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EXPANDED CHOREOGRAPHY: Shifting the agency of movement in The Artificial Nature Project and 69 positions

Mette, Ingvartsen

2016

Link to publication

Citation for published version (APA):
Mette, I. (2016). *EXPANDED CHOREOGRAPHY: Shifting the agency of movement in The Artificial Nature Project and 69 positions*.

Total number of authors:
1

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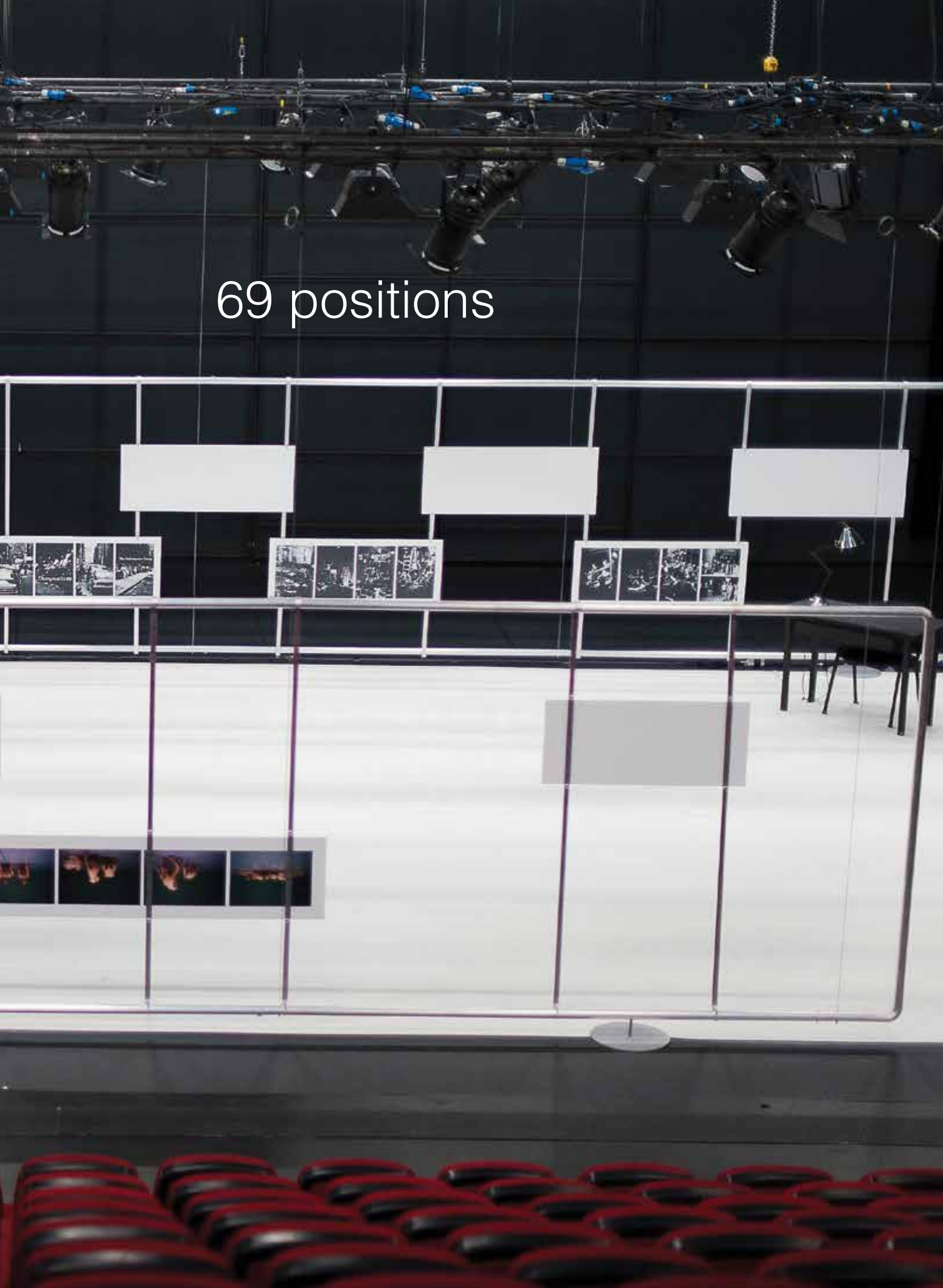
69 positions

Mette Ingvartsen


69 positions

This book is part of Mette Ingvartsen's dissertation *Expanded Choreography: Shifting the agency of movement in The Artificial Nature Series and 69 positions.* The dissertation has been carried out and supervised within the graduate program in choreography at Stockholm University of the Arts and DOCH School of Dance and Circus. It is presented at Lund University in the framework of the cooperation agreement between the Malmö Faculty of Fine and Performing Arts, Lund University, and Stockholm University of the Arts regarding doctoral education on the subject of choreography, in the context of Konstnärliga Forskarskolan.

