

KUNSTMUSEUM ST. GALLEN
GÖTEBORGS KONSTHALL



ANDREA GEYER / SHARON HAYES



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SHARON HAYES

KEHRER

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PROLOGUE

Cambio de Lugar..Change of Place..Ortswechsel is the title of an early work by the two New York artists Andrea Geyer and Sharon Hayes. In fifty-three interviews, presented singly on separate monitors, people are questioned who identify themselves as women or have been identified as such at sometime in their lives. Originating from different geographical, cultural and social contexts, they discuss the relationship between the sexes and their own individual self-images of gender. However on the video documentation that resulted, we do not see the interview partners, but only the translators, thus subtly shifting the contents away from the answers and towards their translation as a means of communication and therefore, in the end, to the production of knowledge through a transcription from one language to another.

Andrea Geyer (b. 1971 in Freiburg), with her impressive work *Spiral Lands/Chapter 1*, was one of the discoveries of documenta 12. Up to the present, her work has been shown in many international exhibitions, at, among others, the Generali Foundation in Vienna, the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York and the Tate Modern in London. In the subtle *Spiral Lands*, black-and-white photographs are combined with historical data, news and fictive travel reports. The reflection on the medium of photography, and its decisive role in the “discovery myth” of the American West, as well as its mediation through the mass media, leads to a discriminating analysis of the colonization and the conquest of land within the United States of America.

Sharon Hayes (b. 1970 in Baltimore) investigates today’s social conditions by researching historical parallels, as in her gripping video work *10 Minutes of Collective Activity* (2003) that was shown in 2007 in the exhibition *In the Eye of the Storm* at the Kunstmuseum St.Gallen. The starting material for her artwork may, for instance, be the rhetoric of a political or presidential speech just as much as the slogans of leftist splinter groups. It is always engaged with socially significant themes inscribed in American history. At issue is a study of the complex relationships between history, politics and the process of individual and collective awareness as exemplified in *In the Near Future*. Sharon Hayes makes use of various media such as video, installation and performance, in which journalistic reporting methods are subtly breached.

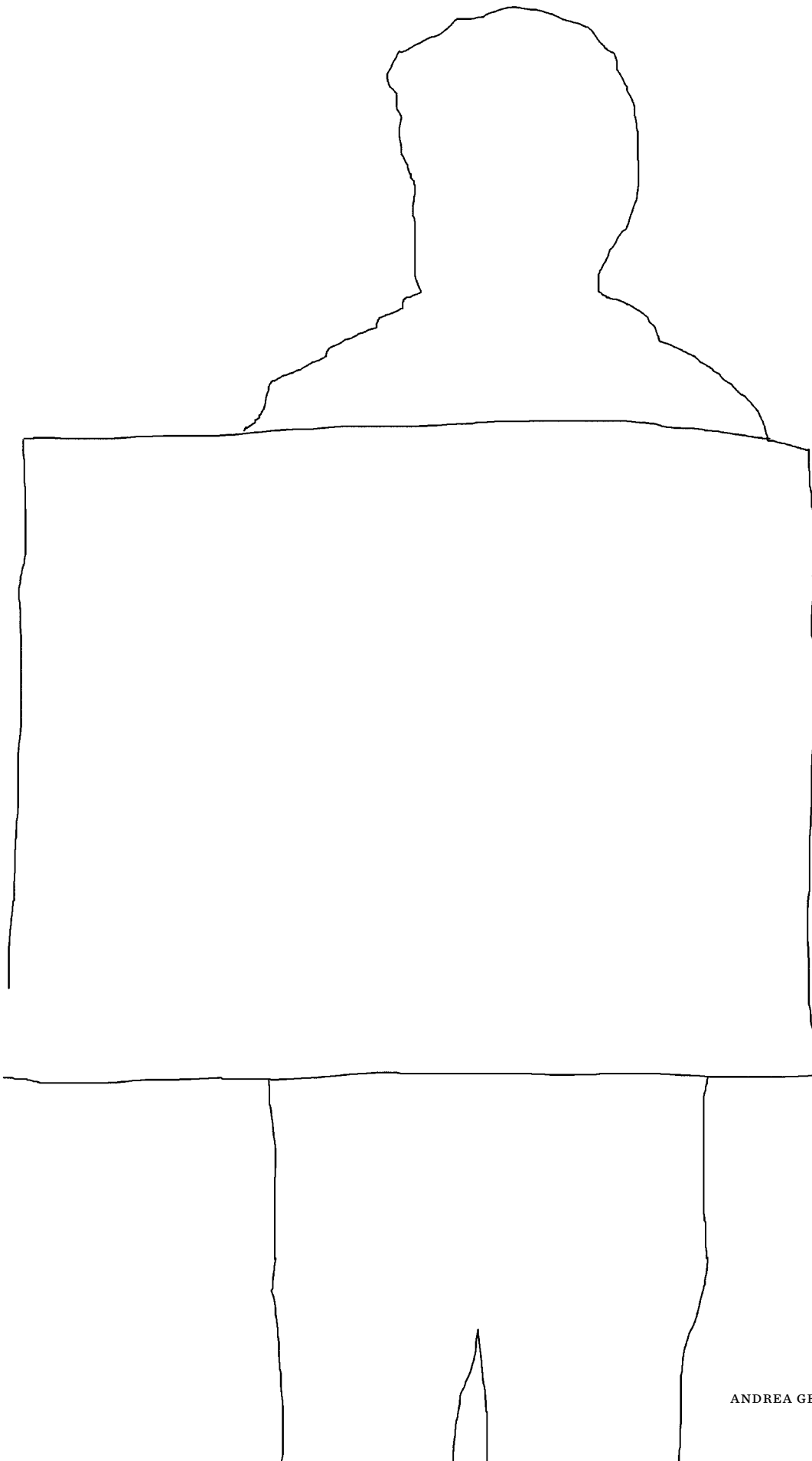
The exhibition at Kunstmuseum St.Gallen and Kunsthalle Göteborg starts with the unique collaboration between the two artists and brings together for the first time a comprehensive group of works by Andrea Geyer and Sharon Hayes who, in their respective oeuvres based on firmly feminist viewpoints, take up fundamental societal and political questions.

This ambitious project would never have come into being without the personal friendship and generous support of Andrea Geyer and Sharon Hayes. A fact we gratefully and warmly acknowledge.

Our thanks are also extended to Galerie Thomas Zander, Cologne, and Tanya Leighton Gallery, Berlin, as well as the Generali Foundation, Vienna, for their manifold support. Thanks also go out to all those who contributed to this publication: the interview partners, the graphic designer, and Kehrer Verlag, Heidelberg.

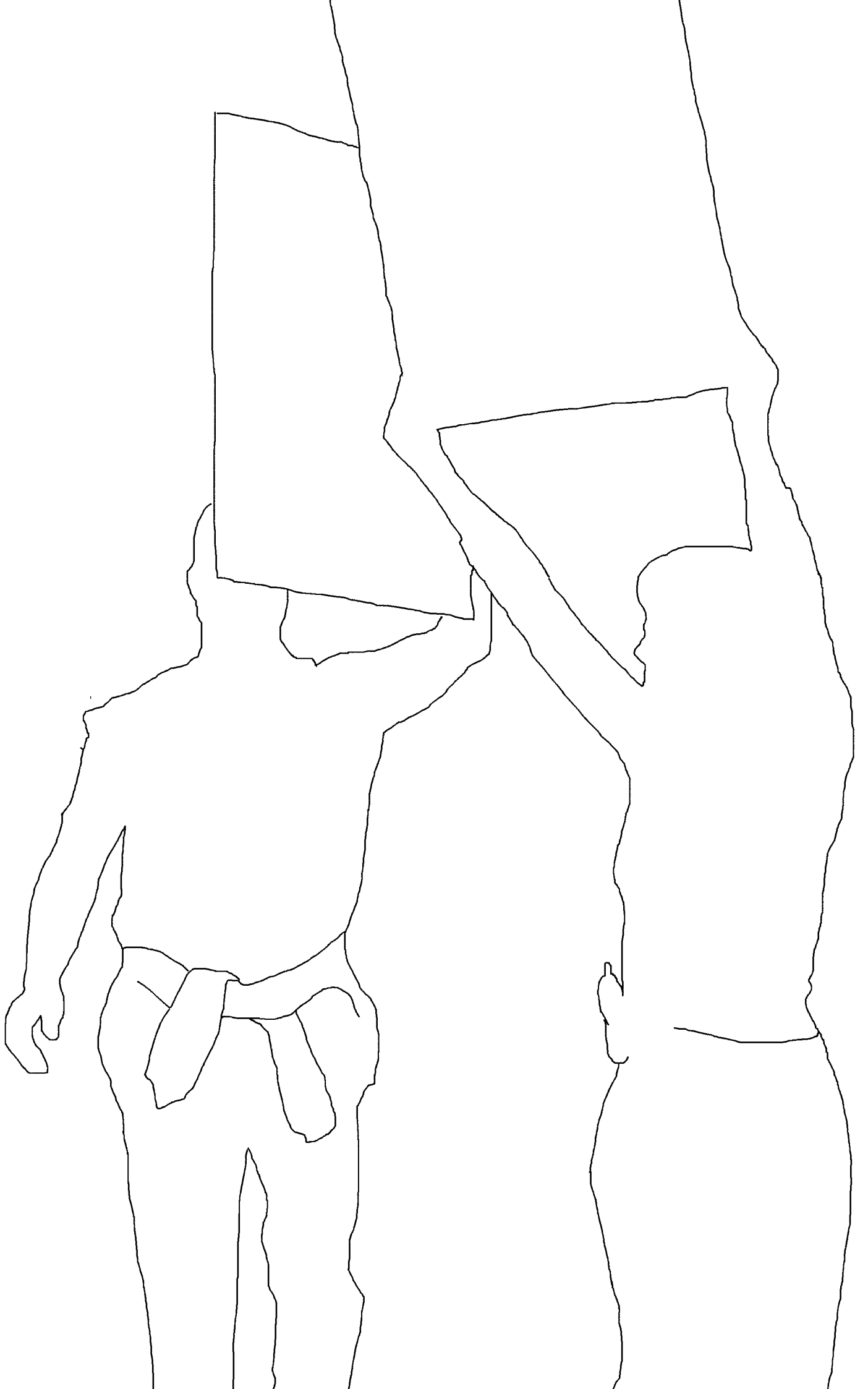
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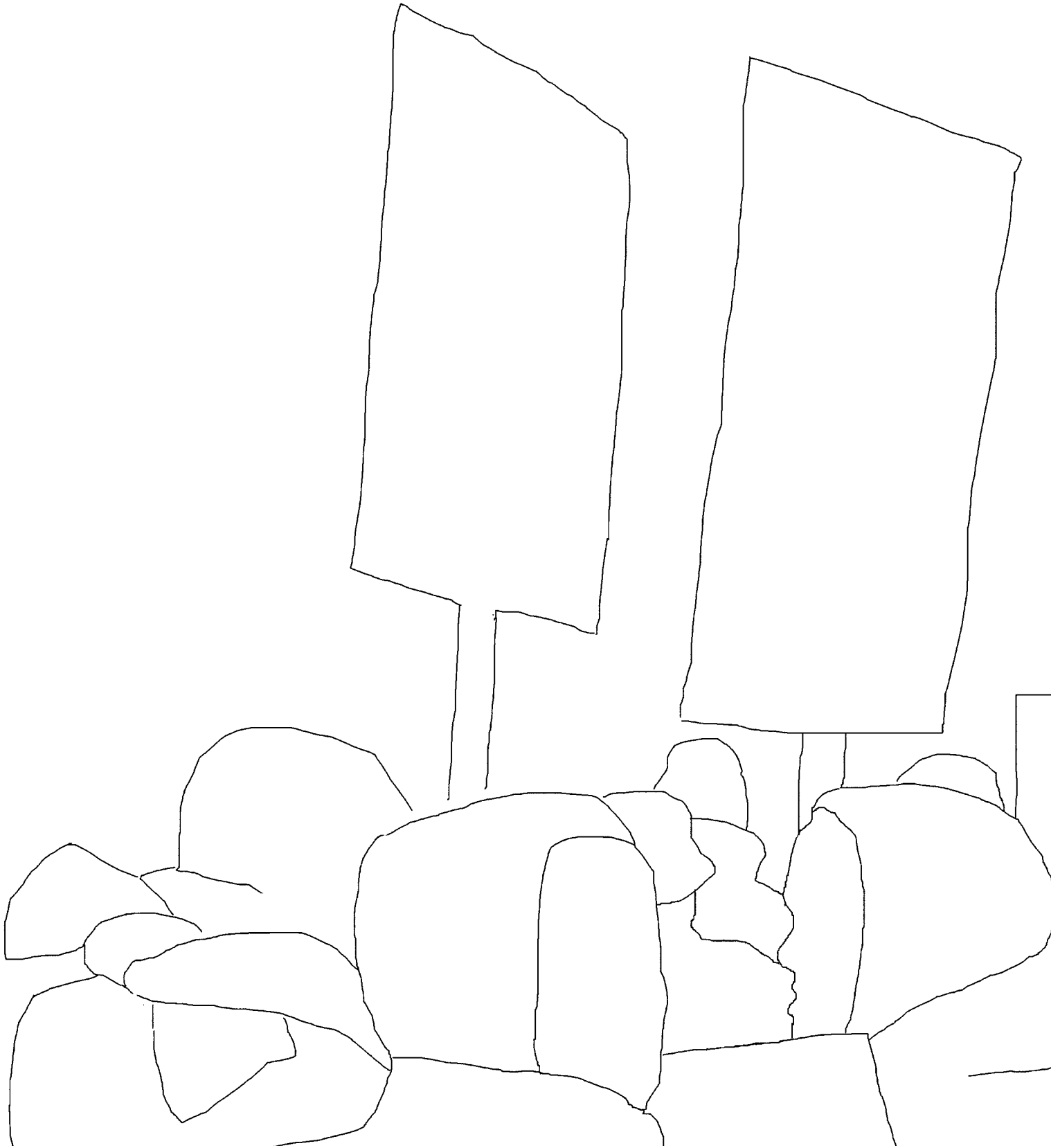
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GÖTEBORGS KONSTHALL



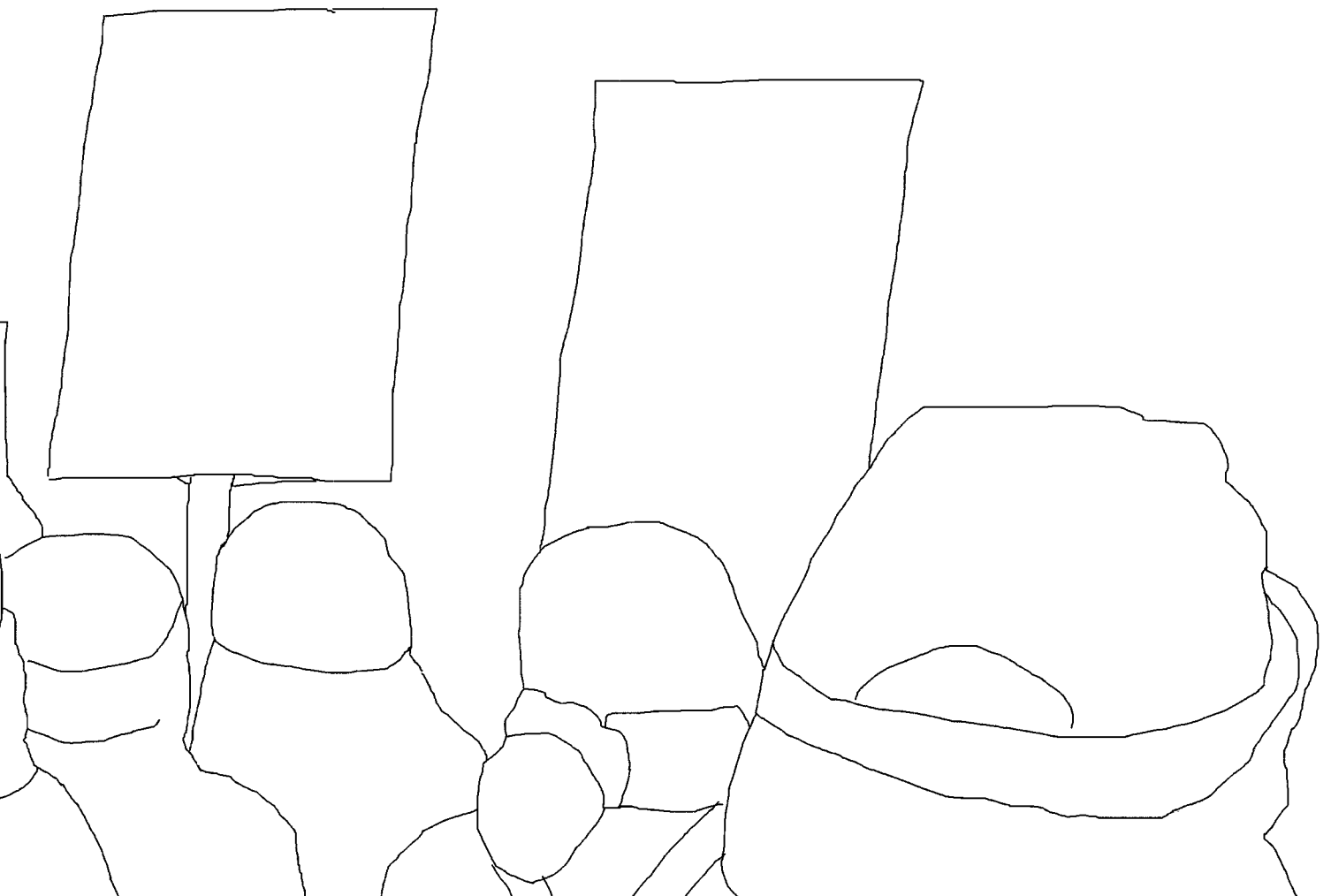
Who are you with? Are you with a group? Why are you here? Who do you speak for? What do you stand for? Can you identify yourself? Where do you live? Have you lived there for more than 2 years? Where do you work? How much money do you make? Can I see your badge? Do you have documentation? Who do you represent? Are you authorized to make decisions? Who is the spokesperson for your group? How will I know who is who? You are authorized to speak on behalf of whom? Who do you report to? Do you have a partner? Why are you by yourself? Are you nervous? Why are you acting suspicious? What do you want? Do you have a permit? Why are you asking me these questions? Are you qualified? Where are your manners? Where are your values? Do you have a goal? And why are you here? Did you read the report? What do you believe in? What do you know? Why then did you stay? Do you know your rights? Are you prepared? Do you understand your responsibility? Are you taking responsibility? What are your duties? What are you trying to do? Are you taking a position? Can you take my position? Can you sit here? Are you a witness? Are you a victim? How are you organized? Are you a member of a party? What are you looking for? Who told you to say that? Don't you think I know my rights? What are your politics? Are you active? Who are you speaking to? Do you think your actions have consequences? Why don't you turn around? Are you speaking to me? What does it mean to express yourself? Whose interests are you speaking for when you talk? Were you told to represent those interests? Are you an investor? Are you clever? Are you proud? Do you prefer to be around like-minded people? Do you have friends? Do you agree with everyone? Do you talk or do you act? Do you follow others? Do you take the lead? Why are you upset? Are you complaining? Do you complain regularly? Who do you complain to? Are you considerate in your choices? Do you find it easy to be impartial? Would you call yourself a group? Do see yourself as one, two or more? Would you call yourself a crowd or an audience?

What do you believe in? Do you believe in justice? What about love? Do you believe in God? Do you believe in a Supreme Being? How many Goddesses do you believe in? Do you think the spirit helps us recognize truth? Are you very religious? What part did religion play in your family? Do you think families can be together forever? Did you go to religious services on a regular basis? Do you remember the first time you prayed? Do you remember the first story told? Do you believe in the mother creator? Do you take Saturday off? Do you take Sunday off? Why is it wrong to eat meat today? Are you covered? Are you wearing your Sunday's best? Is the body something to be rigidly disciplined or something to be pampered? Where do you feel safe? Are you still religious? Are you loyal? Are you loyal to the law? Are you loyal to your god? Are you loyal to your family? Are you loyal to your government? Do you read the Qur'an? What else do you read? Do you feel prepared? Do you know the scripts intimately? Do you understand? Do you think the holy ghost helps us recognize truth? Do you ask questions? Do you tell? Do you listen? But truly, do you know? What does religion do for us? What does it do for you? How do you achieve enlightenment? Do you feel it? Do you let yourself be moved by the breath? Does belief keep you alive? Are you psychic? What is the difference between thinking and believing? Do you know why this day is different from all the rest? Do you follow? Do you use other people's sacred ceremonies? Do you abuse other people's spiritual practices? Do you smoke a pipe? Are you aware of the border? Do you have faith? How do you survive? Do you see the end? Do you see the beginning? Do you believe in paradise? Do you believe in life after death? Do you believe in sacrifice? Do you believe in authority? Why are some people reborn in happy destinations and others are reborn in unhappy destinations? Do others call you spiritual? Do you ever mourn? Do you celebrate? Do you believe in angels? Have you ever felt the presence of a ghost? Do you avoid sacred places? Holy sites? Do you go there? With whom?





What brings you here today? Is this a good time to talk? Can we talk for a second? Do you have three hours? Are you a journalist? Are you familiar with this place? Are you familiar with the language? What are you investigating? Would you say you're outspoken? Is someone listening? Do you see anyone you want to talk to? Do you think they care? How do you feel about being right here, right now? Are you ashamed? Are you content? Do you lie? How do you feel about it? How do you think about it? How did you come to that conclusion? What do you want to say? What do you do when you're not talking to me? Do you work for the government? Are you an observer? Are you a lawyer? Do you think I know what I want to ask you? Is he with you? Are you with the department? Did you discover a story? What's your angle? Why are you filming? You think you know what you're filming? Are you in the frame? Do you feel a part of something? Are you embraced? Do you have a community? Did you have any doubts about coming here? How can I put this? Have you ever been rejected? Ignored? Are you taking notes? How do you make yourself heard? Do you have sense of what that means? Who do you want to be? Do you want to talk to this guy? Why are you focusing on this group? Do you think other people think the same way you do? Why is it important to speak? Is it necessary to shout? What does it mean to express yourself? Who are you talking about? Are you a psychiatrist? Do you think the world circles around you? Do you think if you were rich and privileged you'd be there today? Do you think people would talk to us if we were wearing suits? Do you think people listen differently if you are alone with them? Do you speak differently when you are alone? Do you think many people are informed? Is there anything you would like to ask me? What? Do you feel guilty? Is this going to last? Do you want it to last? Did you participate this time? Do you think the government can represent you? Do you think the state is us? Do you have a message? Do you speak for others?



