art work has been successful. When the visuals obtain a life separate from the action they can carry a greater meaning and weight. This creates a problem when we look at documentation of Live Art. If the documentation is judged as an object and not the action, the meaning of the artwork will get lost. It is however possible to experience a work without being physically present for its presentation. An action captured in a photograph is not any less performative than the action in itself, as the live action needs the photography as the photography needs the action, but when one image is the result of an action we have to be aware of the impact it can have on the experience of the work.

For all the Live works I have discussed I have not seen any myself, but I have experienced them through photography, textual, oral, video and/or film traces, which gives me the advantage of viewing them in a historical context. This is also the exact reason why the essence of a live work will change in time and why the documentation will turn into a work independent of the original action. Because of its independence the documentation can have an activist outcome, and not only be viewed as an historical reference.



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