ISBN: 978-91-7623-994-0
978-91-7623-995-7
Printed in Brussels, September 2016

STOCKHOLM UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS | STOCKHOLMS KONSTNÄRLIGA HÖGSKOLA

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Page 62, 64, 66 Engravings accompanying the 1797 Dutch editions of Marquis De Sade' *The Story of Justine* or *The Misfortunes of Virtue*

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Page 111, 112 © Marc Coudrais. (2015). Photograph taken in Montpellier during a workshop presentation for *7 Pleasures*

Acknowledgements

The title of this book and the performance it names indicates that the body is never one. I would like to thank all the artists, choreographers, theater makers, theorists and writers whose work have contributed to the becomings that my body has undergone in order to develop *69 positions*. More than anyone, I would like to thank Carolee Scheneeman. Without the letter she wrote to me in the very beginning of my investigations, the piece and thus this book would not have existed. My deepest appreciation also to Anna Haprin, Richard Schechner, Yayoi Kusama, Jack Smith, Paul B. Preciado, Dr. R. V. Krafft-Ebing for the direct sources of inspiration and reflection their work has provided me with.

I would like to thank my close collaborators who have helped and supported me in developing the concepts of *69 positions* as well as creating the right frame for its actualization: Peter Lenearts (sound), Nadja Räikkä (light), Virginie Mira (scenography), Kerstin Schroth (production) and Joachim Hupfer (technic), but also the performers who appear on the archival footage of my older pieces: Naiara Mendioroz Azkarate, Manon Santkin, Jefta van Dinther, Gabor Varga and Kajsa Sandström, and all the students from the BA dance education at DOCH School of Dance and Circus who performed in the test version of *to come (extended).*

A special thanks to Bojana Cvejić, my supervisor who has both been following the material developments of *69 postions* as well as the writing process of this book. Her precise, critical, challenging and supportive comments have helped me through a lot of difficult moments. Thanks also to Maria Lind, my secondary supervisor, as well as to Clémentine Deliss, Goran Sergej Pristaš and Vanessa Ohlraum who have given me valuable and constructive feedback by accepting to be my "opponents" and discussion partners in the finalizing phases of my PhD. Also a big thank you to Ula Sickle for commenting and proofreading and to Miriam Hempel for advising me on the graphic design.

I am grateful to Stockholm's University of the Arts, DOCH School of Dance and Circus, Lund University and Konstnärliga Forskarskolan for giving me the opportunity and support to write this book within my artistic doctoral studies. Thanks to: Efva Lilja, Petra Frank, Camilla Damkæjr, Lena Hammergren, Cecilia Roos, André Lepecki, Kristine Slettevold, Helena Nordenström, Kay Artle and Elisabet Moller. My PhD colleagues Malin Arnell, Rasmus Ölmer, Nils Claesson, Marie Fahlin, Anne Juren, Axel Nowitz, Kerstin Perski, Jonathan Priest, Carina Reich, Paz Rojo, Stacey Sacks, and Bogdan Szyber have engaged with and discussed my work in crucial moments. Ylva Gislén and my other colleagues from Konstnärliga Forskarskolan: Petra Bauer, Petra Fransson, Simon Goldin, Janna Holmstedt, Emma Kihl, Elke Marhöfer, Olivia Plender, Jacob Senneby and Lisa Tan have also been important sources of input, critique and exchange. I would also like to thank Mette Edvardsen and Sarah Vanhee for presenting their work and thoughts in relation to the concept of language choreography.

The performance in this book would not have been possible without the support of my collaboration partners and theaters: Guy Gypens and Katleen Langendonck at Kaaitheater, Brussels. Stefan Hilterhaus at PACT Zollverein, Essen. Serge Laurent at Les Spectacles Vivants – Centre Pompidou, Paris. François Le Pillouër and Natalie Solini at Théâtre National de Bretagne, Rennes. Agnes Quackels at Kunstencentrum BUDA, Kortrijk. Boris Charmatz and Sandra Neuveut at Musée de la Danse, Rennes and Sven Åge Birkeland at BIT Teatergarasjen, Bergen. I would like to specifically thank MDT, Danjel Andersson and his collaborators for having presented *69 positions* in two rounds, as well as for hosting several other artistic research activities including my final PhD defense, *The Double Lecture Series* and my 75% seminar.

Thanks also to Adrian Heathfield, Jonathan Borrows, Annie Dorsen and Leena Rouhiainen for accepting to be part of the examination committee.