**I MARCH IN
THE PARADE
OF LIBERTY
BUT AS LONG
AS I LOVE
YOU I'M
NOT FREE**

December 1 at 12, 5, 10pm
December 2 at 12 & 4pm
December 8 at 12pm
December 16 at 12pm
January 12 at 12pm
Assemble: Prince and Bowery

切烈感大平同為
★★ IN MEMORY OF THE AMERICANS OF CHINESE ANCESTRY WHO LOST THEIR LIVES IN DEFENSE OF FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY ★★

NO BILL

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ST 3001 PACE BLDG
THIRD FLOOR
NYC 10017
NYC 21 140





My dear lover,

I am taking to the streets to speak to you because there seems to be no other way to get through.

To give you a picture of where I am. I am standing on the street, on the corner of x [Prince St.] and x [Bowery]. I am speaking into a megaphone. It is Saturday, December 1st, today is World AIDS day.

I need to speak to you, my love. Of your life and of mine, of the past and of the future, of sweet things that have changed to bitterness and of bitter things that still could be turned to joy. You refuse to answer my messages, my letters and my phone calls but I know that the ears are the only orifice that can't be closed so I will speak to you from every street corner if I must.

Things here are spiraling so far down that I fear people just can't face it anymore. Everyone seems so cheery, which I know means that the violence is worse where you are. They are packing up their pain and their anger and they are moving on. You would be surprised at how different things are now from when you were here 9 months ago. No one seems to be able to talk about the war. It's like we can't find the words or we're tired of repeating the same things over and over. There is no movement here and yet so much has happened.

In May, I started a list of things I wanted to talk to you about: Cheney's pompous warning to Iran, the Blackwater scandal, the bombing at the Ghazil market and all this hurried talk of Baghdad returning to normal. As more time passed, I started adding things about us. That time in

November when I said I don't want to love you. And that day in January when I said that this pain was just too much, that I was made for other things. And as the list grew, I couldn't tell which events happened while we were together and which while we were apart.

My love, why have you abandoned me to all this confusion? I've waited month after month to hear from you. I know when you left I was angry and sad and I said I was shutting the doors against you, but you should have remembered that no one can shut the doors against love forever. There is no prison in any world into which love cannot force an entrance. If you don't understand that, you don't understand anything about love at all.

I am speaking to you with total freedom. What holds me to this microphone is you.

Don't you remember the last time we were on these streets together? Striding arm in arm in that pack of people, hundreds and hundreds of thousands of them, swaying their bodies, stamping their feet, shouting movement talk and then whispering little nothings that could hardly be heard in the ear they were spoken to, so loud was the crowd. You yelled and yelled and yelled and then you lost your voice. The ecstasy of being gay and angry!

Do you remember how you made me stop at 14th Street so you could fix your sign? "If everyone acted like us" it said on the front and you turned it over and wrote "There would be power in the streets."

My sign said "Together we can change the world" which you told me was simplistic and cheesy but by the end of the day you were shouting it at the top of your lungs as if it was the most important thing in the world to say.

We were so in love that day and we really thought things could change.

The next day when you saw the headline about the march in the Times, you said now the president would have to respond. You said that many people couldn't take to the streets for nothing. The whole next week, you woke up early, you went out and got us two cups of coffee and a copy of the paper. We lay in bed and read each one cover to cover, looking to see what they would say about our work. Waiting to find some mention that we had been heard, some evidence that things were shifting, some sign that our movement was a tide that couldn't be stopped, that everyone, young and old, political and apolitical was prepared to talk about the war and that everyone would want to, that our message would be repeated again and again in a thousand mouths until the world was full of nothing but voices of protest as far as the ear could hear.

By the end of the week you were despondent.

You woke up one morning that next week very clear. You said that the whole world watches us strap on this revolutionary spirit and they let us spend our waking hours demonstrating and writing letters and speaking out like they let an 8-year-old think she's winning at Monopoly. You said you felt duped, that you felt like a chump and how could we ever have believed that it could work. We were so stupid, you said and you looked at me like I was the one who tricked you.



I told you this is how things are. That things will be bad and that they will be good. That you shouldn't take it personally. And no, no, no, you shouldn't give up.

But within the month, you said that you couldn't take being so ignored. You said that this country was arrogant and that we were confusing and that things weren't like this in other parts of the world. I stared at you in disbelief as you told me that you bought a plane ticket and you were leaving in the morning.

All that happened in the early part of March and now a great river of life flows between you and that date so distant. I know it might hurt you to have me replay this scene. For you it is history. But for me time itself doesn't progress, it revolves and suffering is one long moment. For me, this scene occurred not yesterday but today. The moment that you long ago forgot is happening to me now, and will happen to me again tomorrow. The past, the present and the future are one and in that one moment you are here with me and then you are gone.

How many times do I have to I tell you? You have lighted a fire in me, my love, and I'm being burned up.

If you long for me, I long for you.

I'm waiting for the war to end.

Come out against war and oppression.

I love you.

I love you entirely.

I love you so much I can't sleep.

A dream is a dream, reality is real, open the door to the way we feel.

The news is grave.

Love is so easily wounded.

Out of the closets and onto the streets.

We will not hide our love away.

We will not be silent.

ACT UP, FIGHT BACK!

I am beginning to think we speak in different tongues.

Surely you know that desire is cruel?

I feel certain that I am going mad again.

Nothing is real but you.

I am a stranger in my own country.

I feel as though a part of me has been torn away like a limb in battle.

Nothing that has ever gone before was like this.

What do we want?

When do we want it?

I feel like I could talk to you for a very long time. Like I could stand out here for hours and hours, days and days, for longer even in the hope that some mere phrase, some single word, some broken echo of love might reach you and find its way to bounce back to me.

The aim of love, my sweet, is to love, no more, no less.

How many times can I say that to you?



IN CONVERSATION WITH TAISHA PAGGETT & YVONNE RAINER

ANDREA GEYER AND SHARON HAYES: Performance, as a form, appears to be important to all of us in some way. Is there something about this current moment—politically, socially, culturally—that makes performance a particularly apt medium for your work?

YVONNE RAINER: No more than any previous moment. Performance—and I’m talking here about film, video, and dance—is the only art medium in which I’m trained and accustomed to work. These modes all present different challenges and problematics, but in the ways I’ve dealt with them, they all use performance as a base from which to combine language, image and movement. This has hardly changed in my fifty years of art-making.

TAISHA PAGGETT: Actually, the advent of Sarah Palin, with her horrifically entertaining puppetry performance, left such a terrible taste in my mouth that the idea of performing anything scripted was for a while quite nauseating. But performance is my primary medium, and whether working on a dance piece, collaborating on an installation, or having a discussion about politics, my concern always tracks back to questions of embodiment. As in any other discipline, an artist gets politicized. This process for me as a dancer came with an elevated awareness of the inseparability of the medium from the body. So the questions I began posing about being on stage and in the studio were of a similar tenor to those I posed as a queer black woman moving through the city. Perhaps because my vantage point is such a personal one, I don’t identify anything particularly salient about using performance work these days. It will always be an important form.



Yvonne Rainer, *AG Indexical*, Sidestep Festival, Helsinki, Jan. 25, 2007.
Performers Pat Catterson, Patricia Hoffbauer, Emily Coates, Sally Silvers.

SH: Do either of you feel that you are approaching performance differently than you have in the past? Is there a particular aspect of performance that is most operative or urgent for you right now?

YR: The choreography I used to do in the '60s, for the most part, used people who were about the same age and had all gone through the same training. Or if I worked with people with no training, I “ghettoized” them in some way, or gave them little tasks like moving objects, or used game structures. *Trio A* was a special case. In a single performance the “professionals” would execute it in one group, and the “amateurs” in another. My work over the last ten years has led me to a different place, one where the boundary between “good” and “bad” dancing is blurred. *AG Indexical* was my first foray in this direction, with its balletic combinations spread equally among four women with very divergent abilities and training.

A recent dance I completed during a workshop at Harvard deployed ten performers, ranging in age from twenty to sixty-four, whose technical expertise went from zero to balletic professionalism—all performing similar material at the same time. Their varying technical abilities created the contrast. Although Judson Dance Theater’s early concern with so-called “pedestrian movement” has always been important to me, it now takes on a different emphasis as I look at bodies in a much more undifferentiated way. Merce Cunningham said it many years ago, “All movement is dance,” but the trained, svelte body has continued to be the norm, and balletic technique the gold standard, well into postmodern dance. Now, I want to see different bodies doing the same thing—be it technically demanding or quotidian—in the same space, simultaneously.

TP: Yes, the dancer/non-dancer issue. It wasn’t until some recent collaborative projects that I started working with people who had little or no formal movement training, and my approach to performance shifted. Now I want to understand and

privilege the intelligence that resides within everyday bodies, to shape a language for experiential knowledge as a viable site of agency. Without sounding romantic, it's about recognizing that we all have bodies that are unique and specialized in their own right; it's about owning that idea and then unraveling the normative patterns that power places on us to be simply workers, consumers, gendered bodies, etc.; and from there, allowing the body the radical possibilities of being a witness, a speaker, or a creator of new movement languages that stand outside of the dominant trainings of the body.



Taisha Paggett with Dont Rhine and Robert Sember, *Untitled (for large ensemble)*, Chicago, 2008, in preparation for Ultra-red performance event. Photo by Dara Brady.

Constructing performative work with non-dancers has made me look at the “all movement is dance” concept, and it’s also made me question the use of non-professional performers in work that I’ve seen lately (mine included). I agree with Yvonne’s point that the trained body continues to be the norm. At the same time, the capacity of the non-dancer to make meaning is often oversimplified by artists trying to work against this norm. Rather than allowing the performer(s) time to thoroughly construct and execute a set of ideas, it seems as though the tropes of failure or of awkwardness too quickly become convenient devices to rely on. Value is placed on articulating the overarching ideas, but the nuance of their corporeal execution is overlooked—perhaps for fear of being too formal? This overlooking seems to inadvertently aestheticize inarticulateness, ultimately disempowering the same subjects such work wishes to give voice to. And that makes me question who and what such work really serves.

YR: I agree, nontraditional devices can become clichés very quickly. In the early ’80s, when a stocky untrained dancer named Frank Conversano performed *Trio A* intercut with Bart Cook (New York City Ballet) and Sarah Rudner (Twyla Tharp Dance), and my own 1978 performance of it, Trisha Brown remarked that Frank’s version was by that point passé.

Perhaps my renewed interest in restaging a version of this format of *Trio A* has come about through reassessing what I perceive as the fetishism of the solo. When you see a group of people of differing abilities doing similar things, a different meaning emerges. Virtuosity, or lack of it, is not so much the issue as is the collective effort, accomplished differently by each individual, further demolishing the extreme model of the circus-like ballet solo. Though I confess to recent attendance of ABT [American Ballet Theatre] shows!

This immediately reminds me of exceptional solo performances such as yours, Sharon, which demonstrate both virtuosity and its absence. This dancery framing may be entirely inappropriate to most of your projects, but it seems apt at least with regard to your recent performance of Abraham Lincoln and your lecture dealing with Cunningham at the Dia Center for the Arts, where the silver leotard you wore while speaking (were you also dancing?) revealed your non-dancer’s body, which of course must have been one of the points you were making. The costume functioned to offset any notion of authenticity that may have been attached to your role as historian, dancer or scholar.

All of this leads to another question: What role does ambiguity play in post- (or post-post-) modern dance and performance? Why is it necessary? Why do I find it necessary? Were you, Sharon, questioning previous Cunningham verities or honoring them, or both? I wonder what you non-dancers, four decades removed from this fount of inspiration that so affected me, think after seeing a Cunningham performance. And of course, how do you, Taisha, as a superbly trained dancer and choreographer, relate to Merce? My ongoing connection to and questioning of Cunningham—and by extension, of ballet—may be irrelevant to all of you.

SH: I think the idea Taisha brought up of “embodiment” is quite interesting, and it does, actually, relate to the silver leotard. For many years now I’ve been interested in how performance allows for the possibility that you are both doing and not doing what it is that you seem/look/sound like you’re doing. Maybe that relates, Yvonne, to what you’re saying about the demonstration of virtuosity and its absence.



Taisha Paggett, “we imitate fences” from *how we get by*, 2006. Photo by John Reiff Williams.

Often, for me, this doing and not doing happens through the execution of some kind of oral translation—taking a speech act that was delivered at one moment in time and respiking or readdressing it in another. Of course, this necessarily means that I, or someone I ask to do so, must embody a speech act that is not originally mine or their own, but becomes so in the singular moment that it is respoken. That is what happens when we speak—the words materially become our own, even if they are our own *and* someone else’s. Maybe this is another way to think through the condition Brecht identifies for a new kind of actor: a figure that speaks not “as,” but “as if” someone else.

In terms of movement and speech, *embodiment*—self-reflexive, differential or collective—allows us to become aware of the dancer/speaker *and* the score/script. This is also where we are presented with the problem of virtuosity. Words and movements can be executed correctly or

incorrectly. Additionally, words produce a different meaning when spoken naturally as opposed to spoken as if read from a page. Words also produce a different meaning when spoken by different people. In this way, a script or text can be executed in endless variations, each of which may produce meaning in a different way. This is something I worked with in the piece *In the Near Future*. The placard “I Am a Man” means something different when it is held by hundreds of striking African American sanitation workers in Memphis in 1968 than it does when it is held by me in front of St. Patrick’s Cathedral in Manhattan in 2005.

In much of my work, I embody a given speech act myself because it is important to me to stand in a space of responsibility vis-à-vis this respiking. Also the act of performing, particularly with the recent work I have done on the street or in public space, is the actual site of the making of the piece. That is, it’s not work that I can rehearse, because to rehearse it is already to be standing on the street doing it.

In the cases of the Lincoln piece at the Hammer Museum, where I dressed in a black Lincoln-esque suit and read quotations from contemporary journalism about Abraham Lincoln, and the Cunningham lecture I gave for Dia’s Artists on Artists Lecture Series, I was invited to talk about two very specific and historically spectacular personas. The suit and the leotard marked the first time I’ve worn costumes that were so literal, but in both cases, the dress allowed me to call up the presence of these grand figures and, as you say Yvonne, to both affiliate and distance myself from them. To appear “as if” Lincoln or “as if” a dancer makes the contrast—between then and now, and between dancing and talking—all the more clear.

Through the process of researching the talk, I became completely mesmerized by the intense clarity and consistency of Cunningham, the dancer and the choreographer, and yes, for sure, by his incredible virtuosity. A week or two before the talk, I went to a couple of classes at the Merce Cunningham Studio, one of which was a class for the company dancers. When you watch a group of people trying to master one of his very particular movement phrases, you become like a sports fan, cheering for their successes, wincing at their mistakes, moving your body to the left or the right in empathy with the challenge of their tasks. I left the experience longing, at least for a few weeks, for some enveloping training of my

own that would consume my physical and psychic attention.

AG: Coming from a non-dance and non-performance art background—photography, writing, video, and installation—I recently ventured for the first time into the form of performance for my piece *Spiral Lands/Chapter 2*. With eighty slides to project and an old-fashioned men’s suit as a costume, I performed a text I had compiled of a multiplicity of voices, channeled into one authoritative body: the lecturer. This (for me) rather unusual and uncomfortable choice of putting myself on stage as the medium to deliver “knowledge,” was not a playful exploration of the unfamiliar, but was born of urgent necessity. I needed to put some of the ideas that I have worked with for many years—regarding land, identity and land rights in the United States—into the actual body of an accountable author (me). By using the common format of a lecture, but staging it as a performance, I tried to create a

shift, in which familiar positions and actions became staged: my role as the lecturer but also therefore automatically the role of the audience. Sharon, when you did the talk on Cunningham you did not only wear a unitard but you moved around the space of the audience and made us turn around, moving with you and therefore becoming aware of our positions in relation to you and to what we were seeing on different video projections around the room. Similarly, the audience of *Spiral Lands/Chapter 2* was called out through the performative aspect of the lecture, challenging the specificity of the relationship each member of the audience has to the authority of the knowledge I spoke.

I had realized that certain ways of working, even if subject positions were reflected upon and addressed consciously within the work, seemed to reproduce over and over again a certain safe distance between the audience and the ideas presented. Even when in earlier work, I was working textually with an “I,” the personal story would remain at a level of abstraction that would allow the audience to remain outside of it and therefore in an already knowing control of the stories unfolding in front of them. I have become more and more interested in challenging this distance, trying to find ways in which the audience is asked to engage their own experience into the understanding of the work. Traditionally history as a discourse facilitates a distancing of the audience as well as the author, removing both from actual responsibility toward the issues at stake. Yet we all know that history is experienced—written within a body or across bodies. Putting myself on stage might seem a simple gesture, but it created an undeniable presence of a body that was calling out and addressing the audience, directly and indirectly, as bodies themselves. As Sharon mentions above, like in the work of Bertolt Brecht, there is no illusion between the audi-

ence and the performer of a true character being conjured, but rather a critical awareness of, and hopefully engagement in, the construction of such a character.

I’m interested in what Taisha said about the knowledge that lies within each body, in its forms of expression, and how to make that knowledge visible. How can we make bodies play a part in politics and ideas without slipping into common forms such as biographical narratives? How can the body with all its multiple histories become a foundation/source of knowledge? Yvonne’s doubling of choreographies using different bodies at once, and Sharon’s repetition of speech seem to be invested in similar attempts to make the body visible, against or through existing patterns of control or perception.



Yvonne Rainer, *Trio A in 10 Easy Lessons*, Dance Visions, Barclay Theater, UCI, Feb. 5-8, 2009. Top: performers Amanda Prince-Lubawy, Caryn Heilman, Simon Leung. Bottom: performers Simon Leung, Rachel Pace, David Gutierrez, Caryn Heilman. Photo by Rose Eichenbaum.

Seeing a few of the recent Cunningham performances in and around New York, I also find myself mesmerized and inspired by the clarity and presence of the working bodies on stage in his performances. And yes, they are those of dancers, beautifully framed within the colors of their thin leotards, revealing each detail of muscle and other body parts. The bodies are extremely controlled and focused to execute movement scores, with gazes turned inward toward the task. Watching them, I wonder where they are when they dance. In their minds? Their bodies? Their knowledge? On stage? Through performance, I am trying to think through where we are when we produce knowledge and ideas. The performer becomes on the one hand a director of the present moment and place, but also a conductor of sorts, creating a score through which the audience is implied in the act. Not that I want to control them, but I would like to unsettle them within their possibly assumed roles towards certain histories and engage them continuously with the ideas brought forward in the work.

YR: It makes me wonder how what we are doing “gets the audience into the act,” or out of it, as our post-Brechtian strategies have so idealistically intended. As audience we desire to identify, and if we can’t identify with characters we will identify with the performer. The problem is how to induce the audience to identify with the situation and the ideas. Classical theater from Aristotle to Stanislavski knew how to do this. I saw it happen in India, where the spectators’ familiarity with and investment in the classical stories enacted by the Khatakali created a special ambience and relation to the material, quite unlike that in my experience. My generation revolted against what we saw as outworn modes of address. Feminism and postcolonial discourses reintroduced both the integrity of “other” subjectivities, and the necessity for more hybrid strategies for narrativizing difference and otherness. Where does that leave us? My current thinking around gender, for instance, revolves around reference, rather than inhabiting or “renting” a role. I go for a hit-and-run approach, land on a dime and change direction—I don’t let them settle into an “I know what she’s trying to do” comfort zone. Maybe I haven’t changed in all these years. Assuming that I can’t control audience response, I may as well entertain myself with a combination of outspoken epigrams, goofy actions, news bites that cater to the bourgeoisie, and transvestivist moments. I’m trying to find a way of operating that brings to an extreme devices that I’ve already been using. I always ruefully return to the same place: my work will not change the world.

In the spectator’s shoes, I have talked about “trusting” the choreographer. Once that trust is established, I, as spectator, will sail along uncomplainingly. As a performer and choreographer, I cannot predict which gesture or twitch or word will produce that trust.

TP: I see that both Andrea and Sharon are invested in performance work that speaks through historical figures or narratives; and Yvonne, your work, specifically *RoS* and *AG*, is also in dialogue with historical works. I don’t have a similar engagement with history, but I’m really interested in understanding its relationship to virtuosity, specifically in the performer/viewer context. The supposed stability of both history and virtuosity requires that they narrate, sum up and tie off any possible direct, penetrable relationship to the present location of their recipient or viewer. The hands of history and virtuosity are the genius, the author-expert, the technician, etc. History orders a certain set of circumstances whose functionality relies on temporal distancing. A timeline, for example, the quintessential device of the historical narrative, could never truly bridge to the present moment—to do so would be to endlessly put into question the selection of previous events, and the entire thing would become a jumble. Which is to say history also relies on selection. As we know, a million histories lurk in the shadows of the chosen narrative.

The distancing effect of virtuosity works by defining a set of conditions



Taisha Paggett, rehearsal stills from *“Living with _____ in this country is like living through a war that’s happening only for those people in the trenches. Every time a shell explodes you look around to discover that you’ve lost more of your friends. But nobody else notices—it isn’t happening to them...”* (Title adapted from a quote by the late ACT-UP activist Vito Russo), 2007. Top: performers (left to right) Sebastian Peters-Lazaro, Hana van der Kolk, Christine Suarez, Lisa Wahlander. Middle: performers (clockwise) Arianne Hoffmann, Hana van der Kolk, Sebastian Peters-Lazaro. Bottom: performers (clockwise) Sebastian Peters-Lazaro, Christine Suarez, Lisa Walhander. Photos by Ashley Hunt.

(mobility, agility, skill, talent) against “what you are not,” “you” being the recipient, the audience, the viewer. The distancing here is experienced as the audience witnesses a set of actions that they could not imagine themselves doing. The higher the leg, the quicker the clip, the cleaner the line, the longer the monologue, the more the audience is mesmerized into submission. This becomes a measure of success and a standard of quality. Most important is the degree of effortlessness, but the viewer never sees the quivering ankle that supports the standing leg that supports the hip that supports the gesturing leg doing something fancy. Nor is the audience let in on the process that got the performers to “master” said actions. Nor is it known what was edited out or modified. Similarly, dancers are taught to hide their mistakes and know ways to compensate for what would otherwise be extremely non-virtuosic boo-boos.

On this level I find Sharon’s choice to not rehearse quite interesting. I wonder how the work would be different otherwise on an experiential level as well as from the audience’s perspective. To destabilize virtuosity by making us aware of it and its absence, as Yvonne recognizes in Sharon’s work, seems a useful tactic in performance, more so today than the earlier impulse to do away with virtuosity altogether. Such “doing away with” has over the years turned into a flat, codified aesthetic. Dance always feels like it’s already painted into a corner. Often my first impulse in making a work is to not dance. The expectation of virtuosity is there from the beginning. The very utterance of the word and I see exclamation points and jazz hands! So when you ask the question about what role ambiguity plays in contemporary dance Yvonne, I can’t help but feel that it’s extremely useful—useful to upset the expectations of the conventions of the form.

While the heart of my concern is embodiment, my attention often goes to dealing with the stage, the venue, the music, and other external elements because they contribute so much to the meaning of a given dance work. But now sticking more to the body and going deeper to uncover its internal knowledge, I think I’m trying to redefine virtuosity as something that is not arm’s length from the recipient, or a product of decades of ballet, but is connected to everyday bodies. Andrea, you asked about how it’s possible to make that knowledge visible, and I certainly don’t have any answers yet, but it does remind me of Victoria Marks’ work *Not About Iraq*. Vic has a history of making choreographies that are portraits. When we first went into the studio to begin exploring ideas for that piece, she really went for extracting patterns of rotation in the body, partly because I default to that when I move, but also because it was a way of “making evidence of limbs.” Big moves were less important

that executing the functional rotation of arms and legs. Breathing and blinking and seeing were more important than speed and dynamic shifts. I felt like that sort of construction of a performance was a step toward a type of virtuosity that did not function to distance the performer from the viewer. And here I recognize that redefining virtuosity requires finding some new language.

YR: We keep returning to some key words: distancing, knowledge, history, virtuosity. The first suggests dislocation, disjunction, collision. An example from my *Spiraling Down* comes to mind: Emily Coates, the youngest of the Raindears, goes to the microphone and reads a text originally written by an eighty-year-old man:

I get testosterone shots and my sex drive comes and goes. And when it goes it's replaced by revulsion. Oddly, there seems no connection to how alive I feel. Like I'm kind of grateful for the aversion phase because being horny is a nuisance.

The disconnect between speaker and text is exaggerated by the act of reading. If Emily were to recite the lines, her speech-act would fall into a mode of address belonging to traditional characterization (while admittedly straining our suspension of disbelief). We would see her as inhabiting, or attempting to inhabit, a role. And yet, even the present disjunction still has the potential to create a flickering unity. So ingrained and ferocious are our habitual desires as spectators that we grasp at the merest residues to create a sense of cohesion.

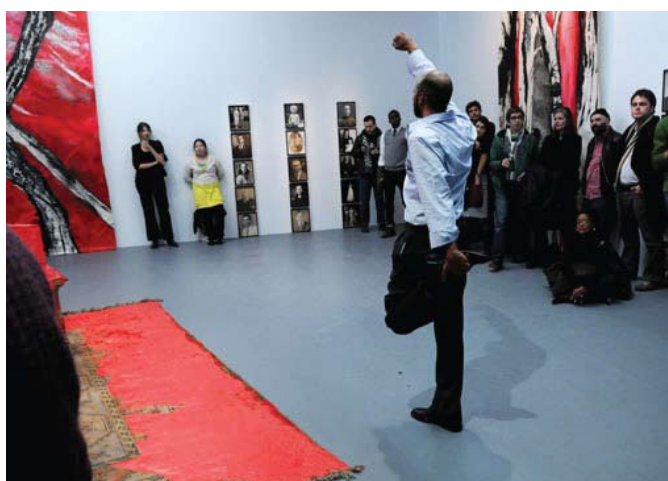
Knowledge and history. I am thinking of the kinetic and anatomical knowledge that dance training brings and which must be constantly reassessed, renewed, challenged, and reinvented as the choreographer develops and ages. The biological body of the dancer outstrips her mind. Each young dancer, at least those who see themselves in an avant-garde tradition, inevitably reinvents the wheel and must just as inexorably unspool that history.

And finally, that bugaboo virtuosity. Taisha's point about needing new language raises a question: aren't we all redefining virtuosity in the work that we do, and in those very acts creating a new language? Our individual histories and knowledge impel us to take these big leaps off the cliff of cultural history. Language follows. Or maybe the leap is the language.

AG: I would say that it is a leap *into* language, one that brings us back to the presence of the audience to whom we relate in our work through dancing, writing, speaking. This leap is like throwing out a line/rope or maybe I should say an action into an ever-present network of relations. Hannah Arendt says in her later work: "Nothing and nobody exists in this world whose very being does not presuppose a spectator."¹ Maybe Yvonne, what you are saying here is that being aware of cultural and political histories, and having a sense of oneself, is not really enough, but that self-awareness needs the risk of the leap to engage others?

I often think that moving from Germany to New York created in some ways such a leap in my own biography, in which I suddenly experienced my cultural self, reflected through foreign eyes. I had to reinvent language for myself literally and metaphorically, to be able to communicate not only my ideas or my work, but myself. I have been doing that learning of language informed by the things I brought with me and the things I am continuously learning from this environment and more often than one would think, these two backgrounds don't overlap at all. I find this gap in my everyday experience a refreshing and vital source for reflection. It also informs my ongoing investment within my work in understanding the social and political conditions around us through the complexity of irreconcilable languages, knowledges and histories that exist alongside each other.

SH: I read Yvonne's leap to be about a departure, a rupture, an abandoning of whatever stability makes up our cultural grounding. This makes sense to me, and



Taisha Paggett, performance still of Rodney McMillian performing a work by Taisha Paggett for his installation at The Kitchen, New York, 2008. Photo by Ray Llanos.

although I didn't notice it when I was younger, I can now see that I am invested, on some level, in developing a practice that radically breaks with given forms (performance forms providing the primary ones) in order to make certain ideas about our political and social position(s) intelligible.

I also find this idea of unspooling history quite compelling. I've always perceived that the unspooling that has been most operative for you as an artist, Yvonne, is an aesthetic, or maybe a cultural one, a resistance to the cultural forms that preceded you. It's true that such an operation is foundational to the avant-garde, and I've always felt a tinge of remorse that my own moment of artistic becoming didn't come along with such an overturning of a past form. On the contrary, my experience of becoming an artist was similar to my experience of becoming queer—maybe this is because they happened around the same time. In both, there was some encounter, a period of exposure, a moment when I became aware of lesbians and artists (ha!) which was followed by me saying yes to both encounters, then bringing myself to New York City where I actively and passively looked—in my own moment and in previous ones—for various heroes with whom I could model myself. So less an unspooling of history than a cobbling together of a semi-fictitious one for myself.

But I find it interesting to think about my actions toward political history as precisely this action of unspooling. I've never thought of my work in this way, but perhaps I have been rewinding to certain moments in time, in part to entertain a possibility that things could have unfolded in a different way. For instance, by referencing back to the short-lived moment of gay liberation, I've been invested in reinserting more radical notions of liberation into the current staid, conservative conversation about queerness and mainstream politics. But maybe I am also, on some level, trying to disturb the timeline of events that, in 1972, marched off in such a distinctly less radical direction than the GLF (Gay Liberation Front) had proposed. To speak of such an action as an unspooling of history seems a helpful way to steer the discussion away from nostalgia and toward a kind of action or activism. Not an activism that can change the world per se, but one that refuses the idea that there is a naturalized way in which a series of events are meant to unfold in the world.

1. Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind: Thinking* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1971), 19.



TEXT ON SCREEN: *The war fury ran over half of Europe, but she was still young and beautiful and thought about jumping over to America, when two men sat in the restaurant, sometimes glancing around cautiously while talking about politics.*

A: *The passport is the most noble part of a human being. It is also not made as simply as a human being. A human being can happen anywhere, in the silliest way and without good reason, but a passport never. That's why it is acknowledged if it is a good one, whereas a human being can be as good as it gets and nevertheless be not recognized that way.*



B: But still, one could say that in a way the human being is necessary for the passport. The passport is the main thing, respect, but without the human being that belongs to it, it would be impossible or at least not complete. It is the same with a surgeon, he needs the patient to operate, as far as that goes he is not self-sufficient, half a thing with all his academia; and also a modern state is the same; the main thing is the leader or the duke, but they need people to lead. They are important, but someone has to afford it, otherwise it won't work.



A: The two names you mentioned remind me of the beer and the cigarettes right here. I would like to see them as the leading brands, the best available, and I see it as a fortunate circumstance that the beer is no beer and the cigarettes are no cigarettes, because if accidentally there would be no correspondence between them, the restaurant would not be sustainable. I assume the coffee is also no coffee.

B: Somebody once claimed, dirt altogether is only matter in the wrong place. In a flowerpot you can't really call dirt dirty. Basically I am for order. I once saw a film with Charlie Chaplin. He put his clothes and stuff in a suitcase, meaning he tossed the stuff, and closed the top and then it was too unorderedly for him, because too many things stuck out at the sides, and then he just took a pair of scissors and cut off the shirt arms and trouser legs and everything else that had still hung out.

A: You could say it this way: where nothing can be found in its right place, there is disorderliness. Where in the right place one can find nothing, there is order.





OPENING TITLE: APRIL 11, 1961

TITLE: AUGUST 11, 2009

[all screens black]

REPORTER: *[off screen voice]* Nothing and nobody exists in this world without a spectator. *[Audience screen on]* That what we call consciousness, that I am aware of myself and therefore can appear to myself anytime anywhere, is never enough to guarantee reality.

TITLE: WHAT GOOD WILL IT DO?

TITLE: IT WILL DO JUSTICE

[all screens black]

AUDIENCE: *[on screen]* Today I am proud. I am proud of my country and of my people. Had a lynching taken place, had the masses risen to take the law into their own hands in their need for revenge, humanity would have understood. But it did not happen. The Accused will stand trial and it will be a just one.

[all screens black]

[all characters appear on their respective screens]

JUDGE: *The ninety-fifth session is now open. Please proceed.*

ACCUSED: *[gets up, reads from a 1960 Life magazine excerpt of an interview he gave to Willem Sassen]* Yet what is there to “admit”? I carried out my orders. Where would we have been if everyone had thought things out by themselves in those days? You can do that today in the “new” country. But for us at the time an order was an order. If I had sabotaged the order, I would have been not only a scoundrel but a despicable pig! Only now with these new interpretations of justice, subordinates like me are suddenly responsible for what they do. *[pause]* All we did is deprive people of their citizenship and confiscate their property. We merely marked them an enemy of the state. That was my job, to allocate the internal enemy. Through this entire period, I wanted to solve things politically and according to the rules. It was never a matter of emotion. *[pause]* Once on a mission, I was told that they had sent me, the “master” himself, to make sure. People used this word to describe me. I did not use it first. Yet, since they had designated me the “master,” however, I wanted to act as such. I resolved to show them how well a job could be done when someone like myself stands 100% behind it. I wanted to set an example. Yet I was never a man of violence. At heart I am a very sensitive man. I simply can’t look at any suffering without trembling myself.

AUDIENCE: *[moans]* Hey! Hey!

JUDGE: *Silence! Keep it to yourself or you will need to leave!*

ACCUSED: *To sum it all up, I must say that I regret nothing.*

[all screens, except Reporter, black]

REPORTER: *As for the base motives, the Accused was perfectly sure that he was not what he called an innerer Schweinehund, a dirty bastard in the depths of his heart; and as for his conscience, he remembered perfectly well that he would have had a bad conscience only if he had not*

done what he had been ordered to. This, admittedly, was hard to take.

[all screens, except Prosecution, black]

PROSECUTION: *Humanity is the sovereign which has been offended and this tribunal is convoked to determine why. This is not a new concept in the realm of morals, but it is an innovation in the Empire of Law.*

[all screens black]

[all screens wide shoot set up, empty table in front of archive, stacks of papers frame the scene]

REPORTER: *[off screen voice] The site is Beit Haam, the House of the people. At the top of his voice, the usher lets us jump to our feet. The judge [appears on his screen] bareheaded, in black robe, walks into the courtroom from a side entrance to take his seat on the highest tier of the raised platform. His table, soon to be covered with innumerable books and more often fifteen hundred documents, is flanked at each end by the court stenographers. Directly below the judges are the translators. One tier below, facing each other and hence with their profiles turned to the Audience, we see the Accused [appears on his screen] and the witness box. Finally, on the bottom tier, with their backs to the Audience [appears on his screen], are the Prosecutor [appears on his screen], and the Counsel for the Defense [appears on his screen].*

TITLES: ACCUSED, DEFENSE, JUDGE, AUDIENCE, PROSECUTION, REPORTER

[all characters appear on their respective screens]

JUDGE: *Let's proceed. Accused, are you the Accused in this case?*

ACCUSED: *Jawohl.*

[all screens, except Reporter, black]

REPORTER: *What appears to us to be "historic justice" looks to others like a semi-pathological legacy of a traumatic experience.*

DEFENSE: *I want proceed to the State of Exception that has been argued in this case, if I may. I understand that there is room for exceptional laws under special emergency conditions. And such exceptional law can be a just law if it has a just purpose. The purpose of the exceptional law, which is used here before us, is punishment [glances to the judge] and if I may suggest revenge. Its purpose is the defense of the State the court represents and of its citizens, not justice at large.*

[all screens black]

[all characters appear on their respective screens]

JUDGE: *Please, Mr. Attorney General.*

PROSECUTION: *May it please the Court. As to the fairness of the trial, I deeply regret what the Defense Counsel has had to say. Although it was clothed in delicate and polite manner "the Accused is afraid that he will not have a fair trial in this country." Our judges are bound by the principle that there should be "one law for the person born in the land and for the stranger in your midst." They are faithful to the principle of doing justice.*

Furthermore it must be laid down that the question of an "Act of





State” is not a defense. It is clear that there is an artificiality in this argument, since, if such a defense were accepted, under the conditions of a dictatorship, there could only have been one accused, and that would be the head of state.

JUDGE: *Not even he. As Head of State he, too, is immune!*

PROSECUTION: *Your honor, if we were to accept the theory of “Act of State” as a defense, then anyone who carried out state orders could justify himself for the most terrible crimes without ever taking responsibility. The conscience of the world shrinks from this!*

[all screens, except Reporter, black]

REPORTER: *When a dictator says that a day would come when it would be considered a “disgrace” to be a jurist, he is speaking with utter consistency of a dream of a perfect bureaucracy. The essence of totalitarian governments, and perhaps the nature of every bureaucracy, is to turn men into functionaries and mere cogs. It takes the form of an administrative machinery that dehumanize them: A rule of Nobodies. [pause] Yet having said that, one must realize clearly that any true justice can consider these kinds of social and political factors only to the extent that they are circumstances of a crime, circumstance of an individual. In the same way that in a case of the theft, the economic plight of the thief is taken into account yet without excusing the theft, let alone wiping his crime off the slate.*

TITLES: THE OPENING SPEECH

[all characters appear on their respective screens]

PROSECUTION: *When I stand before you here today, I am not standing alone. With me are many. But they cannot rise to their feet and point an accusing finger towards him who sits in the dock and cry: “J’accuse!” for they are gone. Therefore I will be their spokesman and in their name I will unfold the indictment. [pause] There is no precedence to guide me. It is the first time in history that such crime has been perpetuated, and the first time that a tribunal has been established to try it. Revenge can not be implemented here. [pause] Men still ask themselves, and they will certainly continue to ask in days to come: How was it possible? I doubt whether in this trial we on our part will succeed in laying bare the roots of the Evil that drove them. That is a task to concern the many historians, sociologists, authors and psychologists to come. [pause]*

Let me frame the crime with a history.

Let me frame the Accused with the choices he made.

Let me frame humanity with a crime.

Murder has been with the human race since the days when Cain killed Abel. It is no novel phenomenon. Yet in this trial, we shall encounter a different kind of criminal: the kind that exercises his craft behind a desk, at safe distance. [pause] But it was his word that put the killing machine into action; he lifted the telephone, and ordered death; his signature it was his signature that sealed the doom of thousands and tens of thousands. [pause] We shall find the Accused describing himself as a fastidious person, a “white-collar” worker. I say he must bear responsibility therefore, as if it was he who with his own hands knotted the hangman’s noose. [pause] This crime was no accident, no transient

phenomenon. It may be doubted whether there can be accidents in human history. Like streams flowing each in its own channel until they unite into a mighty river, they come together only if their flow is in the same general direction. [pause] The Accused knew that for the success of his work he would have to use the age-old weapon of hate. Through propaganda he needed to place before the people an object to which could be attributed everything loathsome and contemptible, an object worthy of abhorrence which would be the absolute antithesis of themselves. A confused and blinded world was not alarmed by this campaign of hatred and the denial of human rights. It did not understand that the persecution of these victims was only the beginning of an onslaught on the entire world.

REPORTER: *What disturbed me most was the behavior not of our enemies but of our friends. They were not responsible for what happened, yet they were impressed and suddenly unable to pit their own judgment against the verdict of history. To understand what actually happened, we need to take into account this almost universal breakdown, not so much of personal responsibility, but of personal judgment.*

[all screens, except Reporter and Prosecution, black; Prosecution sets up a reel-to-reel audio player while Reporter is speaking]

REPORTER: *The manifestation of the wind of thought is no knowledge itself; it is the ability to tell right from wrong. This indeed may prevent catastrophes, at least for myself, in the rare moments when the chips are down. In omnia paratus—prepare for all things. Fiat justitia—let justice be done. Comprehension does not deny the outrageous. Comprehension bears consciously the burden, which our century has placed upon us. Comprehension is an impartial facing-up to reality. Comprehension is the resisting of reality—whatever it may be or was.*

PROSECUTION: *We will now play the statements of the Accused during police interrogation.*

[all screens black]

[all characters appear on their respective screens]

JUDGE: *Next witness. Put the Yarmulke on your head and speak after me.*

[Audience turns radio on: sound of witness testimony from the original trial]

REPORTER: *63 of 121 sessions of this trial were spent on a hundred prosecution witnesses who country after country told their tales of horror. Their testimony lasted from April 24th to June 12th. Then another week was spent handing in documents for the prosecution's case, most of them read into the court's protocol by the attorney general, which would be given to the international press each following morning.*

AUDIENCE: *I cannot help but notice that the Accused does not even blink. He just participates in the proceedings, unfazed. Where is his weakness now? [pause, leans back into his chair, then yells]*

Murder! Murder!



IN CONVERSATION WITH SALLY GUTIÉRREZ & ASHLEY HUNT

SHARON HAYES AND ANDREA GEYER: Given the particular time that all of us met, in 1999,¹ the events that have happened since and the impact they have had, we are curious to know if you think of your work or practice as artists and filmmakers as a document of this period that we could name the recent past, the present moment (and maybe the immediate future)?

ASHLEY HUNT: In your question I'm struck by the word "document," by the difference between *the act of documenting* on one hand and *the thing that becomes a document* on the other, the latter of which may have little to do with any intention to document something per se.

During these past ten years I've produced works that are documentary in their intention, in which I've set out to document institutions, social processes, conversations, and actions; but I've also struggled with questions of documentary more generally—struggled with its conventions, tropes, forms and criteria. These struggles might well serve as documents of this time. Whether they occurred as conscious responses, or less consciously, symptomatic of this time, in either case I see them as responsive to the wide-ranging destabilizations of "truth" that have characterized these years. Especially since 9/11, notions of truth, fact and evidence that something like "speaking truth to power" would rely upon, have been thrust into murkiness, so that to me, figuring out how to work, live and speak as an artist has meant something new.



Ashley Hunt, *18,000 Men* (Men's Central Jail, Los Angeles, California), 2009, digital c-print.

I think of Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, who wrote that following the Cuban revolution, "All we had to do was to set up a camera in the street and we were able to *capture a reality that was spectacular in and of itself*" (emphasis added). But, he continues, as the revolution changed and the meaning of events became "less obvious," new forms, attitudes and approaches became necessary in order to interpret "what we were living through."² In a similar way during events of the recent past, I felt that I couldn't rely on many of the tools I was trained with for interpreting or intervening in "what we were living through." While some of my work has continued in a directly documentary mode, it's been much more animated by questions of how truth is formulated, who gets to speak it and through what training, how facts become facts and how it is that we come to know things in the first place. What registers of knowledge, thinking and power do we have to draw upon other than the cerebral registers we're taught

to trust at the expense of the rest of our messy, "irrational" selves? This has been a tendency among a number of artists, and I don't think it's a coincidence that it comes in relation to the increasingly opaque nature of contemporary governance, of secrecy, deception, and the politicization of the objects and modes of truth claims.

Beyond actual events of the recent past, the present moment and maybe the immediate future that I've spoken to directly in my work, it may be in the context of this tendency to look more deeply at the conditions of truth on a cultural level, and at our varied capacities for knowing, learning, thinking and feeling on a more subjective level, that my practice during these years could be considered some kind of document.

SALLY GUTIÉRREZ: Throughout world history most artists and cultural producers have addressed their socio-political contexts. They might not understand our shock at the events in the last ten years. Wars and atrocities of all kinds have been the rule throughout history, not the exception. The fact is that (at least after the fall of the Berlin wall) we completed our training in a period when it seemed—or so the prevalent paradigm claimed—that History had ended. In political and cultural

terms we were unprepared for *something actually happening*; i.e., for a true Event, in Alain Badiou's sense: a world-shattering, paradigm-breaking, truth-founding, truly historical moment.³ In the face of true events, when the world may literally re-arrange itself around you, the myriad narratives that structure our daily lives at all levels may come crumbling down (after the buildings themselves). What seems essential to me is how we cope with that: how do we re-organize our stories, how do we create counternarratives or oppose the narratives of power that are ready to fill the vacuum? (The “war on terror” was one such ad hoc master narrative.)

Even before 9/11, I had focused on the micronarratives of anonymous people, whose lives I believe weave the network of our contemporary societies; but in the period immediately afterwards I became convinced it was crucial to work with those narrativisations of experience, in order to construct alternatives to the macronarratives we were being spoon fed with in the Bush/Blair/Aznar years.



Sally and Gabriela Gutiérrez, *Tapologo*, 2009, video still of the homebased carers/retired nurses.

Of course, when World History gets going again—in a quite painful way—so does the history of Art. As in Borges' *Pierre Menard*, the meaning of all artistic practice gets totally shifted and re-organized, everything acquires a new depth. What characterizes Events in political terms is that there is a “world before the Event” and another “world after the Event”—likewise in the sphere of art. The piece I had shot in the World Trade Center from January to May 2001, *City Game TV*, was for me a lesson on the significance of world-breaking, world-making events. While I tried to interview WTC workers, aiming to explore their relationships to the city through their views and their positions in that building, many refused to be interviewed, mostly because they couldn't take my project very seriously. The representative of Cantor Fitzgerald told me his workers were “very busy and had no time for art projects.” *And that was what made sense to them at the time.* The building where they worked was for them completely unquestionable, and my piece must have seemed totally unimportant or irrelevant to them. They all died on 9/11. In the aftermath of

9/11, many international TV stations wanted to broadcast my video. It had become “historical.” But for me, what makes even the smallest or seemingly most insignificant micronarrative worthy of attention is that they are always connected to World History, either through resistance and a thousand convoluted mediations, or through a single flaming instant of collective trauma.

SH: My first response to this question was, yes, of course, my work is a document of this moment. After all, I am deeply invested in the social and political conditions in which we find ourselves, and I've made work that is explicitly “about” the events of our current moment and recent past: the 2004 election, the current U.S. occupation of Iraq. I have also made work that is staged at collective political events such as the 2008 Democratic and Republican National Conventions, and my work is explicitly concerned with the relationship between events and their documents or what I have called in other contexts, the relationship between the event and the not-event of its document (whether a photo, video, film, or sound recording). But I don't think I am actually motivated by the desire and/or the intention to construct a document. My practice is, primarily, a means to work through a relation to the events that unfold or have unfolded around us. This is, necessarily, *also* to work through a relation to the documents of these events, as no event can even be perceived without the set of documents that are produced alongside or as the event itself, whether these documents precede, succeed or function as the event in and of itself (for example: the documents used to justify the initial invasion of Iraq, the image of the burning WTC and the photos of

detainee abuse from Abu Ghraib).

I am intrigued by this impulse to work through a relation to events, and by its relationship to the impulse to document an event. Sally's anecdote about *City Game TV* reminds me that we, as artists, exist in a field of cultural production that is much, much bigger than we are and that contains widely divergent investments in documentation. At any event I find myself in, whether a protest, a political rally, a concert, I am always surprised (I know I shouldn't be) at how many people are taking pictures or video. Dancing, singing, shouting, raising their fists, and shooting pictures. This impulse has as many rationales as there are people engaged in documenting. I'm curious why so many people are recording things these days, why so many people are writing blogs, posting pictures on Flickr, shooting video from their cell phones. How much of it is about actually producing something that one can reference in the future and how much of it is about the construction of a position, role, task for oneself in the midst of the event itself?

AG: A friend of mine who lives in Rome once told me that when the Pope was in public, people used to crush each other in the crowds, pushing and shoving forward to touch him, or the car he was in, or at least a bodyguard, something physically close to the Pope. The shoving is still there, not to gain a physical connection but to take a (moving) image with the cell phone, a camera. Taking a (digital) image has become a form of being present with a person, at an event, or on a street. In some ways, in some situations, to take the picture has become a priority over the physical imprint, the impact on a body, or the ways in which we also connect to events immaterially through emotions, sensations and language: memory. It is curious to me that, given the fleeting and sensitive nature of digital media, most of these "documents" will vanish within the next decade because digital media does not preserve itself by itself, unlike negatives and old-fashioned prints. Like Sharon, I am interested in what that radical shift of presence means, that with each fist comes a camera (it comes with the hand not the eye anymore). I wonder what consequence this taking of images has for the person in front of and behind the (cell phone) camera. In comparison, what are the consequences of a raised fist, or the putting of the body on line in a protest? These things don't have to be mutually exclusive but sometimes they are.



Sally Gutiérrez, *Organ Market*, 2009, video still.

Being present within the space of politics continuously changes over time. For me, making documents in any form is part of that space of politics. And documents are and become, as all of you describe in one way or another in your work, tools of engagement with events, conditions and institutions. They have the power to activate, describe, rewrite. In my work, I have been thinking and working through the ways in which history lives within us, how it travels across borders and times with an individual. I am not interested in biographical determinism, but in the ways in which past events and documentation of them stay alive through our

encounter with them. It has become interesting to me how such encounters condition our thoughts and frame our actions in the present moment, inform them in a very active way. During the last eight years, I have made work about how political concepts such as citizenship, immigration and land rights (in the United States) exist within individuals, how individuals consciously and unconsciously engage, comprehend and resist them, and how these political terms translate into the experience of the everyday. Documents become part of this translation process, as input and output.

Maybe my interest in the document is motivated by the need to name the outcome of my practice (as a form of poetic document-making) consciously in

the realm of politics, that allows someone who encounters it to be present within it. The work is made to be an active and activated part of a concept of “truth” as it exists in individuals (not abstractly outside of them) and does not try to merely represent it by fixing meaning but by actively creating a space for a viewer to be the site of the creation of “a truth.” In this strategy, I see a relationship between all our work: for example, Ashley’s current collaboration with Taisha Paggett engaging anti-intimidation training with migrant workers in Los Angeles, Sally’s collaboration with her sister Gabriela, *Tapologo*, a documentary film about women’s response to the AIDS crisis in South Africa, or Sharon’s *Revolutionary Love*, a queer response to the national conventions leading up to the recent U.S. presidential elections. Each of these works seems to hold a claim over a present moment which they engage, without needing to determine that moment, but rather to create a document of how one engages with it.



Ashley Hunt, *Unknown Number of Men and Women (Metropolitan Detention Center, Brooklyn, New York)*, 2009, digital c-print.

AH: Andrea’s example of the Pope intersects with Sharon’s interest in the excess of imaging devices at political events. In both cases, I’m struck by the function of cultural authority, through which the state, the church, or entities we might identify with the spectacle narrate our events, producing the documents, records and knowledge that we are expected to consume, and which subordinate the value of our own experiences, our own memories and personal documents.

The explanations for such mass picturing tend to be technologically deterministic, attributing it solely to the ubiquity of recording devices in our hands and pockets at all times. But there’s something resistant in the use of those devices as well—even if it’s inadvertent—when we counter subordination by recording our own memories, producing our own documents, exercising our own narration and interpretation, and offering up our own “visions” to be shared socially. Even though people often try to mimic

the narrative structures and tropes of these dominant institutions and their media, and although this is incredibly lucrative to the capitalists who service this phenomena (i.e., Yahoo, Flickr), there is still a great deal of variation and anomaly that comes from it, not least the YouTubing of instances of police violence and other abuses that would never make it onto a front page or TV story, at least not until they’ve had a few million hits.

An additional dimension to Andrea’s story connects with Sally’s discussion of the need to tell our own stories in the face of an Event (in the philosophical sense). What precedes the mass picturing of the Pope is pushing and shoving, and what this mass picturing would seem to have replaced is the attempt to be touched by the Pope. While we typically think of documenting as something done through image and sound, speech and writing, through technologies of the eye, the ear and the intellect, this makes me think much more about touch—about the haptic and about dimensions of knowing that begin more internally, more phenomenologically, but are nonetheless at play within or underlie our relationships to a document.

Perceptual as well as semiotic, touch is a most intimate form of record, greatly informing memory (the touch of another’s skin, the feeling of a texture, a temperature, a pressure, a grip; something comforting, abject or frightening). Although touch can’t be recorded or shared as easily as sight or sound, it nonetheless has signifying dimensions. Social animals teach us much about dimensions of touch that we seem to forget, as they use it to teach, to discipline, to establish social hierarchy and to form intimate connection. For people, touch relates with proximity and the proprioceptive so as to mark familiarity and strangeness (we don’t touch strangers, we greet the new with a handshake, we embrace the

familiar and touch those we love with our bodies, we hit those we dislike or who offend our social order). Additionally, touch serves as a primary metaphor for things we feel a connection to, which “touch us,” or which fail to do so.

With the Pope, the ultimate connection would be to have his hands laid upon you, an indexical marking of yourself in the purview of the divine. I wonder what it would mean to consider the mass picturing as not a replacement of touch, but as an extension, for to see the Pope with one’s own eyes is to be in proximity, to be in the same place at the same time. Seeing is a kind of removed touching, and the image is evidence to that closeness. To return to what I said earlier about my interest in other ways of knowing at a time of disorientation, a time of crisis, I’m interested in considering these expanded registers of learning and evidence-making, not as subordinate to the document but in relation to it. I see this interest rehearsed in each of our projects—where the markers, records and documents of truth-telling narratives are not to be taken for granted, but to be examined, unpacked, processed subjectively and tried on individually, or rejected.

SG: I’m sorry to have to sound a pessimistic note on the issue of the internet as an instrument of resistance or democratization. I believe this is one of the myths of globalization, one of the contemporary grand narratives that is least questioned. Firstly, billions of people have no access to internet at all, so for them the point is moot. Secondly, in the countries where technologies of resistance would perhaps be most needed, it’s precisely technologies of censorship and control that proliferate—for instance, Yahoo helped the Chinese government track dissidents. Thirdly, even if you manage not to drown in the oceans of banality in the web, how do you avoid the danger of substituting real life experience with its digital double? What if you end up spending more time documenting your life than actually living it? Ashley has raised the issue of the world of touch, but how do you bring corporeality into the net?



Sally Gutiérrez, *Black Nazarene*, 2006, video still.

That is, where are the real bodies? One of the issues I tried to focus upon in *Organ Market*, my piece for the “Embedded Art” exhibition, was how, regardless of traditional geographical locations (“developed world,” “under-developed world,” etc.) the planet is divided into areas populated by multitudes of suffering bodies—constituted by war, famine, squalor, ecological disasters, or natural catastrophes—and networked, digitally saturated enclaves, obsessed with security, where subjectivity is increasingly shaped through the exchange of images.

When I was in the Philippines for the first time I witnessed and filmed the Black Nazarene Procession. Thousands of people—mostly from the poorest sectors of the working classes—swarmed to Quiapo in Manila, walking barefoot from long distances, desperate to touch a black-skinned wooden representation of Christ, or at least to pull the ropes of the platform bearing the figure. For this they were willing to risk their lives, and actually three people died when I was there, trampled by the multitude. The distance between the masses at this event, on the one hand, and the crowds wielding their cameras and cell-phones at a concert or a demonstration, on the other hand, seems to me incommensurable. It’s not just about religion, it’s a whole way of life where physicality—even to the point of shedding blood—has a higher meaning, versus another universe of experience where subjects produce themselves through digital networks.

I think Western societies have lost the notion of the unique event and the singular experience, of things happening once and once only. The basic fact about the Pope is that there’s only one Pope: it’s not a platitude, it’s the essence of

monotheism. Touching the Pope belongs to the sphere of the auratic, in Walter Benjamin's sense. It has to be a unique experience or it has no meaning at all. Therefore, the replacement of the touch (a singularity in itself) by a proliferation of endlessly reproducible images is another instance of the political economy of the sign, forever circulating from YouTube to Facebook to Twitter to whatever comes up next. What stands outside the proliferation of images?

In *Tapologo*, Gabriela and I wanted to question and push the limits of documentary as a form. For me, doing art politically, as opposed to doing "political art," means not just focusing on more or less overtly political or progressive content, but questioning the political and ideological orientation of aesthetic forms in themselves. As we were shooting and editing, elements such as the tempo of narration, the use of silence, or the gaze of the women in the film *looking back* at the audience, were all political issues. From the start, we saw how the dimension of touch was one of the most striking features in the work of the Tapologo home-based carers. Like Ashley remarks, it's extremely difficult to record or represent, but we wanted to show touch as part of a healing process that was also a communal and intersubjective process, to depict the women lifting themselves up from victimised corporeality into self-constituted, politically active subjectivity. One of our main concerns was not to land in the middle of the Tapologo network imposing our foreign, outsiders' gaze upon them, but to work with them. We wanted to make a film that they and similar communities or organizations could use as a tool. In that sense we were aiming at a performative effect; i.e., a kind of cinematic discourse that does not stand outside, but attempts to become an active participant in, the reality it represents.

The link between truth and experience has come up in different ways throughout this conversation. One of the most potent forms of truth for me has to do with memory, personal and collective, and the transmission of the authentic core of experience—a key element throughout my work, especially in *Manola Gets the Bus* (in collaboration with Gabriela) and *Listen, Interviews with Filipino Citizens*—involves listening to a voice that is *true to the event*, an authenticity that, like Andrea says, transcends the individual biographical subject.

I believe we must never lose sight of the fact that our art practice, as Sharon remarked, develops within an ever-shifting field of cultural production that contains widely divergent investments in documentation. In the cover of Michael Chanan's book *The Politics of Documentary*, there is a still from Brazilian filmmaker Eduardo Coutinho's *Boca de Lixo* [Garbage Dwellers], in which a boy is subtitled saying: "What do you get outta this, holding this thing in our faces?"

SH: Sally, the attention you and Gabriela gave, in *Tapologo*, to the political dimension of formal and aesthetic choices and modes of production is an engagement that I think the four of us share as a necessary component to make the kind of work we make. Your description also reminds me of the social dimension of the process of documenting people and events. I mean both the obvious fact that, as you describe, it is a person or a set of people who literally take a camera to a person, a community of people, or an event. But also that part of what the camera records is, in fact, a social and political relationship or a set of social and political relationships. I'm interested in how those relationships can be seen or made manifest in the documents themselves. In my recent work, *Revolutionary Love* and *I Didn't Know I Loved You*, which I just made for the Istanbul Biennial, I've been trying to actively work with the physical proximity between the camera or the microphone and the face, body, voice that it is capturing. In this way, I'm interested in materializing what I could call the desiring body or bodies behind the various recording devices of the camera and the microphone. I am, at the moment, quite compelled by the way in which physical proximity evidences itself in a recorded document and I've been trying to work very consciously with materializing the distance between a camera and the person or people it is filming

and/or a microphone and the voice or voices it is recording. This is not just formal curiosity. I'm invested in the way in which our social relationships exist in, around and through these unending and all-pervasive documents and these processes of recording and documenting material reality.

The word "truth" came up, in different ways, in all of your responses. For me, the word points to one of the hazards of working in the territory of the "document," which is that it is hard to escape the imperative to address a/the notion of "truth," whether to embrace it, shape it or refuse it. My investment as an artist has, actually, very little to do with anything I could call or know to be called "truth." Rather I'm invested in narration, in the narrativizing of experience, histories, memory, in the ways in which we come to form and construct collective narratives. I can't say these narratives are authentic or inauthentic; I think most of our narratives about ourselves and our lives are probably both at the same time.

I understand the way in which you, Sally, propose that a narration can be a counter-history or a counter-document to an ideologically-enforced dominant discourse, but there are also intensely potent strategies that don't engage the discourse of truth or authenticity.

Here I am thinking of queerness and psychoanalysis.

Psychoanalysis for its brilliant (and extended!) elaboration of all the ways in which we are neither authentic nor truthful to or about our own experiences. And queerness in the sense that some of the most successful strategies of queer activism have been those in which queers stand firmly in the space of the abjection or perversity with which we are ascribed. Those in which we embrace our difference, even when that difference is the fodder for homophobic rhetoric, rather than assert our shared humanity. While queer politics have, for sure, been invested in the production of counter-histories, more significantly, I think, radical queers have been active in the production of what Michael Warner names counterpublics,⁴ in which, rather than fight against normativity, that ideology is strategically dismissed or disregarded in favor of a scene or a world or a moment, however contingent and "unreal," in which these positions simply don't matter.

SG: A short note on the issue of truth—why I think it's come up quite a few times in the discussion and why I think it's important. I remember a wonderful line from Pasolini's version of the *1001 Arabian Nights*: "truth lies not in one dream, but in many." I see truth as plural; there are many forms of truth. Badiou talks about different truths and truth-procedures: political, poetic and aesthetic, scientific, even personal. And Foucault used to reply to those who believed he thought there was no truth that on the contrary, the issue for him was that there were many truths, and he wanted to

find out how they worked.⁵ I agree that psychoanalysis and queerness are very powerful strategies but what they oppose to "established discourses of truth" is actually their own adversarial truth procedures by another name. I believe that there is no way you can argue anything, or indeed make a claim or fight for anything, without an implicit concept of truth, whatever you want to call it. Queer experience generates its own oppositional truth in many regards, as Foucault would say. But that's how truth works. It is an arena of opposing claims defined by our struggles. I believe it was Bertolt Brecht who said, "the truth that Galileo suffered for is still the truth." Our struggles create spaces that generate their own



Ashley Hunt. Top: *796 Men* (Atmore State Prison Farm, Escambia County, Alabama), 2009. Bottom: *6,512 Men* (California Men's Colony, San Louis Obispo, California), 2009, digital c-print.

validity and have a claim to the truth that cannot be ignored. That's why the issue of truth and experience is important for me, because truth is a battlefield, truth is where we fight.

AG: I don't see "truth" as an entity to be achieved in relation to documents; rather, my interest lies in the way we relate to the notion of truth in our experience. My artwork is not invested in truth and authenticity as such but in the politics of narration and the way in which—as you say, Sharon—history, memory, experience and notions of truth are narrativized. In part, my work has to question the ways in which truths and authenticity circulate and are used strategically. I am interested in how the experience of the notion of truth is constructed, socially, culturally, politically, historically. And how we as artists are part of its construction.

For me, it is hard to generalize about the internet. It is clearly a privileged form of communication, and it can be an incredible tool for organization in one place and completely irrelevant in another. In a moment of crisis, whatever people have access to, they will use for their struggle: videotape, print media, radio, letters, photographs, banners, knotted ropes, etc. Communication in whatever form is power, and isolation is a way of breaking that power. I see all our work as part of this communication, of this narrativization. I want to go back to what my story of the people going to see the Pope has opened up in our conversation. The camera in the hand has become part of an experience, it exists within it, and is not outside of it. This observation which has long been true for us artists using media, has now become commonplace within industrialized nations. Where there used to be few with cameras, journalists, artists, wealthy people, now, in some spaces, there is nearly everyone, recording. I find it interesting in your new work, Sharon, how you are capturing the intimacy of the moment of recording, and at the same time a slightly claustrophobic sensation for me as a viewer. The work seems to address not so much the experience of the moment but the experience of documenting this moment, which reflects back on the commonplace now with camera and the equivalent experience (of the political) we have been discussing.

Yet what is important to me is to look at these two moments together, the one that Ashley describes as the indexical physical touch, and Sally as the reality outside Euro- and American-centric discourses, and the one Sharon has been working with, the moment of the encounter with the document, or now the act of documenting. Of course we all know that an event without any cameras or the media is still witnessed. The "document" exists as a memory of the event, textual, physical, visual, and emotional within people. The ways in which such an event travels across generations and in which a photograph is archived are different but have similar consequences in us and will each affect our actions in the present as a form of collective memory. What makes these two tracks decisively distinct is the politics of their making, questions of authorship, of power with them and over them, centuries of so-called Western traditions that value paper over words, questions of control and of management. Even though we have marked some differences in our approaches, I see the combination of these "two moments"—the "indexical" and the document—unfold in all your work and I am invested in them in my own.

1. Geyer, Gutiérrez, Hayes, and Hunt all participated in the Whitney Museum of American Art's Independent Study Program during the academic year 1999-2000.

2. Julianne Burton, "Individual Fulfillment and Collective Achievement, an Interview with T. G. Alea," *Cineaste* 8, no. 1 (1977), cited in Michael Chanan, *Cuban Cinema* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 159.

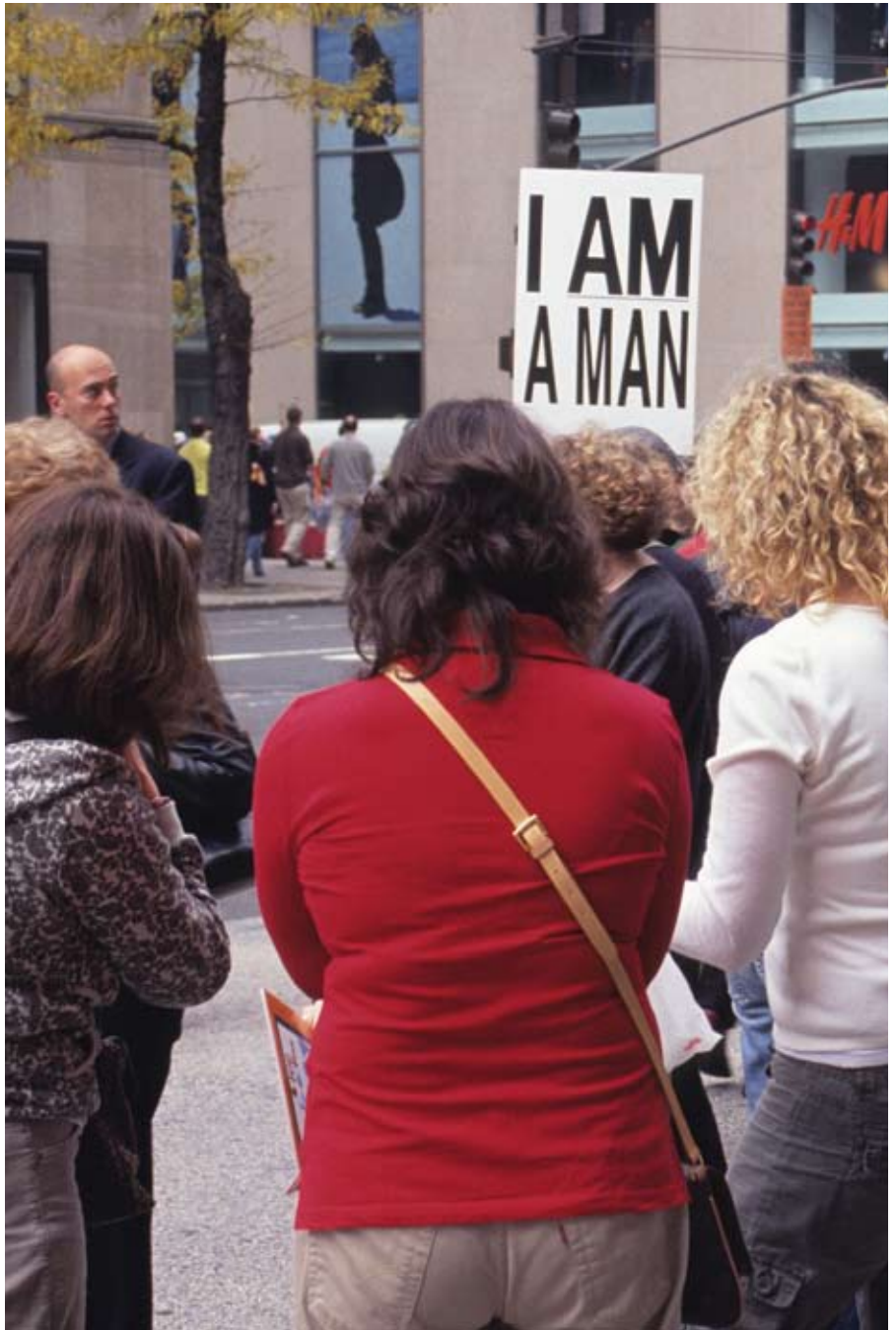
3. Alain Badiou, *Metapolitics*, trans. Jason Barker (London: Verso, 2005).

4. Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York: Zone, 2005).

5. Michel Foucault, "Truth and Power," in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (London: Penguin, 1984); also, Michel Foucault, *The Politics of Truth* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 1997).























There are many stories told.

One speaks — a moment — one listens — a place — a vanishing point. Standing in this landscape with my un-lived recognition, I can feel a shift from the image or the movie to the land. The perspective turns, the lines are crossing the other way around.

The nights are cold.

I set a tent at a marked site — but alone. One name on the map, another name on signs, and one more in the stories told.

All names are infected by alienation.

Vastness of land.⁹⁰

Jasper, a man I spoke to at Monument Valley, told me that there used to be large crowds of eagles that led travelers in safety.

Then he sang a song I did not understand. When we left Eagle Cave, the site of our conversation, a strong wind blew sand into a little twister right behind us.

Back at the campsite, I start a fire to cook a meal.

There is no one out there I can see, the fire just marks myself, a figure on a wide-open stage. I eat baked beans and drink some whiskey. I reach for tobacco to roll a cigarette.

And then I sit, not quite sure if I experience the place or the picture that I seem so perfectly to reproduce.⁹¹

Or did it start with *The Searchers*.

A lone racist cowboy turned hero, set in this very landscape, directed by John Ford. The land, the white man, the other white man with red painted face, the settlers, the innocents that are always the women and children, from either side. All are written into the master narrative of an evident fate. Ideology as destiny, I think, I can barely watch it. A masterpiece of cinema. I have been told that in a 1971 interview John Wayne said: "I don't feel we did wrong in taking this great country away from them, if that's what you're asking. Our so-called stealing of this country from them was just a matter of survival. There were great numbers of people who needed new land, and the Indians were selfishly trying to keep it for themselves. . . . This may come as a surprise to you, but I wasn't alive when the reservations were created . . . what happened 100 years ago in our country cannot be blamed on us today . . . What happened between their forefathers and our forefathers is so far back — right, wrong, or indifferent — that I don't see why we owe them anything."⁹² On the Navajo Nation John Ford's films are screened at times. People get together to laugh about what their grandparents and parents, playing the crowds of a generic screen invention of a primitive savage, said in Navajo when directed to speak. A whole other message distributed again and again by Hollywood, present but inaudible for its producers and its intended audience. Nobody would tell what was said there on screen. When asking, people would just smile at the question.

Later I take a horseback ride, passing closely by high red cliffs with desert varnish, looking up I think for a moment I see tall figures painted on the walls, animated through my movement. I stop to look and find a pattern of little white and black hands on the wall just above my head. We turn the mustangs to the open field. It was here and there — my guide C.J. points to where the movies were done. He forgot the name of one particular movie. We both don't care. Then there is the Totem Pole, a tall skinny rock, climbed by Clint Eastwood in *The Eiger Sanction*. The Elders say that this climb caused the drought that has lasted ever since. C.J. tells me that now they fly cars like mine up there to take pictures in the sunset.⁹³ We ride on. These rocks are called the Three Hopi Sisters or now they call them the Three Nuns. Four years ago, C.J. says, one of them lost her head due to erosion. We both laugh. It's getting late and we have to get back. He calls a race back to the horse trailers and we let the horses go. Swift action, flying lightly over the valley's wide open floors. I hold my breath. He wins.



I would have liked to begin this paper with a quotation of [Jimmie Durham] because of his wisdom, and because it would have immediately set the tone of being in the right “camp.” I leave the quotation out because one of our most serious troubles in the United States today, whether we are Indian, white, black or whatever, is a tendency to attempt to escape our reality. We do this by substituting slogans and pronouncements for the more difficult revolutionary praxis of working, looking, thinking/working, looking/thinking. The white left in particular has a tendency to take the words and concepts of revolutionary leaders from around the world, instead of participating in the hammering out of a true understanding of what is going on here, and how to use it.¹

1. Jimmie Durham, “American Indian Culture” in *A Certain Lack of Coherence* (London: Kala Press, 1993), 1.



My name is Sonya Atalay, Vine Deloria Jr., Romaine Moreton, N. Scott Momaday, James Clifford, Aby Warburg, Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, Arturo Escobar, Maria Elena Garcia, Hannah Arendt, Leslie A. White, Larry Littlebird, Gillian Rose, Chief Seattle, Fredric Jameson, Barbara Bender, Leslie Marmon Silko, Roland Barthes, Clifford Geertz, Wilma Mankiller, Hayden White, Paul Chaat Smith, Willa Cather, Michel Foucault, Nancy Shoemaker, and Walter Benjamin, just to name a few. I speak to you as a scientist, anthropologist, ethnographer, archaeologist, geographer, historian, journalist, adventurer, as an artist, researcher, traveler of known and unknown territories, as a man and as a woman, but foremost I speak to you from the place of knowledge.



Furthermore information was obtained during my work out in the field. In the deserts, the mountain ranges, the open skies—the words I encountered quietly spoken about this land, and out loud right into my face, into my mind. I want to share the colors of what I saw and of the unseen, of the traces along the horizons of my mind and the untraceable, the delineations of the documents and the dust I found on the library stacks. I want to talk about the light in this auditorium, the light from your eyes glancing at me.



I am here to talk about an experience that we all share even though it is singular to my being. I am here to talk about land. I am here to talk about history, I am here to talk about knowledge. Mine and not mine, yours, ours and others.



Every summer when school is out a veritable stream of immigrants heads southwest into Indian Country. Indeed the Oregon Trail was never so heavily populated as are Route 66 and Highway 18 in the summer time. From every rock and cranny in the East, they emerge, as if responding to some primeval fertility rite, and flock to the reservations. They are the artists, the ethnographers, the anthropologists, the most prominent members of the scholarly community embark, all brands of this species, on their summer adventure, that infests the land of the free, the homes of the brave . . . ¹



1. Vine Deloria, Jr., "Anthropologists and Other Friends" in *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* (London: Collier-Macmillian Limited, 1971), 78.



This land I am showing you, reaches far out stretching across rivers and mountains, hills and valleys, suburbs and cities all the way across what we call the United States of America . . . It is this land I speak to you about. A land that understands each rock as connected indeterminately to the ground that reaches the bottom edge of those frames up here on the screen. This is the land, the land of history, of this present and its future. The land is not there in a distance but it here underneath our feet. Quiet now! and listen, you will hear it breathing.





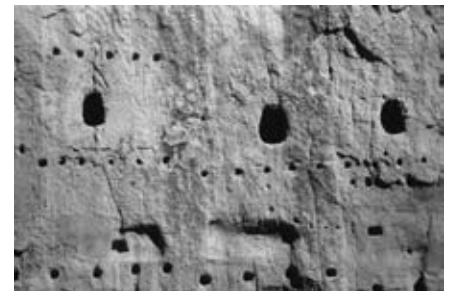
On the screen photographs repeating and with them repeating their gaze. We see how they saw, skimming surface; surveying land. We are invoked—an active viewer equated with culture and it—a passive land equated with nature. The photograph’s static viewpoint is a scientific procedure to help, not a particular aspect of the way things are.² Self-consciously, seriously partial.³ One could say this gaze and the photograph as its witness is controlling us and nature.⁴ One could say the photograph as its witness enacts within this discipline a sophisticated, systematic erasure.⁵

2. Roman Jakobson, *On Language* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), 91.

3. James Clifford. “Introduction: Partial Truths” in *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 7.

4. Barbara Bender, “Subverting the Western Gaze: Mapping Alternative Worlds” in the *Archeaology and Anthropology of Landscapes*, eds. Peter J. Ucko and Robert Layton (New York: Routledge, 1999).

5. Gillian Rose, “Looking at Landscape: The Uneasy Pleasures of Power” in *Feminism & Geography* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 87.



My words exist on the level of my voice. If I do not speak with care, my words are wasted. If I do not listen with care, words are lost. If I do not remember carefully, the very purpose of words is frustrated. This respect for words suggests an inherent morality in man’s understanding and use of language . . . That moral comprehension is everywhere evident in American Indian speech.⁶

6. N. Scott Momaday, “On Indian-White Relations: A Point of View” in *The Man Made of Words* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997), 55.



*All that distance
From here to there.
A sweeping view, I think you would call it.
Grass, yucca, sagebrush, in the far, far distance
Juniper, maybe some scrub pinyon.
So far away even the horizon is misty.
Kaweshtima, I think, seen from this side.
Once I started a long walk to Chaco Canyon.
Years and years. Ago now. A shaky memory.
Drinking too much then, years and years.
And trying to quit. Quit for months, even years.
Once or twice. It was like that for years.
All that distance from here. Now. To there.
Back then. A view sweeping to the past.
From here looking south. And somewhat east.
Shadows and dimension. Place and time.
I can't believe it sometimes, you know.
How we pass through, how we manage.
Yet we do. No matter what has happened.
Looking from here on this low knoll.
You can see everything. Everything about time and place.
Everything about time. Everything about place.*



I've never been sure.

What it is.

A scene.

Variety, like a carnival. Or a state fair. A doing. Something happening.

And how old is it? It is fairly contemporary in some aspects and details.

Even the ride-like spirals. And the zig zag contraption figure. Snake loops.

Buffalo. Mountain sheep. Kaahs-kuh. The name of an elder uncle. Elk.

Antelope. Deer. Goat. And horses. A number of horses. One or two with riders.

And the horses I figure are recent. Since Spanish conquistador times at least.

So it doesn't figure.

Sometimes, no.

Footprints, for example.

And snake tracks.

And a mark like time.

Or something magic.

I want to know but maybe I'm not to know. Being within the culture sometimes is:

Not knowing and accepting it's okay. Knowing you're within is knowledge enough.

You're part of all that has taken place: buffalos, mountain sheep, elks, antelope, deer, goats, horses, their riders, even the fact of the conquistadors, conquistadors.

IN CONVERSATION WITH MARY KELLY & WU INGRID TSANG

SHARON HAYES AND ANDREA GEYER: It seems like the four of us, in addition to addressing various political concerns, also have a particular interest in social and political movements (feminism, gay liberation, the current trans movement, etc.) and the ways in which political desires are articulated as collective actions or activities. Is this an accurate or productive way to talk about your interests as artists?

MARY KELLY: Rather than jumping right into the work, I'd like to talk about how these shared concerns came about, historically speaking. When I started making work in the '70s, the prevailing definition of art concerned "medium," as Rosalind Krauss defined it, not just a physical support, but also a set of rules or procedures that were inherent to it, form as content you could say. Well, I wanted to argue that the physical support could be something like an oppositional movement, a community, or a discourse—psychoanalysis, ethnography, for example—and that the rules this generated, the procedures, would have to be different, less self-referential, more context driven. This shift seemed to be prompted by the emergence of issues like identity, less consciously at first, but it really took off in the '80s, producing the aesthetic strategy now known as "post-medium." So, the look of work as well as the kind of options you have for what you can address has changed. If we considered the trajectory of our practices over three decades in terms of *procedures*, then I'd be interested in asking what continuities you see there.

WU INGRID TSANG: Listening to you all makes me think about the first project I ever made, which—now looking back—I understand to be concerned with the question of social movements. It's a film called *Hospitality* (2005) that I made while studying with Alfredo Jaar at the Ratti Foundation in Italy. Prior to that, I had organized an event in Chicago around queer feminism called *Pilot Television*, but I was really struggling to define my art practice. *Pilot* had grand ambitions. It was inspired by that scene in *Born in Flames* (directed by Lizzie Borden) where the women take over the TV station—and we actually intended to get our videos on television. In reality it was a totally bombastic, ephemeral thing, although several of the videos have lived on as artworks today. *Pilot* was definitely a social and aesthetic endeavor for me, but I didn't know what my questions were, nor did I understand my role as a maker. *Hospitality* was my first attempt at developing what Mary would call a true project. While I was working on this film in Italy, I had a phone conversation with Emily Roysdon, who was studying with you at the time, Mary. I remember we got into a debate about the meaning of *political*. She said, "I was crossing the street with Mary yesterday, and I was trying to stop her from getting hit by cars when she gave a really precise definition of *political*, which I kind of forgot because I was so worried about the cars." And I was like, "Oh! Please find out for me!" I was dying to know. And she forwarded me your definition in an email: it involved Jacques Rancière's concept of *disidentification*, from his essay "The Cause of the Other."¹

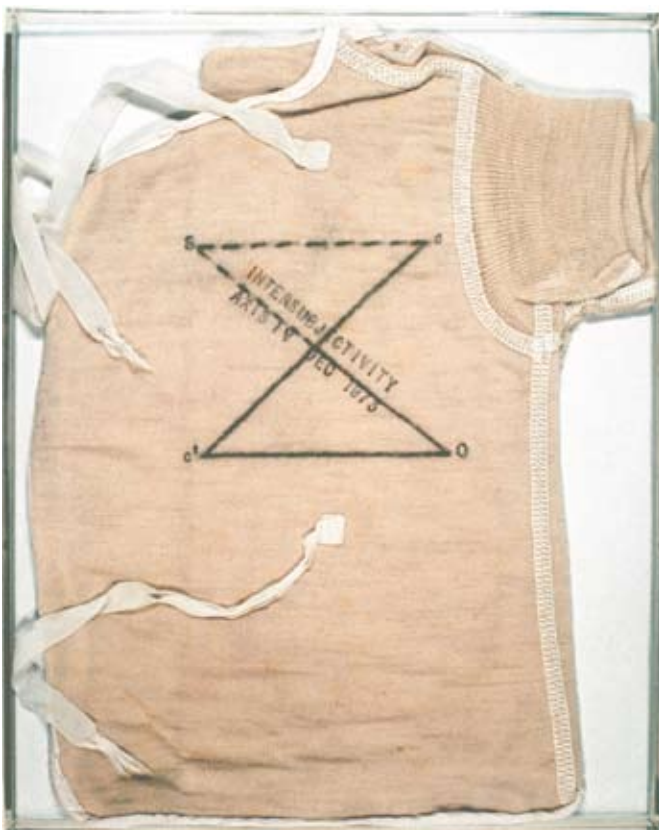
MK: About becoming a political subject . . .

WIT: I remember what really struck me was that you said in order for a movement to be *political*, it must have concrete demands. This idea actually became the genesis of *Hospitality*, which is based on a series of interviews with queer feminist-identified people, and it is about searching for a demand. I didn't use a set of questions in the interviews. Instead I let the conversations develop to see how people articulated what they wanted. The resulting film is a kind of palimpsest of voices, which are incoherent as a movement yet are precise in a way that creates a different kind of politics. Looking back, I think my initial question about the relationship between art and social movements was like a seed planted by Mary Kelly.

MK: From a personal point of view, it's obvious that the women's movement created a completely different imperative for me as an artist. I was involved as an activist initially and it wasn't until later that I realized it was the basis for my project—that conceptualism's "interrogation of the interrogation" had become, for me, the question of subject formation. There was logic to the questions that followed, too, which came from what I began to call the "discursive site," and it determined how I would actually carry on developing a practice informed by feminism. But not just any feminism, it was the tendency that emphasized the construction of difference rather than gender—called "anti-essentialist" in the '80s, remember? Because it

was based on the discourse of psychoanalysis, our notion of sexuality was linked to its uncertain status in the unconscious and I think this allowed other things to be thought through in a similar way: ethnicities, race, object choice. I feel this is the legacy all of you continue, but more importantly, I see you transform and advance it in your work, especially in Wu's documentation of the Silver Platter.

AG: Many times, as a student, I was “accused” of being a sociologist because of the methods and ideas I was working with in my studio. When I arrived in New York, I found a community of like-minded people, became part of a reading group, and started to think about post-colonial theory and psychoanalysis as sites that could become part of my art practice. Listening to Wu and Mary, it's interesting to me how formative this connection between community, a theoretical discourse and art seems for all of us, it enables our practices as artists.



Mary Kelly, *Post-Partum Document: Introduction*, 1973.
Detail, 1 of 4 units, 20 x 25.5 cm each. Collection Peter Norton Family Foundation, Santa Monica.

MK: Referring to my earlier comments about medium, perhaps, I would say that community is the physical support and, within it, the particular discourse you share is where the rules come from, what makes it possible to have a method of interrogation. Art then is defined by the medium, but without being prescriptive, without trying to make “art” per se. Andrea, you were saying how they called you a “sociologist,” well, when I first exhibited *Post-Partum Document* at the ICA in London in 1976, they called me everything, from “raving lunatic” to “the nappy lady”—referring to the stained diaper liners in *Documentation I*. The tabloid press had a field day. I said, “It’s art because I say so,” and this was quoted everywhere. There were cartoons. I remember people arguing about my work and actually starting to fight over it.

At that time, *PPD* was problematic. It looked like conceptual art, but there was a visceral materiality, which seemed incongruous in some way. Something was disrupted each way you looked at it. Some viewers could identify with the mother’s experience, but had a problem with the Lacanian diagrams. Others, mostly men, liked the idea of theory, but had a hard time with the memorabilia or “stuff.” I do think it’s easier now to make work that doesn’t look like “art.” Do you think this way of working has become a known style and, consequently, poses other problems for you, or don’t you even think about your work in those terms?

WIT: I think I’m still figuring it out. The question of whether a work, the film I’m working on, *La Bienvenida* [working title] for example, will ultimately function in art contexts or social or political contexts isn’t that urgent to me right now. I imagine that it could operate in multiple contexts and I don’t feel that I have to fight to prove that. Such possibilities are already a given, something I inherited from the work done before me. I can focus my energy elsewhere.

SH: Mary, you are absolutely right that it’s easier now to have an art practice that doesn’t look like “art.” There’s a wide and diverse set of possibilities to work in at the moment, whether discursive, exhibition-based, or event-based, and there are multiple ways in which to engage one’s practice around an interrogation or a set of procedures. What that does for me is it asks for another kind of responsibility vis-à-vis other discursive and disciplinary procedures. This is where I see a relationship to the moment in which you were first working, Mary, when many of these possibilities were opened up.

MK: Yes, yes, Sharon, absolutely. There's a difference between the formal interventions of the two moments. Now that diverse strategies are accepted, they may also have become somewhat meaningless because there isn't a common project connecting the work to a specific site or historical moment. What you're calling responsibility is exactly that—a project; it's as if you're bearing witness to something and want to be responsible or faithful to that experience and the process it initiated. Maybe that's what gives our different practices certain continuity.

AG: I find this question of the responsibility towards not only form but mode of production very important in the current moment, in which the “everything goes” seems at times to suggest a certain superficiality in the meaning of such choices. Yet no meaning exists without a form. As a gesture, formal decisions might be considered and at times used as meaningless, but as you both say truly they are as meaningful and allow us to build relationships across disciplines in all their complexity and references. I think the difference today is that it might take a different effort to make that visible to an audience in the work and this “making visible,” I think, is part of this responsibly you are describing.

MK: Do you think that something transformative—the “event” as Alain Badiou defines it—has to happen to you before you feel impelled to act, or “follow the consequences of the event” as he would say?² But, perhaps, this doesn't happen for everyone.



Wu Ingrid Tsang, top and bottom: *La Bienvenida* (2008, work in progress). Feature film, HD video, video stills.

WIT: I've heard you say before, Mary, that the possibility of having a project requires being at the intersection of a historical moment that impels you. I guess I identify with that because I often feel there is simply work that needs to be done. Not that it's easy, or that I know how it's going to turn out, but at times it seems my creative decisions are determined by the conditions. The more I work, the greater the imperative to be clear, almost to the point of being literal as a strategy. For example, if the tangle of activities I'm involved with right now center around questions of sexual difference, there is already so much to do just to parse it out—through my individual and collaborative works, such as the nightclub (Wildness), and IMPRENTA (the project space), which is developing social services for low-income trans people of color. We are even working on a program to administer free hormones—which is like my fantasy, that being trans is not only something you survive at, but something that is embraced and simply available. Working this way, in between these different nodes of production, can become quite illegible as an art practice, and I feel like there is so much to do, just making meaning of all the connections.

SH: What's interesting to me, reflecting on the work you did, Mary, in relation to the feminist movement, is that one's historical moment is often overwhelming and impossible to see from within. Not everyone can identify their own project *at the time it's forming*. There is something necessary, for me,

about working through ideas and discourses in the space of one's practice that is about constructing the project as you are practicing it.

MK: Can you say a bit about some of your early performance pieces? What made you want to remake events from the past? There's something about re-enacting that is very specific to your generation.

SH: It has a lot to do with the specific historical connection I have to the moment of the late '60s, early '70s. I was born in 1970, and I came to New York in 1991,



Mary Kelly, *The Ballad of Kastriot Rexhepi*, 2001. Installation 206 feet overall, detail: 1 of 196 units, compressed lint.

at the height of the AIDS crisis and ACT UP. I think these generational specificities are different from both yours and from Wu's. The year 1970 marks a kind of primary trauma for me. The set of events that happened in those years had a deep impact on me but in ways that I couldn't possibly understand. This generational specificity has shaped my formation as a political subject and defined one of the most significant aspects of my practice, which is an investment in the ways that events mark themselves psychically and socially into our collective imaginations.

MK: Can I go into this a little more? I see two different things here. I don't think that the notion of a transformative event as we were discussing it earlier, that is, something that instigates a truth procedure, is the same thing as the traumatic event you're describing, Sharon, which concerns

the question of origins. In psychoanalytic terms, it would be the primal scene that prompts the child's question: Where did I come from? So, perhaps, we could consider the mystery of conception in a socio-political as well as sexual sense and call it the political primal scene. I've talked about this in relation to *Love Songs*, haven't I? I think it's about the way you decode parental desire, not just what *is* said, but also, what is *not* said. It's what you *think* you know about the past. Of course, it's always about failure, which supports Walter Benjamin's idea that the secret agreement between generations is about a missed opportunity and the possibility of redeeming it. I think this is what comes up in your work, Andrea. But the idea of event as something that you might call, let's say, epistemological, rather than traumatic, that is, about knowledge, even if it's more intuitive, concerns a distinct experience. I feel it palpably when I talk to Wu, that there's something that happened that's life-changing and you're not necessarily sure why, but you go with it, you feel you have to respond to it, that you are impelled to find out more. The two types of event don't necessarily coincide.



Mary Kelly, *The Ballad of Kastriot Rexhepi*, 2001. Video still, opening performance, Santa Monica Museum of Art. Courtesy Michael Nyman.

AG: I just completed a new project based on the trial of Adolph Eichmann that took place in Jerusalem in 1961. Wu is the only performer in this work. He performs all six characters in a constructed trial scene that is based on a heavily edited script of the existing trial transcripts and Hannah Arendt's writing about it. It's a re-enactment not of the event but of the document of the event, as well as of what I would call *memory*. Memory as it exists within each of us is a combination of the memory of events we experienced ourselves, the memory that is transferred to us through older generations, and the memory we learn through the cultures we were raised within. By living your life, all these elements become your own memory. I don't think you can ever take them apart. Having grown up in Germany and having lived in the United States for the last 14 years, I feel I have two formative cultural histories as part of my own memory. This awareness has guided my work in recent years in which I

look at history through an actual body, through a person (not a biographical but a singular person). The work I am doing on the trial of Adolf Eichmann is a visualisation of how a historic moment, and the memory of this moment, is processed through a singular body: Wu. As himself, as one person, he embodies all positions within the trial. For me to treat the event of the Eichmann trial this way becomes a metaphorical space of re-enactment that occurs within ourselves. It reflects the relationship of an event and memory.

MK: And of the body “as language”?

AG: Yes.

MK: So there’s the written and spoken language and there’s the language of the unconscious, all those dimensions of what is visible and invisible on a sliding scale. But I’ve always wondered about the form that takes in your work, how language materialises in the work through an actor with a visible body and speaking voice. I have, for the most part, worked around the absence of the body or, with its “presentified absence,” you could say, in the form of residue. Even when I use a

representational image, as I did in the film loop for the *Love Songs* installation, it’s minimal, barely visible. I feel like I’m working with my eyes closed, with the residue of something, what’s left after the perceptual experience, I mean, the “affect.” Although I identify with the way you work, conceptually, I realize that your installations have always taken a very different form from mine and that intrigues me.

AG: Interestingly, I recognise the investment in the body, but as you say, the politics of the representation of that body are different. I think that speaks to time. Perhaps Sharon could speak about the love addresses she has recently spoken in public spaces, that are personal, abstract and general at the same time. I feel that even at the high time of what is called “relational aesthetics,” nobody wanted to address the complexity or maybe the discomfort of a concrete, singular (non-biographical) body that exists and operates within the social and the political sphere. I try to address the unsolvable presence of it, as part of my work. In the work on the Eichmann trial we find: Hannah Arendt, Adolf Eichmann, Gideon Hausner (Prosecutor), Dr. Servatius (Defense), Mose Landau (one of three judges), and the audience. All are invested heavily in justice for their own ends, they argue, convince, fail, as well as law itself fails them at times, while the case itself focuses on the question of individual responsibility within politics. We experience their struggles and discomfort of the constant shifting around these questions. To show the complex struggles around the concept of truth and justice rather than essentializing them is a very important strategy for me to understand history, to understand memory.



Mary Kelly and Ray Barrie, *Multi-Story House*, 2007. Top: installation, documenta 12, Kassel. Bottom: detail, wood frame, cast acrylic, fluorescent light, 244 x 183 x 244 cm. Photos by David Familian.

SH: I wonder, Andrea, if this strategy is also a response to the openness that we were talking about at the beginning of the conversation, that multiple discourses, multiple objects of interrogation are available to us. Something else that is

common to Andrea’s and my work is that we both make iterative work—work that deals with this idea that there is a moment in which a body and a text and a time and a place coalesce but that is one moment among many. This isn’t a valorization of relationality by any means, but, perhaps, a strategy to deal with overactive and multiplicitous social, political, economic times. This thing that Andrea calls singularity is something that she and I and Ashley Hunt, David Thorne, and Katya Sander talked a lot about in relation to our collaborative project *9 Scripts from a Nation at War*. In that piece, we were interested in positing various speech acts in which what was made material was not just the words and not just the person who spoke those words, but also the presence of a text that was both script and transcript—a text that functions as a document of something that had happened but also as something that could project itself into the future, another moment

when it could be read or could be spoken again.

MK: Those fragments of conversation, or what you call the singularity of real bodies . . . you could also think of that as a kind of oral history. It means you can leave the analysis to the viewer. I use this in my work as well. I structure the speech events so that they're intelligible, but still open to interpretation. This way of organizing or materializing evidence is central for all of us, I think, but for you, the voice, the actual physical voice, seems to be necessary. For me, it's the writing, the physical imprint, the physical trace, which matters most. Those are significant differences in the visual field; I mean, how does the trace act on a viewer differently from the voice?

Sharon, you've tried to show how the voice registers the unconscious dimension of language by calling attention to the contingency of the moment and the specific subject within the moment of the utterance. I always hear certain people speaking when I write, but when you read my text silently, do you hear them? Or is it always filtered through your own voice? I got such a shock when the score Michael Nyman wrote for my installation *The Ballad of Kastriot Rexhepi*, was performed because I was letting someone else into the process. When I heard

Sarah Leonard sing, it was radically different from the voice I imagined. I mean, the separation was interesting because it prevented a hysterical identification with the subject, which you could say is true for most of my work that isn't sung or spoken. But when you use an actor you always have to deal with that idea of difference and I think that is, or can be, in a way, more ethical.

AG: What I hear is this introduction of a third person into a work: You have the artist and the audience, and there is a third person introduced and through an actor, or the singer in your work. I can also identify it in Sharon's and Wu's work through themselves enacting characters that are not themselves, it is not the author/artist speaking, but it is a figure that they are creating, through speaking and re-speaking. I visualise somehow a line-up of the author, this third person, and the audience and we're all standing looking at the work. For me this third position seems to open up something in an experience of a work. The more we talk about it, the presence of the body in your work like *The Ballad*, seems at the end as present as it is in my work or Sharon's work or Wu's work, yet the methodology to manifest this body is different.

SH: What happens to me as a viewer in the space of *The Ballad* is that I become a vehicle of the narration. Because the space of the installation narrates my viewing. For me in the space of *The Ballad* it's my body as a reader that I am called to be present to or made aware of, not so much the body of a character, or the body of the child in the story.

MK: Yes, I do that very self-consciously by making people walk through it—*The Ballad* is like a 360-degree pan.

Multi-Story House, of course, was made to go into; people

walk inside the house and I really like that photograph that you took, Andrea, of *Sisterhood is POW* . . . where the two girls look like they could be holding the placards. The phenomenological presence of your own body is certainly different from that of the actor you're watching, but the psychological space between them is permeable, could you say that?

WIT: The film I'm making now about the Silver Platter (*La Bienvenida*) also



Wu Ingrid Tsang, Zackary Drucker, Mariana Marroquin, *P.I.G.* (2009), REDCAT, Aug. 6-8, 2009, documentation of live performance.

involves questions of singularity and memory. The Silver Platter is a fierce, historical Latin trans bar that I became involved with through organizing Wildness with Ashland Mines and Daniel Pineda. Wildness is a weekly club that derives its energy and politics in response to the history of the bar. It's basically a really fun party that evolved into a more explicitly political platform when I started renting the adjacent storefront, IMPRENTA, with Michelle Dizon, Camilo Ontiveros and Nicolau Vergueiro. *La Bienvenida* kind of synthesizes my experiences: the pleasures and problematics that result from these activities. I consider "my perspective" in the film to be not so much a personal one but as a position at the intersection of historical circumstances that could be shared, or in any case is more reflective of conditions than of biography. This shift in thinking about authorship or narrative is very important to me. So in fact when I'm trying to develop discourse around the site of the bar, I always need to return to my memory, to my initial excitement of the encounter, and feelings of subjective investment.

SH: Wu, I don't know if you actually experience this but I feel that there is a possibility that is available to you that you said yes to that has something to do with movement-building, or with a gathering up of collectivity, that was not exactly available to me. Not that I haven't been involved in activism and collective politics but I feel that there is something distinct for you or maybe for you generationally that allows for a different set of possibilities. There is something different about the way in which a collective voice is available to you that I didn't experience as available to me in that same way.



Wu Ingrid Tsang, *STILL* (Life chances), 2009, digital c-print, light-box, 36 x 48 x 5 inches.

MK: What's different perhaps is the moment in which it's possible to make a demand. I remember this in the movement—feeling that we were speaking for all women, when we said, everyone had a voice, you didn't speak for others. This is what was so unique about feminism in a way: it always refused in the end to force a truth as it were, and I think that radically undermined prevailing notions, including Rancière's, of the political subject. So for me there's a continuity with that past as a discursive site, that is, there's a logic to the questions that have emerged from that community as it ages, theoretically and physically, that keeps me connected with it, but it's not the same as being present in the moment when the demand is made. I think the trans movement is at a point now where you experience urgency, where a demand is possible. You couldn't have imagined earlier how the idea of trans-sexuality could change the whole field of feminist politics juridically as well as ideologically, but it has.

WIT: In thinking about what you just said, I see a way in which Sharon's and Andrea's work could be seen as an interval between Mary's and mine. For instance, I have come to understand the semiotics of protest primarily through your works, Sharon and Andrea. It has enabled me to take a really different approach as an organizer. When we first started IMPRENTA, we were having conversations around the idea of "quiet" resistance. Now the space also now operates as a non-hierarchical, collective-run, free trans legal clinic. Our work is all about, for example, strategizing ways to alleviate poverty and decriminalize trans folks. It has nothing to do with getting people into the street; it has to do with quietly dismantling the non-profit industrial complex. Getting together and talking about re-distributing wealth,

formalizing decision-making processes—it's not the same kind of image as a fist to power, although it feels like the work that needs to be done.

MK: Can you say something about your (joint) project in St.Gallen? How this conversation figures in this project?

AG: When Sharon and I were invited to do a collaborative museum show in St.Gallen, it was a great opportunity to show our collaborative work and also to show our individual work in dialogue with each other. In my work process I share a lot of ideas and questions with Sharon as my colleague and friend, even if I work individually. It has always been interesting to me how we have been invested in related ideas, mobilizing related questions but with very different methodologies and starting from very different backgrounds. For this book as a continuation of the show, Sharon and I were both interested in showing how our dialogue with each other expands far beyond the two of us, because of course it is not just her and me but you, Mary and Wu, and Yvonne and Ashley and Taisha and Renate and Pauline, etc. It is important to us to acknowledge these dialogues in which we work as artists. We don't exist in the singular as artist but in a wider network of conversations.

MK: Can we call that a discursive site?

SH: Yes!

1. Jacques Rancière, "The Cause of the Other," trans David Macey, *Parallax 7* (April-June 1998): 25-34.

2. Alain Badiou, *Being and Event*, trans. Oliver Feltham (New York: Continuum, 2006).



[August 27, 2008, Democratic National Convention, Denver, Colorado]

My sweet love,

I know it's been a long time since we've seen each other and that this isn't the best time to reconnect but I've been a mess since you left. I can't eat and I can't sleep. I called your phone but your voicemail is full.

I tried to reach you by email but got an automated reply. I went to find you at the Pepsi Center but I don't have a pass and there are police and party officials four lines thick down there. It's not like the old days, when things were loose and you could flirt or lie your way in. Yesterday your mother told me that you gave her explicit instructions not to tell anyone anything about you. I saw a mention of you this morning in the newspaper but there wasn't even the slightest hint of where you'd be today.

Why all the secrecy my love?

This convention makes me miss you more than ever. This used to be our season remember? From June to November, from Stonewall to the election, from the queens to the polls, you used to say.

The last time I saw you, you told me "The time is now." You looked so fierce and so passionate. You were beautiful. "This is the moment to act," you said. I was angry that you were thinking about the election when I was thinking about us so I told you I was acting all the time and that I wasn't going to take to the streets shouting unless we are shouting revolution.

Don't you remember, my sweet, when we were shouting revolution? I know that you get mad at me for looking to the past but I can't understand the present or believe in the future if I can't look back at where we've been.

In July we said we'd make it, if we could just believe.

In June they said we should wear proper clothes when we go out in public.

In May I remember you told a reporter that that I was expecting too much from you and that I should remember how far we've come.

In April I told you "We become the enemy of our own liberation when we insist that we are not oppressed."

In March I said, "I demand the right to be gay anytime, anyplace. The right to modify my sex for free and on demand. The right to free dress and adornment."

In February you said I was too loud, too opinionated, and too gay.

In January you told me that it wasn't so easy to just end a war.

On New Year's Day we resolved not to speak.

On New Year's Eve you told me I was stuck in the past.

On Christmas I said the time is now.

In December you told me that I shouldn't let other people tell me what to say.

In November we talked about old patterns.

In October I asked you to give me another chance.

In September you said you needed a little more time.

In August we shouted our love from on top of the highest mountain.

That summer we decided to have a new start.

June 29th you declared that this is a historic moment.

Now you ask me to believe you when you say that one day we will be together again. You ask me to understand that things have changed. That one can't have everything that one wants right away. Be patient you say. We'll get there. I've been so so patient my love? When will we get there? What will it take?

Should I work behind the scenes. Tone down my shirts and take off the lipstick. Do you want me to call off the urgency? Be happy about what I've already got. Trade my heels for flats and my sneakers for dress shoes, should I wear loose-fitting clothes and take off my ties?

I can say "It's personal not political." But what do you mean when you say you don't ask and I shouldn't tell?

Can you really be a homosexual and not a faggot? Can you love longer as a lesbian and not a dyke? Do your kisses taste sweeter if you are gay and not queer? Are you more attractive as a queen for an hour than trans all day long?

They say, my love, that history moves in waves, from deep troughs to high crests. Sometimes I think you are in one and I am in another. I want to find a place to meet. I want to ride your crest as far as it will go to pull us out of the deep trough we've been stuck in for so long but it takes too much out of me.

You want me to say that our love is just like everyone else's. How can I say our love is like everyone else's?

You are the land that I stand on. You appear and my whole world appears with you. I know you're here. I can feel you in the streets. Out of the closets and on to the streets.

I need you.

I need you to change.

I need another revolution.

You may be holing yourself up inside those layers of people, but I know that the ears are the only orifice that can't be closed.

I am an army of lovers, my sweet, and I want you to hear me clearly.

I love you.

You are in the air I breathe, along with racism and homophobia and war and violence. And I find a way to deal with that. Why can't you handle all of me? My private side and my public one, the times when I am quiet and those when I yell and scream.

I refuse to give up the territory of my emotional expression. And I want you to love all of me.

What a pleasure to feel indignant!

This is a beautiful revolution!

So much has happened my love and we are just at the beginning. We will evolve as we get ourselves together and we are only at the beginning.

We'll be gay until everyone has forgotten and then we'll be gay again.





[September 1, 2008, Republican National Convention, St. Paul, Minnesota]

My dear lover,

I know you will be angry at me for speaking to you like this in public but you left me with no other choice. I called your phone but your voicemail is full. I tried to reach you by email but got an automated reply. I still have your mother's number from when you were visiting her last summer but when I called she said she didn't know who I was. This morning I tried to get into the convention to talk to you but I don't have a pass and there are police and party officials four lines thick down there. It's not like the old days, when things were loose and you could flirt or lie your way in. I'm not quite sure what you're all so afraid of. What's with all the armor? Are things really that bad?

When I couldn't make it in, I waited outside hoping to find you in the crowd of people lined up to get in. I know that you were there. I felt certain that you passed me but I didn't see you. You are indistinguishable from all the others—the delegates, the media, the police, those smartly dressed young volunteers. I can't find you anywhere in this mess.

Did you see me? Maybe not. I'm standing on the Capitol Grounds, on the green rectangle just below Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

You must admit, my love, we've had a terrible relationship. You kiss me long and hard but you never loved me. I tried to tell myself I would get used to it. That comforting old myth about the body's ability to adjust is just pure fiction. If that were the case, after all these years, I should take to hatred the way a duck takes to water. But instead I've suffered terribly.

As far as I can make out I've ended my relationship with you every three months for the last 38 years. I resolved never to speak your name in public, I speak bad of you to all my friends and I even refuse to acknowledge that you exist. I promised you I would forget about you, if you left me alone. But each time I banish you from my life, you manage by means of entreaties, telegrams, letters, letters to the editor, the imposition of your friends or of mine, to call me back towards you.

For years, I've tried to make sense of your behavior.

When you told me you loved me but would never speak my name out loud, I told you I could live with the silence. When you told me you would fuck me but would never take me home, I told you I would be your rest stop lover. When you called me a moral pervert on the floor of the Senate but then whispered your apologies sweetly in my ear, I told you to use me as your scapegoat. But when you gestured to shake my hand and spit on me instead, I told you I was the rage of all queers condensed to the point of explosion.

Huey P. Newton said "even a homosexual can be a revolutionary" and I'm finding my revolution. I've been awakening with ideas and with energy, I'm replacing the old stories with new ones. How it began, I don't really know. Where once there was frustration, alienation and cynicism, there are new characteristics in me.

I am in a flow of love and I am showing it.

There is nothing easier than to burn with enthusiasm for some issue and to be ready to fight for it, when the very same idea has inflamed hundreds of thousands of others. There is even something suspect, something actively repulsive, in denying ecstasy, in denying that which directs the outbursts of the heart.

You may be holing yourself up inside those layers of people, but I know that the ears are the only orifice that can't be closed. I am an army of lovers, my sweet, and I want you to hear me very clearly.

I've found my voice and with it I scream, I love you.

I love you because when I say I do, you blush and bury your face in your clothes. I love you because when I throw you a kiss your body shakes, quivers and writhes in response. I love you because I know my love causes your heart to skip a beat and sends shivers up your spine.

I love you. It may be shocking to you but I do and I will shout it as loud as I can manage. I love you and will do so until it hurts you or me or both.

After all, my love, we're all queer.

And if you find in what I am saying something of which you feel unjustly accused, remember that one should be thankful that there is any fault of which one can be unjustly accused.

What a pleasure to feel indignant!

This is a beautiful revolution!

I demand, my love,

1. the right to be gay anytime, anyplace.

2. the right to free physiological change and modification of sex upon demand.

3. The right of free dress and adornment.

9. That straight thinking views of things in terms of order and comparison be resisted. A is not before B, B is not after A, 1 is not below 2 and 2 is not below 3.

15. That we stop making promises about the future, which we have no right to make and which prevent us from, or make us feel guilty about, growing and changing.

So much has happened my love and we are just at the beginning. We will evolve as we get ourselves together and we are only at the beginning.

We'll be gay until everyone has forgotten and then we'll be gay again.



















IN CONVERSATION WITH PAULINE BOUDRY & RENATE LORENZ

ANDREA GEYER AND SHARON HAYES: Both of your work spans across writing, music, organizing discussions, conferences, exhibitions, and film screenings, making films, videos and installations. Can you talk a little bit about your diverse methods of working and what relates them for you? Also we are interested in talking about the role that collaboration plays within your work, particularly because you two so often set people in dialogue inside your work itself.

RENATE LORENZ: Recently, on the one hand, I observed that queer-artistic practices have increasingly been producing images that undermine common categories of embodiment or even refuse to show bodies at all. My impression is that these visualisation strategies undertake new efforts to block themselves off from processes of normalization and integration. On the other hand, in my artwork together with Pauline, I was working on the *N.O.Body* project that started with the use of photography by the German sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld. We especially focused on one single image that Hirschfeld presents as an example of a woman with not only a beard but also with exceptionally long hair. While Hirschfeld showed this image in the beginning 1930s as a document of his theory of gender deviance in a medical context, we learned that it was first produced about forty years before in the context of the U.S. Freak Shows, making deliberate use of staging techniques and of aesthetic means such as light, props, costuming, contrast and exaggeration.

From those two starting points I developed my interest in the figure of the freak, which gave the name to the Freaky Queer Art Conference that took place in Berlin August 28-30, 2009 (www.freaktheory.de). Without knowing exactly what a “freak” (or freaky art or a freak theory) may become, it is not meant to be a new devalued or chic identity (I don’t want to call the bearded lady a freak). Rather, maybe it marks the most possible distance from an identity. A Queer Freak may be useful as an intersectional figure that is able to represent all kinds of differences without producing a category. Freak figures also would not allow any definition of a norm from which they deviate (such as a visual deviation from the norm of femininity or masculinity). A freak image may, as the above-mentioned examples of queer art show, visualize embodiments that cannot be described in gender or ethnic categories. Freaks may be shown as dysfunctional or incompatible with social and with neoliberal economic requirements. Instead, they may have skills that are somehow strange and do not always get recognition but still have a certain value and may pay.

The second issue that interested me for the conference was the question of Queer Exotics, that is, why imagery of the exotic and the Oriental is often used in queer art. I was asking myself if this queer art is able to refer critically to a history of colonialism and to interfere in the meaning of non-Western fantasies for the construction of whiteness and the West.

From this description you may already get an idea of how my theoretical work, my artwork with Pauline and the public debates about art and theoretical ideas are interconnected. For *N.O.Body* we were invited by the sociologist Rainer Herrn, who wanted to publicize and broaden his research on Hirschfeld’s ambivalent archive and who organized an exhibition in Berlin called *Sex brennt*, mixing documents on Hirschfeld’s life and theories with invitations to produce new art works. Like colleagues such as Henrik Olesen and Ulrike Ottinger and in constant contact with Rainer Herrn, we started our research in the archive and on the history of freak shows. We worked, drawing on texts and theories, through the question of how we could possibly show the Hirschfeld photographs without reproducing a scene of staring and of knowledge that rearranges the normalcy of the observers in contrast to the deviation of the objects. Then we produced the film, which was further influenced by our great performer Werner Hirsch, who does a kind of queer conceptual drag performance and who was dealing with laughing scores at the time. Despite a very careful and exact planning of the film, the result was somewhat surprising for me, and what the film became as a final product instigated a lot of new questions and thoughts about laughing as a language, about possible interventions into the scene of knowledge production, and about queer temporalities. The film became one of the starting points for a public debate in the conference and a workshop, which also included the presentation of other artists’ work in a film program and a small exhibition. Since our work has a lot to do with creating alternative ways of sociality, of authorizing people to speak, of producing debate, of instigating non-hierarchical ways of seeing, it has always been important for me to create a “space” (by providing social situations such as a public event, a screening, an exhibition or a conference), a space for strangeness, maybe a small queer heterotopia, a space, where a certain syntax of acting and knowing may work

differently, where it may be possible to think through or try out some investments against a normalising life and debate. (There are quite a few others, of course, who do the same, which makes it really interesting.)

AG: I think you are addressing several intersections of thoughts and practice that for me, in part, address in one way or another a moment of uncertainty, of surprise, of unsettlement: the terms “identity,” “freak,” “queer,” “exotic,” and then the action of laughter. But I understand this process you are describing in your work is not the uncertainty of “not knowing,” “of confusion,” but on the contrary one of method and concrete and stable action. I would suggest that collaboration also fits in this (discursive) working method in which meaning and knowledge are built, located in and tied to a continuous process of active engagement, that aligns itself not with the need of identification but with a recognition of difference. Maybe I would call this process a building of alliances across and with people and knowledge, rather than an accumulation of knowledge as matter.



Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz, *Normal Work*, 2007, video stills. Top and bottom: performer Werner Hirsch.

In my work *Spiral Lands*, I have worked within a similar methodology, that partly assumes an active position of not knowing. This not knowing is not to be overcome but is accepted as part of knowing and learning. It is not a defensive withdrawal but a respectful active engagement with others and other knowledges that is not interested in mastering but in a growth based on the dialogue across difference. You describe the laughter in your last work as a “possible intervention into the scene of knowledge production.” It reminds me of a moment when I visited the Hopi Village Old Oraibi, I was asked to come inside by an old woman. Inside her home was her husband sitting in the kitchen. She asked me what I was doing in Old Oraibi. I answered that I was here to try to understand the Hopi/ Navajo Land Conflict better because I was making a work about land and identity in the United States. This conflict was created through aggressive reservation/land politics by the Bureau of Indian Affairs involving outside interests in natural resources. She asked from where I had learned about this conflict so far. And I said: I read a book about it. She looked at her husband and both of them fell into a loud and long laughter. They did not laugh about me, but about the implication of my statement, that I could know anything about this situation by reading a book. It was such a humbling and interesting moment for me, in which the laughter described better than any words could have the complicated situation we were in, that they were in, in relation to me and this conflict, that I was in, and of course over all the undeniable, irreversible effects of the colonization of the North American continent and the role that scholarship (and artists like me) played in it. We all were in this situation together, entirely a part of it. Their laughter acknowledged

that without being determined by this forceful frame. It acknowledged the complex uncertainty created through it. I followed their invitation of laughter and laughed with them and then together we proceeded to have a conversation about the so-called conflict.

In my own work I have been very interested in trying to understand this potential of creating such “uncertain” spaces through my work in which I (or viewers) can wander into spaces that are and by their complex nature have to be uncertain. These are spaces that are often convoluted with meaning, history, politics, and emotions, and therefore are often associated with a certain level of

discomfort. To create a public and therefore an always already collective space in which these issues can be engaged.

The position of an “I” within that space engages in relation to another. It does not exist independent of that other “I,” yet it does not automatically merge into a “we,” it stays singular in its experience but this experience is always connected to and implied by others. What we feel and experience, what we speak and hear is connected to specific histories, social, cultural, political conditions that exist within us, that formed us as the “I” in which we act in the present moment. For me collaboration always automatically calls these conditions out in the process of making but also the process of viewing.



PAULINE BOUDRY: Yes, but I think the relation to a “we,” especially for queers, has always also been something which places the “I” in the realm of social norms and which produces vulnerability to violence, devaluations, threats, needs, and desires. So I think that a public space is not always already supportive and collective but something that has to be continuously created. I find it interesting to think about my work with Renate as something which may try to create a collaborative space that could be called “transtemporal,” a space which refers back to historic moments that may not create a progressive narration of history but rather an anachronistic narration or “fiction” of ways to refuse normalisation, of alternative economies and sexualities—a collaboration with friends from the nineteenth century.



In *Normal Work* for instance, we restaged four photographs produced by the Victorian maid Hannah Cullwick in 1860 with the performer Werner Hirsch. These four photographs show Hannah Cullwick crossing the main social positions of her time—in gender “drag” as a gentleman, in class “drag” as a lady, and in ethnic “drag” as a slave. Hannah Cullwick stayed all her life in the lowest social position as a maid, which she was very proud of. At the same time she had a S&M relationship with a bourgeois man. Our perspective is that the photographs allowed her to negotiate labor and sexuality and at the same time to become an expert in everyday power relations. Her photographs also seem to make the process visible, how it becomes “natural”

Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz, *Salomania*, 2009, video stills. Top: performer Wu Ingrid Tsang. Bottom: performers Wu Ingrid Tsang, Yvonne Rainer.

for certain subjects to be attributed to certain social positions. The re-enactment of Werner Hirsch shows all the work required to take these poses, to be able to embody and cross these social positions. In the installation we have on the one hand the original pictures of 1860 and the contemporary “re-enactment” in relation to each other. The “uncertain space” would be this gap between the two temporalities, what it produces for the spectator who has to reconstruct relationships between the two moments.

In *N.O.Body*, as Renate explained, we worked with one photograph of the bearded lady Annie Jones, who Werner Hirsch not only re-enacts but from which position he/she develops a performance of laughter, enabling our bearded lady/Werner Hirsch to look through the archive of Magnus Hirschfeld once again, not from the voyeuristic perspective of an audience staring at a freak show, nor with the objectifying perspective of doctors looking at research material, but from a very unstable, uncertain, partly complicit and multiple perspective that doesn’t erase previous ways of looking. In our recent work on the figure of Salomé, we worked with three different moments: Oscar Wilde’s play (1880), the performances of numerous women of Salomé’s “Dance of the Seven Veils” at the beginning of the twentieth century, among others Alla Nazimova in the film

Salomé (1923), where she acts and dances Salomé. This film was a reference for Yvonne Rainer to create in 1972 “Valda’s Solo.” Why were so many subjects, who were themselves marginalized by the society of the turn of the 20th century by reason of their gender, sexuality or ethnic origin, interested in this figure, identified with her, performing her, and at the same time subversively transforming her exotic and transgender character? Showing the original film, we try to touch these questions with Wu Ingrid Tsang and Yvonne Rainer, who re-enact the dances, and also discuss them.

So, in those three installations, we use a kind of “transtemporal” or “anachronistic” method. We start from some historical material that is not very well known, then we excavate, doing some kind of archaeology of queer subjectivities and embodiments. Because of the different contexts, we underline the impossibility to understand them through the same categories we are familiar with today (queerness, ethnicity, subculture, transsexuality, drag performance, etc.). In showing the original material juxtaposed with a performed re-enactment, we try to rework histories that are missing, re-telling them, and re-imagining them from a position that is, as you described, uncertain and also uncomfortable.

SH: Ah! The threads of this discussion are quite provocative and intersect with many questions I have been grappling with recently in my work. On one hand, I am struck by the fact that, yes, many of the terms that have come up thus far—queer, exotic, freak—are intensely unstable, by which I mean that they are actively deployed rather than just written, spoken or used. They are and have been deployed by and from invested ideological and economic positions. They are and have been historically deployed, as Pauline points out, to describe difference but also to assert a/the norm. As you three have already marked in different ways, our deployment of them is therefore in debate, in dialogue, in affiliation or in resistance to these other deployments.

Our discussion brings me to a photograph that I used in relation to my recent work *Revolutionary Love: I am Your Worst Fear, I am Your Best Fantasy*. It’s a photograph taken by a woman named Diana Davies at the 1970 Christopher Street Liberation Day Parade in New York City. The photograph is of a woman named Donna Gottschalk wearing a protest sign with the words: “I am Your Worst Fear. I am Your Best Fantasy.” The slogan and the sign came out of the very short-lived moment of Gay Liberation. The two women who made the sign, Gottschalk and Michela Griffo, were members of the Gay Liberation Front, a group that formed in response to the Stonewall uprising but disbanded about three years later and was replaced by increasingly less radical gay organizations. What I find so compelling about the slogan is the way in which it both announces and embraces the psychic and social conditions that attend a position of radical sexual or gender difference—excitement, fear, anxiety, threat, violent repression, etc. For me it calls to the homophobe who is always both desiring and deeply afraid.

The description you use, Renate, of a queer freak—“an intersectional figure that is able to represent all kinds of differences without producing a category”—seems to me to also be an accurate way to describe materially what radical sexual and/or gender difference produces socially and politically. To normative social and political structures, yes, radical sexual and/or gender difference represents exactly *all* forms of difference, threatens *all* forms of normativity and this threat can only be articulated as an undifferentiated terrifying otherness. As demonstrated in the violent, confrontational question: “What are you?”

The gay liberation movement in the United States in the early ’70s was willing to stand firmly in the space of that otherness and to affiliate itself with populations, activists and movements who were equally, though for different reasons, othered—Black Panthers, Vietnamese Liberation, etc. I wonder if they were willing to do this, in part, because there was an idea that this radical difference could/would lead to a revolution, to a wholesale change in the structure of the

white patriarchal heteronormative political system. I've read many accounts and talked to friends who were active in this period who often say, "We really thought we were changing the world." "We thought there would be a revolution." It's fascinating to me to think about the bodily experience of living through this kind of collective anticipation. It has always seemed to me, from the distance of time and history, that these activists must have been in a state of extreme attentiveness or extreme presence.

In the project *Revolutionary Love*, I was interested in staging an event that referenced those historic moments of gay liberation by inviting 75-100 people to be flamboyantly queer and collectively speak a love address that I had written that utilized desire and the expression of desire as an action, not only as a speech act. I staged these collective "love addresses": one at the DNC (Democratic National Convention) in Denver in August 2008 and the other at the RNC (Republican National Convention) in St. Paul a week later. I made a very conscious decision not to cast actors to do the speaking but to invite participants. I did this because I didn't want to make decisions as to how people filled up the call to be "flamboyantly queer" or how, even, people filled the call to be a group of flamboyant queers (or in GLF language, "an army of lovers"). What this also meant was that the event of the performance was both staged and just taking place. There was a script, and a site and an event that I, as an artist, had planned and constructed, but the participants and the unpredictable aspects of being in public space then filled in all the details of what that event would be, as if the event itself was happening on its own. The result was that the event, particularly as it was recorded on video, looks like something that is both actual and staged. And I am particularly interested in the way in which that tension between actual and staged reverberates against the construction and performance of queerness more generally. And the way in which it borrows from queer activist history and from other artists working from and with queer radical subject positions to make a proposal back to a current moment in queer activism about the strategic use of emotive and expressive positions that we often avoid politically: hysteria, abjection, the ridiculous, the pathetic, sadness, desperation, etc.

AG: "Belonging to / and outside of / a hidden / yet forceful / gesture of freedom / of speech / of love." This is a poetic text I wrote for a project called *Out of Sorts*, which consists of banners for public spaces that combine outline drawings of queer kisses with texts like these. Thinking of these works within public spaces, I was interested in the way in which they would read and be decoded by people, to whom they seem senseless, blending in with advertising, and to whom they would be legible and offer identification. Sharon's description of her work makes me think about what it takes and what it means to stage or anticipate collectivity (as opposed to creating a collective). Pauline describes the Salomé dance as something around which one might say collectivity is formed, a collectivity that exists, as you say, not in a space but across time. As such it offers a form of attachment to the symbolic or cultural meaning of the dance, to its beauty, wildness, otherness. The dance is a set of movements to relate to metaphorically and to identify with, for some physically, for others intellectually. Yet it does not offer an identity to take on. Similarly, Renate's "Freaky Conference," and Sharon's invitation for a group of flamboyant queers to participate in her performance, offer ideas or actions to engage with, identify with. Neither of these events offer or are interested in offering an identity as such. Even though all projects described are invested in collectivity. I would suggest that the notion of collectivity as something to aspire to, to engage as an idea, rather than to fulfill as an end, is the connection here. The staging of collectivity within these examples becomes a proposal for a transtemporal public (to use Pauline's word). Sharon describing the early moments of Gay Liberation makes me think that maybe what is the radical and interesting shift from then to now is that the anticipation of a revolution,



Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz, *N.O.Body*, 2008, video stills.
 Top and bottom: performer Werner Hirsch, video stills.

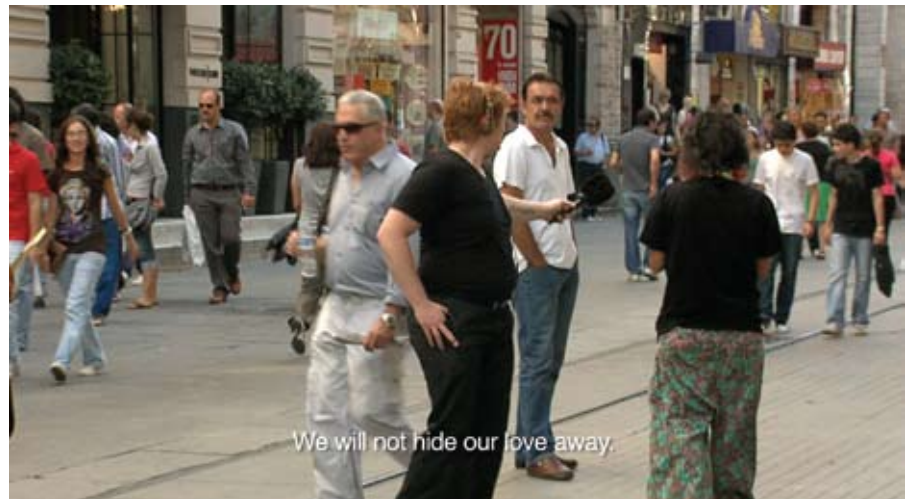
of the collective changing of the world, was then seen as a stepping point to higher ends. Whereas within the queer community today, the continuous anticipation and staging of collectivity, physically and metaphorically, can be seen as a political move and strategy that needs for its own end to remain an anticipation or a continuous staging to allow and be able to engage the complex shifts, changes and radical diversity that this community will always bring with it. It is interesting for me to think of our work as part of this process.

RL: I really like the slogan Sharon brought up, “I am Your Worst Fear. I am Your Best Fantasy.” It makes perfectly clear that the same images and the same representations of ways of living may function either as “worst fear” or as “best fantasy.” It also shows that there is a certain laborious courageousness at work to face the possibility that while one is longing for recognition and belonging, one’s own lifestyle and embodiment may be “the worst” for those who are in the position to confer recognition. But then the slogan is also giving testimony to the idea that there are exactly two parts (it does not allow for three or four possibilities); it deploys a “we” (allowing for best fantasies) and a “they” (producing worst fear). And I think that queer, postcolonial and feminist politics since the ’70s have been engaged deeply with the wish to destabilize either group. “We” has gone through a reconsideration, to find that there are different needs and wishes, that there are conflicts that may only allow for a very temporary “we,” and “they” has been the site of continuous thought that shows the unstableness of that category (the unstableness of heterosexuality, e.g.) Andrea is right

to highlight community as an unstable, non-identitarian formation, a series of strategies, a special way of deploying images, or a use of emotive and expressive positions—as Sharon puts it—such as hysteria, abjection, and the ridiculous, more than a group of people who are defined through a certain sameness. This reminds me of the term “outside belongings” that the queer theorist Elspeth Probyn brought up against the categories of identity and difference. There is a “longing to belong” she describes, “a desire without a fixed political ground but with immense political possibilities,” a desire that allows for drawing connections and cutting connections.¹ This desire enables political power although or exactly because it is formed on “a knowledge of the impossibility of ever really and truly belonging, along with the fear that the stability of belonging and the sanctity of belonging are forever past.” I like to think of that term “outside belongings” in connection to the works and collaborations we all described.

1. Elspeth Probyn, *Outside Belongings* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 8-9.



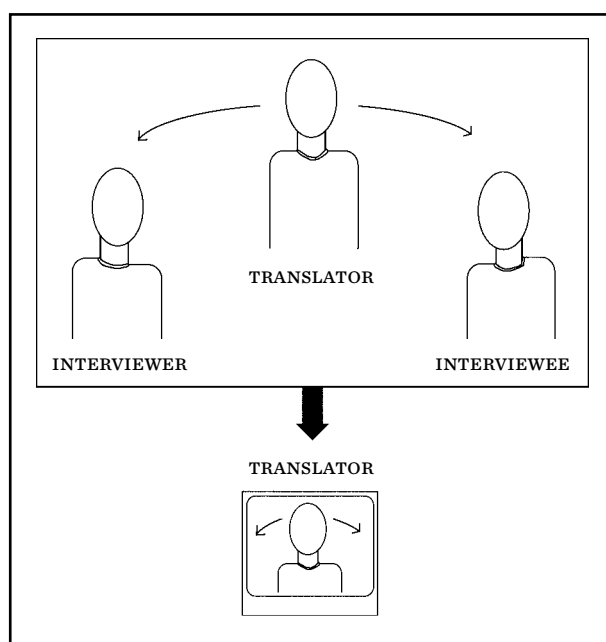








Cual es tu nombre? What is your name? Wie heisst Du? Cuantos años tienes? How old are you? Wie alt bist Du? Que estas haciendo en la Ciudad de México? What are you doing in New York City? Was machst Du in Wien/Berlin? Donde vives, porqué te mudaste aca, mudaste lejos de ahí, lejos de aquí o quedaste aquí? Where do you live? Why did you move there or remain there? Wo lebst Du? Warum bist Du dort hingezogen und dort geblieben? Que estas leyendo ahora? Donde consigues el material que lees? What do you read right now? Where do you get the material you read? Was liest Du gerade und woher bekommst Du das Material, das Du liest? Lees textos traducidos? Te encuentras limitada por la disponibilidad de libros traducidos? Do you read in translation? Do you find yourself limited through the availability of books in translation? Liest Du Übersetzungen? Fühlst Du Dich limitiert durch die Verfügbarkeit von Texten in deutscher Übersetzung? Como definirías el término mujer? How do you define the term woman? Wie definierst Du den Begriff Frau? Do you think of yourself as gendered? Nimmst Du Dich selbst durch Dein Geschlecht bestimmt war? Como definirías 'feminismo,' es activo? Y donde lo localizarías? What does the term 'feminism' mean to you? Is it active and where would you locate this feminism? Was bedeutet der Begriff 'Feminismus' für Dich? Ist er aktiv und wenn ja, wo würdest Du ihn verorten? Necesitan las mujeres ser defendidas? Do women need to be defended? Müssen Frauen verteidigt werden? Crees que hay algo como una propuesta de la mujer? Do you think there is something like a women's agenda? Gibt es so etwas wie eine Frauenagenda? Te sientes parte de una generación? Como se describe esta generación? Do you feel part of a generation? How is this generation described? Fühlst Du Dich Teil einer Generation? Wenn ja, wie würdest Du diese Generation beschreiben? Como te relacionas con la lucha de clases en el contexto de los derechos de la mujer en el lugar donde tu vives? How do you see the relationship between economics and/or social class in the struggle for women's rights? Wie würdest Du das Verhältniss von Ökonomie / sozialer Klasse und dem Kampfum die Rechte für Frauen beschreiben? Sientes la presencia de una comunidad de transgenero? Do you experience a presence of a transgendered community? Nimmst Du eine Gemeinschaft von transgender Menschen um Dich war? Sientes que tienes el poder para narrar tu propia identidad? Do you feel you have the power to narrate your own identity? Glaubst Du, dass Du die Macht hast Deine eigene Identität zu erzählen? Que incidente histórico puedes recordar que llevó a un cambio en las identidades de género y de conciencia en: Ciudad de México, New York, Berlin, Vienna en la historia reciente? What recent incident/s can you recall which lead to changes in your gender identity and consciousness? An welchen Vorfall erinnerst Du Dich, der in der jüngsten Vergangenheit eine Veränderung in Deiner Geschlechterwahrnehmung/ Identität ausgelöst hat? Formas parte de una organización social/política? Are you part of any social/political organization? Bist Du Teil einer politischen oder sozialen Organisation? La idea de privado y publico tiene alguna relevancia en el debate feminista? Does the idea of a private and public sphere still have relevance in feminist debates? Hat die Trennung des Privaten vom Öffentlichen immer noch eine Relevanz in der feministischen Debatte? Como te sientes con respecto a la elección de Vicenete Fox? How do you feel about your current government? Wie denkst Du über die aktuelle Regierung? Que piensas de la liga de futbol de mujeres? What do you think about the women's soccer league? Was hältst Du von Frauenfussball? Hay algo que deseas añadir? Is there anything else you would like to add? Möchtest Du noch etwas hinzufügen?



COMO DEFINE FEMINISMO PARA TI MISMA? / WHAT DOES THE TERM FEMINISM MEAN TO YOU? / WAS BEDEUTET DER BEGRIFF FEMINISMUS FÜR DICH?

[excerpts from transcripts]

— It's something . . . hmmm . . . ahh . . . I have to think about that a little longer. I would define it historically . . . I would define it historically, as a women's freedom movement, but not as an ideology.

— That is a really difficult question. It's hard to answer because I come from the area of politics. In the '70s when I studied this, we were all Marxists, then we all became feminists. Now when I look back upon that, the concepts and the words I used they somehow seem old-fashioned, still true in a sense, but old-fashioned to me today.

— I have some difficulties or bad experiences. For me feminism is like 40-year-old Marxist women sitting in a café. From my background it's a bad word.

— Okay, I think the only way that I can use this term is in the way Gayatri Spivak has defined it as a strategy, as a strategy of gender because I don't think that there's a political subject of gender and if there is I certainly don't feel that I am that or that I am invoked by that. Like thinking also about what Monique Wittig said about a lesbian and also that I think in the end nobody would really fit into that construct because there's always these transversal cuts of race. In the end, it would leave no one really inside of that category.

— Well, for me, feminism is the fight or the struggle that has been ignited or started by groups that have been subjugated by that very patriarchal society that I was talking about before. Feminism is the direct result of domination and it's a fight or a struggle that will last until there is no more inequality.

— A state of mind that encompasses the special social position of women in patriarchal society.

— Well, as a point of departure, I don't define myself as a feminist.





**COMO DEFINIRIAS PARA TI MISMA EL TERMINO MUJER? / HOW
WOULD YOU FOR YOURSELF DEFINE THE TERM WOMAN? / WIE
DEFINIERST DU DEN BEGRIFF FRAU?**

–I guess I think of it in terms of community.

–It’s difficult but a lot of it has to do with the body and being a woman is differentiating yourself from men. It’s on the level of the physical.

–She thinks it’s a really powerful . . . well “chignon” . . . you can’t really translate that. It’s like, “Yeah, very cool.” And to her it means power and it’s very unfortunate that many Mexican women don’t realize the power they have; they don’t . . . they don’t . . . utilize the power that they have.

–I can only think of words that come to mind . . . so I guess I would start with strong, courageous, sexy, soft.

–I’m a historian and I have difficulties with giving a definition like this.

–Well, my background is in the feminist tradition of difference, of gender difference or sexual difference. I’m very critical about post-feminist ideas of the legend of the category of woman. And for me it is a very important attitude that women do exist.

–As I have felt less and less comfortable identifying as a woman, my relationship to the word and the concept has gotten more complicated.

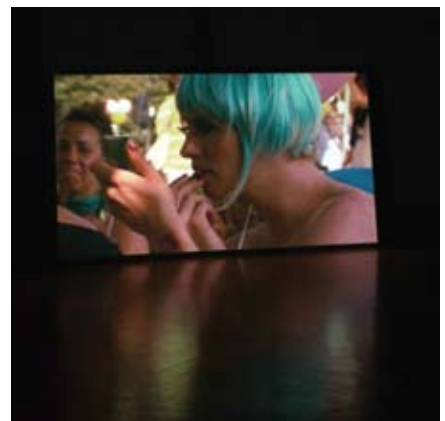
–A brief moment in my life.













INSTALLATION AT KUNSTMUSEUM ST.GALLEN

INDEX OF WORKS

PP. 8-11

ANDREA GEYER & SHARON HAYES

In Times Like These Only Criminals Remain Silent, 2005

5 double-sided posters, newsprint for distribution.

A five-page poster project that places line drawings of protest photographs in relation to groups of questions, to examine the way in which language marks individual and collective activities and subject positions.

PP. 8,9

1 poster, front and back

PP. 10, 11

1 poster, front and back

PP. 12-13

1 poster, front and back

PP. 14-19

SHARON HAYES

I March In The Parade Of Liberty But As Long As I Love You I'm Not Free, 2007/2008

sound installation with framed poster, 26.5" x 20", PA Speaker, 6 hours 7 minutes

For eight days between December 1, 2007 and January 12, 2008, Hayes walked from The New Museum to a different site of public address, stopping at street corners every few blocks and speaking a love address to an anonymous and unnamed lover. Part of a series of works dealing with love and politics, the piece maps personal desire on top of political desire to raise questions about war, public speech and the imbrication of promise and disappointment in collective political action.

P. 14

poster, The New Museum, New York, December 1, 2007-January 27, 2008

PP. 16-19

script

PP. 15, 16

documentation of performance
photos by Kristine Woods

P. 18

documentation of performance
photo by Andrea Geyer

P. 19

documentation of performance
photo by Kristine Woods

PP. 28-31

ANDREA GEYER

Reference Over Time, 2004

monitor, DVD player, headphones, old-fashioned kitchen table and chair, video, black-and-white, 19 minutes
actress: Jenny Bass

In the summer of 2004, a government leak revealed the proposed USA PATRIOT ACT 2 legislation (Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act), which suggested to give the U.S. government the power to de-nationalize unwanted citizens. This video responds to this proposition by re-visiting Bertolt Brecht's narrative writings in Exile on the denationalization procedures of the Hitler Regime. An actress emotionally struggles to rehearse fragments of texts, that reflect on a situation where the value and agency of a human being is inextricably tied to a passport.

PP. 28-31

video stills and excerpts from script

PP. 32-39

ANDREA GEYER

Criminal Case 40/61: Reverb, 2009

6-channel video installation, 6 monitors, 6 stools, HD video, color, sound, 52 minutes
performer: Wu Ingrid Tsang
director of photography: Ashley Hunt
assistant director of photography: Harold Batista
production assistants: Feliz Solomon and Harold Batista
assistant editor: Michael De Angelis, Harold Batista
sound editor: Lidia Tamplenizza
sound mixer: Alexa Zimmerman
performance support: Justin Perkins
crew: Jane Anderson, Lily Benson, Cynthia Chris, Cassandra Xin Guan
location: Industry City, Sunset Park, Brooklyn
research: The Jewish Museum, New York, www.nizkor.org

Based on edited transcripts of the 1961 Trial of Adolf Eichmann in Jerusalem and the writings of Hannah Arendt, an abstracted trial scene stages six characters: Accused, Defense, Judge, Prosecution, Reporter, Audience. Each character within the scene is embodied by the same performer. The reconstructed, abstracted scene examines complicated questions of truth and justice as they travel across time within an individual and become history. The installation places 6 monitors—one for each character—around the viewers, situating them within the scene.

PP. 33, 34, 37, 38

excerpts of script

P. 32

video still of the character "Accused"

P. 35

top: video still of the character "Defense"
bottom: video still of the character "Prosecutor"

P. 36

video still of the character "Reporter"

P. 39

top: video still of the character "Judge"
bottom: video still of the character "Audience"

PP. 48-57

SHARON HAYES

In the Near Future, 2005-2009

multiple slide projection installation

A performance-based slide installation in which Hayes stages anachronistic and speculative protest actions in an ongoing investigation into the figure of the protester, the speech act of the protest sign and the contemporary political construction of public space and public speech. Performed in six different iterations in New York, Vienna, Warsaw, London, Paris and Brussels, Hayes invited viewers to document each action. Images from thirteen actions are projected, each from its own slide projector, creating a field of protest that is not geographically or linguistically specific. In the *Near Future* was realized, in part, through Art in General's New Commissions program and presented at PERFORMA 05. The piece was further realized with the generous support of MUMOK, Vienna; Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw; Lisson Gallery, London; Objectif Exhibitions, Antwerp; Kunstmuseum St.Gallen; and Art Matters.

PP. 48-57

35mm slides
details

PP. 58-65

ANDREA GEYER

Spiral Lands, 2007-2009

The cycle of works called *Spiral Lands* investigates the role of photography, the researcher and the artist in the colonization and continuous appropriation of the North American continent, using the American Southwest (now Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, and Colorado) as an example. Not stopping with the past, but working up through the present moment, this work looks critically at records, documents, stories, drawings, and photography that construct and continuously reconstruct the complex history of North America and the identity of all its people. *Chapter 1* focuses on photography, *Chapter 2* on the role of the scholar, and *Chapter 3* is a collaboration with Simon J. Ortiz, that shows a dialogue created about these issues using the means of poetry, prose, and photography.

PP. 58, 59

Spiral Lands / Chapter 1, 2007

installation with 19 frames, with either 2 or 3 fiber-based photographs and 2 text cards, 70cm x 175cm or 70cm x 230cm, brochure with footnotes.

SL1#07: 2 photographs and 2 text cards

PP. 60-63

Spiral Lands / Chapter 2, 2008

installation with slide projection, 80 color and black-and-white slides, voiceover, brochure with footnotes, 50 minutes

28 of 80 slides and excerpts from script

PP. 64, 65

Spiral Lands / Chapter 3, 2009/ in progress

(with Simon J. Ortiz)

fiber-based photographs with corresponding text sandblasted in glass, 55cm x 69cm

photographs: Andrea Geyer, text: Simon J. Ortiz

PP. 74-81

SHARON HAYES

Revolutionary Love: I am Your Worst Fear, I am Your Best Fantasy, 2008

multichannel video and sound installation, HD video, color, sound, 17 minutes

performance, August 27, 2008, Democratic National Convention, Denver, CO

performance, September 1, 2008, Republican National Convention, St. Paul, MN

director of photography: Ashley Hunt

production manager: Wu Ingrid Tsang

Denver:

camerapeople: Holen Kahn, Chris Bravo

sound: Will Robinson

outreach coordinators: Jody Bouffard and Ana Maria Osburne with assistance from Carlos Perez

participants: Kathy Andrews, Jan Brennan, Trine Bumiller, Catherine Burns, Clark Clarcken, Carolyn Gentile, Dav Guidry, Elizabeth Hauptman, Alex Hernandez, Lisa Hochtritt, Lauren Larken, Andie Lyons, Erica McCollough, Brooke O'Harra, Courtney "Bastian" Oldham, Rev. Cathryn Paradise, Bruce Price, Jessie Rodriguez, Dylan Scholinski, Shelly Schroeder Jeanine Strasia, Rebecca Vaughan, Lori Wahl, Samuel Wells

Minneapolis/St. Paul:

camerapeople: Frédéric Moffet, Usry Alleyne

sound: Brent Naylor

outreach coordinators: Shannon Forney and Eric Jones

participants: Corrie Bastian, Jessica Becker, Nastalie Bogira, Daniel Byers, Sue Charles, Clark Clarcken, Chelsea Culp, David J. De Block, Lauren DeLand, Elizabeth A. DeVries, Shannon Forney, Michael David Franklin, Gabrielle Fulmer,

Bobbi Gass, Elizabeth Gwinn, Megan Holm, Haley Honeman, Andrea Jenkins, Elissa Johnson, Misty Johnson, Robin Johnson, Eric Jones, Tere Kupin-Escobar, Lauren Larken, Kelly Lewis, Jeffrey Lusiak, Sheena M. Meddaugh, Crystal Meisinger, Kelley Meister, Emily Mercer, Mindi Monroe, Sarah Peters, Pricilla G. Pope, Zannah Porter, Jack Randol, Scotty Reynolds, Esmé Rodríguez, Abby Seeskin, David Seitz, Margaret Helen Sergeant, Kelley Shipwreck, Becky Smith, Mary C. Stein, Joseph Sullivan, Marisa Vape, Colin Waitt, Vanessa Yancey.

Revolutionary Love was commissioned by Creative Time, New York, for *Democracy in America*, curated by Nato Thompson, in collaboration with Dialog City in Denver and UnConvention and the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis/ St. Paul.

This multichannel video and sound installation documents two large-scale public performances that Hayes staged at the Democratic and the Republican National Conventions in the late summer/early fall 2008. The performances, in which 50-85 people speak one text in unison, addresses the relationship between political desire and, what might be called personal or romantic desire. The group of speakers, drawn from the Denver and the Minneapolis/ St. Paul gay, lesbian and transgendered community, recite a 10-minute text three times in unison. Drawing both on the history of the Gay Liberation Movement, which forged a new and deep relationship between love and politics, and the contemporary political moment in which the war figured as a central element in the Presidential campaign, the performances challenged the simplistic opposition between love and war. The spectacle of the performances mimics the spectacle of the DNC and the RNC themselves framing the work as an address, a speaking back of a sort, to the big-P political sphere with its fraught relationship to gay, lesbian and transgendered communities and its history of strategically galvanizing homophobia for political gain.

PP. 75, 76, 79, 80
scripts

P. 74
top: documentation of performance, DNC, Denver, CO, photo by Andrew Clark Photography
bottom: documentation of performance, RNC, St. Paul, MN, photo by Gene Pittman for the Walker Art Center

P. 77
documentation of performance, RNC, St. Paul, MN, photo by Gene Pittman for the Walker Art Center

P. 78
top and bottom right: documentation of performance, RNC, St. Paul, MN, photo by Gene Pittman for the Walker Art Center
bottom left: documentation of performance, DNC, Denver, CO, photo by Andrew Clark Photography

P. 81
top left: documentation of performance, DNC, Denver, CO, photo by Andrew Clark Photography
top right and bottom: documentation of performance, RNC, St. Paul, MN, photo by Gene Pittman for the Walker Art Center

PP. 82-89

ANDREA GEYER

Intaglio (The Audrey Munson Project), 2008
12 frames, 11" x 14", digital archival print, sandblasted glass

The Audrey Munson project honors the life of one of New York City's most famous artist's models, whose likeness can be found throughout Manhattan publicly representing consummate concepts like freedom, purity, peace and truth. Munson also authored at least twenty articles about her life and work, exposing corrupt power structures within artist studios and asking for recognition of the models active contribution in the creating of masterpieces. Today mostly forgotten, the work *Intaglio* finds Audrey Munson's portrait in sculptures all around contemporary New York City and layers on top through engravings into glass historical photographs of women activists from her lifetime, picturing other women fighting like her for their rights. The Audrey Munson Project was partially realized with the generous support of Art in General's New Commissions Program and the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council's Space Project.

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Intaglio #01, digital reproduction

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Intaglio #12, #05, digital reproduction

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Intaglio #09, digital reproduction

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Intaglio #07, digital reproduction

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Intaglio #08, #11, digital reproductions

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Intaglio #06, digital reproduction

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Intaglio #02, digital reproduction

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Intaglio #10, digital reproduction

PP. 97-99

SHARON HAYES

I Didn't Know I Loved You, 2009

single-channel video installation, HD video, color, sound,

10 minutes

presented at the 11th Istanbul Biennial, 2009

participants: Becca Blackwell (sound recorder), Aybike Esin Tumluer (speaker), Gizem Aksu (speaker), Tuna Erdem (speaker), Sema Semih (speaker), Sanem İlce (speaker), Barış Ger (speaker), Seyhan Arman (speaker)

additional camera: Özcan Vardar

A site-specific collaborative performance and installation that examines the conditions under which collective political and social identifications are constructed. Performed on a densely populated walking street, İstiklal Caddesi, in Istanbul, the work is realized through the collaboration of seven participants from the city. Framed by a social context of enforced heteronormativity and political repression, these gay, lesbian and transgendered speakers provoke questions about emancipatory politics, public speech and the relationship between a global and a local sphere.

P. 97-99

video stills

PP. 100-105

ANDREA GEYER & SHARON HAYES

Cambio de Lugar_Change of Change_Ortswechsel, 2000

multichannel video installation, 53 videos, color, sound

languages: English, Spanish, German

Participants: Shana Agid, Jennifer Baumgardner, Jenny Bass, Birin Bayam-Tekeli, Janet Bellotto, Tanya Bednar, Monika Bernold, Sladja Blazan, Claire Bortfeldt, Pauline Boudry, Sabeth Buchmann, Nuria Castañeda, Minerva Cuevas, Paisley Dalton, Katrina Daschner, Jennie Dau, Monika de la Torre, Ricarda Denzer, Maria Diaz, Erika Doucette, Pamela Echeveria, Ewa Einhorn, Michéle Faguet, Carla Fernandez, Pasquale Ferralli, Grada Ferreira, Victoria Fox, Rike Frank, Jannik Franzen, Esther Gabara, Maria Garcia, Ali Gardoki de la Reguera, Geoffrey Garrison, Leah Gilliam, Julieta Gimenez Cacho G., Maya Goded, Maria-José Gorozo, Hedwig Gründler, Silvia Gruner, Frauke Gust, Sally Gutiérrez, Kathleen Hanna, Nina Hinke, Jen Hofer, Judith Hopf, Meike Jansen, Gabriela Jauregui, Mary Kelly, Johanna Kirsch, Elisa Klapheck, Birge Krondorfer, Carla LaGata, Mabel Larrechart, Peter Lasch, Susanne Leeb, Cristóbal Lehyt, Daniela Lessing, Ricky Lorenz, Luis, Martha Machner, Dorit Margreiter, Berit Martina, Ursula Mayer, Adriana Miranda, Richard Moszka, Ulrike Müller, Angel Nevarez, Paula Nieves, Iziar Okariz, Yoshua Okon, Aline

Oloff, Tamar Osorio, Taiyana Pimentel, Beatriz Preciado, Thomas Raab, Yvonne Rainer, Gabriela Rangel, Esther Regueira, Sascha Reichstein, Reto, Amy Richards, Jesusa Rodriguez, Kathy Rodriguez, Diana Robledo-Velázquez, Katya Sander, Peter Schelling, Gela Schwarz, Andrea Tinnes, Carlos Todelo, Vera Tollmann, Florian Urban, Pilar Villela, Florian Zeyfang

This project documents a set of interviews with people who identify as, have identified as, or are/have been identified at some point in their lives as a woman and who live in different contexts of language. The work utilizes a consistent set of questions addressing cultural feminisms, the historicization of the women's movement, gender categorizations, the role of education in the production of gender, the relation of queer theory to feminist theory, and the struggle for interpretative power within the contemporary political context. Each interview includes three parties: the interviewer, the interviewee and the translator. In the video documentation of each interview the only person imaged is the translator, reflecting a constant negotiation of terminology and interpretation, foregrounding the impact of translation on the production of knowledge and meaning.

PP. 100, 103, 104

video stills

P. 101

set of questions used in all interviews, schematic drawing of set up

PP. 102, 105

transcripts of English translations for selected interviews

ARTISTS' BIOGRAPHIES

SHARON HAYES' work moves between multiple media-video, performance, installation-in an ongoing investigation into the interrelation between history, politics and speech. She employs conceptual and methodological approaches borrowed from practices such as performance, theater, dance, anthropology and journalism. Her work has been shown at the New Museum for Contemporary Art, P.S. 1 Museum of Contemporary Art, Art In General, Artists Space, Parlour Projects, Andrew Kreps Gallery, Dance Theater Workshop, Performance Space 122, the Joseph Papp Public Theater, the WOW Cafe and the New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York and at the Room Gallery at UC Irvine, Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions, Track 16, Gallery 2102 and The Project in Los Angeles. In addition she has shown at the Tate Modern in London, Museum Moderner Kunst and the Generali Foundation in Vienna, the Deutsche Guggenheim in Berlin and in galleries, exhibition or performance spaces in California, Florida, Rhode Island, Texas, and Vermont, Bogotá, Berlin, Copenhagen, Malmö, Vienna, Vancouver, and Zagreb as well as in 45 lesbian living rooms across the United States. Hayes was an artist in the 11th Istanbul Biennale 2009, Yokohama Triennial 2008, Guangzhou Triennial 2008 and PERFORMA05. Hayes is an Assistant Professor at the Cooper Union. www.shaze.info

ANDREA GEYER uses both fiction and documentary strategies in her image and text based installations. She investigates historically evolved concepts such as national identity, gender and class in the context of the ongoing re-adjustment of cultural meanings and social memories within current politics. Her work has been shown in documenta 12, Kassel, at the 2009 Athens Biennale and the 2008 Turin Triennale, Italy; as well as the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Apex Art and Artists Space, New York; Witte de With, Amsterdam; Gasworks and the Serpentine Gallery, London; Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions; Hessel Museum, Bard College; Apex Art and Artists Space, New York; Generali Foundation, Vienna; Landings and the Henie Onstad Kunstsenter, Oslo; Photo-festival Knooke, Netherlands; Kunsthaus Baselland, Switzerland; IASPIS, Stockholm. In 2008 she had solo exhibitions at the Galerie Thomas Zander, Cologne and Galerie Hohenlohe, Vienna. She was a Vera List Center for Arts and Politics Fellow and has received grants from the New York Foundation of the Arts and Art Matters. She has published two books: *Audrey Munson: Queen of the Artists' Studios* (Art in General, New York, 2007) and *Spiral Lands / Chapter 1* (Koenig Books, London, 2008) She is an Assistant Professor of New Genre, at Parsons the New School for Design. www.andreageyer.info

In addition, **SHARON HAYES'** and **ANDREA GEYER'S** collaboration with Ashley Hunt, Katya Sander and David Thorne, *9 Scripts from a Nation at War*, showed in documenta 12 in Kassel and subsequently at the Tate Modern, London and REDCAT, Los Angeles.

TAISHA PAGGETT is a Los Angeles-based dance artist, teacher and co-founder of the dance journal *project itch*. Her work and collaborations for the stage, gallery, and public sphere have been presented and supported by several venues throughout California as well as in Chicago, New York City and Utrecht, The Netherlands. She maintains an ongoing collaborative project *On Movement, Thought and Politics* with visual artist Ashley Hunt and is a member of the audio action collective Ultra-red. She has worked extensively in the projects of Victoria Marks and David Rousseve/REALITY and holds an MFA from UCLA's Department of World Arts and Cultures. www.taishapaggett.net

YVONNE RAINER made a transition to filmmaking following a fifteen-year career as a choreographer/dancer (1960-1975). After making seven experimental feature films—*Lives of Performers* (1972), *Privilege* (1990), *MURDER and murder* (1996), among others—she returned to dance in 2000 via a commission from the Baryshnikov Dance Foundation for the White Oak Dance Project. Her most recent dances are *AG Indexical*, *With a Little Help from H.M.*, a re-vision of Balanchine's *Agon*, *RoS Indexical*, a re-vision of Nijinsky's *Rite of Spring*, and *Spiraling Down*, a meditation on soccer, aging, and war. Her recent dances have been performed in New York, Los Angeles, Vienna, Helsinki, Kassel, Berlin, and São Paulo. A memoir—*Feelings Are Facts: A Life*—was published by the MIT Press in 2006. Rainer is currently a Distinguished Professor of Studio Art at the University of California, Irvine.

SALLY GUTIÉRREZ is a visual artist working in the hybrid field between contemporary art and documentary. After her M.A. Art studies in Madrid, Gutiérrez participated in the '90s art movement in East Berlin. She completed a Masters in Media Studies at the New School University and took part in the Whitney Independent Study Program, New York. In 2001 she received a residency grant from the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, World Trade Center. Gutiérrez's work has been shown at international galleries, museums, TV channels and film festivals. She has taught at the New School, has given many talks/workshops and has been a jury member for several grants and festivals. Her latest film, *Topologo*, co-directed with her sister Gabriela, has received seven international awards. www.tapologofilm.com

ASHLEY HUNT is an artist, activist and writer who engages the ideas of social movements, modes of learning and public discourse. His works include *The Corrections Documentary Project*, the collaborative *9 Scripts from a Nation at War*, and *On Movement Thought and Politics*, an ongoing collaboration with dance artist Taisha Paggett. Recent exhibitions include the Nottingham Contemporary, the Gallery at REDCAT, the Tate Modern and the 3rd Bucharest Biennial. Recent publications include *Printed Project 12* (2009), *Radical History Review* (2008), *Journal of Aesthetics and Protest* (2008 and 2007), *the Art Journal* (2007), *An Atlas of Radical Cartography* (2007) and *Rethinking Marxism* (2006). www.ashleyhuntwork.net / www.correctionsproject.com

MARY KELLY has contributed extensively to the discourse of feminism and postmodernism through her large-scale narrative installations and theoretical writings. Recent exhibitions include documenta 12, Kassel, *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, 2007, the 2004 Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, and the 2008 Biennale of Sydney. She is the author of *Post-Partum Document* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1983) and *Imaging Desire*, (The MIT Press, Cambridge, 1996). Publications on her work include *Mary Kelly* (Phaidon Press, London, 1997) and *Rereading Post-Partum Document*, (Generali Foundation, Vienna, 1999). She is Professor of Art at the University of California, Los Angeles.

WU INGRID TSANG lives and works in Los Angeles. He engages the voice as a physical medium and metaphor. He co-organizes the club Wildness and the project space IMPRENTA, and is studying bel canto with opera singer Juliana Snapper. Group Exhibitions: La Mama Gallery, New York; Montehermoso Cultural Center, Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain; Städtische Galerie Kunsthaus, Dresden; Vera List Center for Art and Politics, New York; Sala de Art Publico Siqueiros, Mexico City. Screenings: Oberhausen, Germany; documenta 12, Kassel, Germany; Tabor Film Festival, Zagorje, Croatia; Impakt Film Festival, Netherlands; Liverpool Biennial, Liverpool; Participant Inc., New York. Performances: REDCAT, Los Angeles; Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst, Berlin; Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions; Espai d'Art Contemporani, Castellon, Spain; The

Kitchen, La Mama, Art In General, New York. www.ingridtsang.com

PAULINE BOUDRY is working as an artist and a musician. As an artist she works with film, video and installation. With her band *Rhythm King and her Friends* she intensively toured and produced several records.

RENATE LORENZ is working as an artist, curator and academic author. She teaches art and queer-/gender-theory. She recently curated the exhibition *Normal Love* (Berlin 2007, catalog b_books Berlin, www.normallove.de) and the conference/exhibition/workshop *Freaky – queer art conference* (Berlin 2009, www.freaktheory.de).

PAULINE BOUDRY and **RENATE LORENZ** live in Berlin and collaborate since 1998. Their recent works draw on archives of historical (portrait) photography and historical films. Their focus is the history of sex and gender discourses and practices, as well as the meaning of “visibility” since early modernity. The works reflect the nearly simultaneous invention of sexuality, sexual perversions, and photography as well as their relation to the colonial economy of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In 2007 they produced the 16mm film *Normal Work*, based on the historic material of the victorian ‘maid of all work’ Hannah Cullwick (performer: Werner Hirsch; Catalog b_books Berlin, 2008). In 2008, they produced *N.O.Body*, a 16mm film installation based on the use of photography by the early German sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld. The film reenacts a photograph of the bearded lady Annie Jones, an image that crossed two different discourses of differences, being produced in the context of the US Freak-Shows of the late nineteenth century and re-published in the 1930’s in Hirschfeld’s book on gender deviance. The film and installation *Salomania* is Pauline Boudry’s/Renate Lorenz’ newest collaboration, including a film, sculptures and photographic documentation. It is based on the silent Hollywood-movie *Salomé* (performers: Yvonne Rainer and Wu Ingrid Tsang). www.boudry-lorenz.de

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ANDREA GEYER & SHARON HAYES

ANDREA GEYER / SHARON HAYES

KUNSTMUSEUM ST.GALLEN
September 19 – November 22, 2009

GÖTEBORGS KONSTHALL
January – April, 2010

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