Introduction – Performing Archives

When I started working on *69 positions*, the performance this volume is dedicated to, I found a book that became very important to me. It was a book about *Dionysus in 69,*[1] a performance made by Richard Schechner in 1968. It contained all kinds of information regarding the performance: the text of the play itself, but also descriptions of how the performance was made and what the author and the performers were thinking about while creating it. The book was full of pictures that, as I turned the pages, created an almost filmic effect of being led through the entire performance. I had the feeling that while I was reading I was witnessing a performance in itself, quite a different one than what took place in the garage on Wooster Street in New York, but nevertheless a performance that made objects vividly appear in front of my eyes.

What the book performed for me was a connection between the original play, the spirit of the 1960's when it was made, together with things that most probably were never visible in the actual performance itself, but only though the testimonies of those who performed it. While reading, I felt how my imagination was stimulated by what I found on the pages and I started speculating about what it must have felt like to be in the situations described. I found a section in the book that spoke about experimenting with nudity in a community theater setting. A project that was surely a performative one, but maybe more than that – a social and political one corresponding to questions surrounding the sexual liberation movement of the 1960's and its connection to the political climate of the time. And there was an itch. An itch regarding the failed project of the sexual liberation movement and how it might be relevant to understanding our society today. I decided to look deeper into books written about performances made in the 60's and 70's to see if I would find out more about the link between the spirit of the time, sexual liberation and its connection to the macro political climate of the anti-war, anti-nuclear and anti-capitalist movements. By that time I had already selected a number of works and artists I was interested in investigating and was happy to find that both Carolee Schneemann and Anna Halprin had published books[2] about their own performances, which I could now dive into. Through my reading I became increasingly interested in the concept of time spirit (Zeitgeist). How one could possibly show a performative understanding of the past; exposing the social and political conditions of a time gone by, while at the same time re-actualizing the questions relating to societal structures that were so strongly posed in the art practices of the 1960's.

As a choreographer and dancer, my approach was not to become an art historian, trying to truthfully expose and analyze what happened in the past. Instead, I wanted to figure out how the position of the body within our present society would differ from the positions of the past. I wanted to understand the condition of our contemporary, decentralized, multi-directional, hyper-connected, over-stimulated,

sensorially manipulated, affected and sexualized bodies. I was interested in creating a cross historical body; one that rips itself loose from history, derived from the past but mutating into the future. A body transforming to a point where it no longer represents history, but becomes a heterochronic phenomenon, sliding between different times, spaces, zones of expression and textualities. I thought in order to do that, I had to make my own body into a site of experimentation. I needed to find a way to make my body not one, but many; not only many genders, sexualities, politics and nudities but also many characters, figures, narratives, stories and fictions. I had to multiply the positions my own body could occupy, as well as search for ways of destabilizing the position of the spectator through actively including their bodies into my narrative fictions.

I was helped by the above-mentioned books. Through them, I started to understand how the performances of the 1960's were created. I found out that besides being symbols of the sexual liberation movement, the shows I was interested in were also emblems of participation and collectivity. While exploring these topics, I remember wondering what the contemporary equivalent of these problematics would be today. Making *69 positions* became a way of imagining their potential reactualization. I started thinking about how it could be possible to create a temporary community and a collective action by creating and experiencing a performative situation with a public today. After these historical investigations, my performance developed into a two hour long journey through performances that explore sexuality from different angles. It became a guided tour starting in the 1960's, passing through an archive of my own previous performances, and ending with a speculation on the status the sexual body has within our society today.

The spine of what you will find on the following pages is the script of *69 positions*, which also contains images of the performance. The photographs accompany the words by showing some of the actions and movements that were essential to how the text was performed live. On the archive pages inserted into the script you will find the documents that were exhibited on the walls in the performance space. Surrounding the script, I have written a number of *letters to the public* as a way to reflect upon the questions posed by the performance. In them I discuss the concept and thoughts behind the piece, specifically in relation to the audience. Language choreography, intimacy, privacy, pornography, affect and economy, self-experimentation and its relation to the public sphere are some of the topics I try to elaborate, together with the notion of Soft Choreography[3] that preceded my work on *69 positions*. The appendix of this book contains an interview I had with Bojana Cvejić after I had performed the piece only a few times. I have also included a running commentary lecture that discusses *7 Pleasures*, a choreography for a group of 12 performers that sprung out of *69 positions*, as well as an interview I had about that piece with Tom Engels.

Letter to the Public # 1:
Soft Choreography

Dear Public

In the very early stages of making *69 positions*, I wrote a text I called *Soft Choreography***,** relating to the politics of being together in and through theater. I called it "soft" because I did not want to say "social". But what I really meant was another kind of organization of performance than what I was used to. An organization that would not rely on a clear separation between me and you (the performer and the spectator), the stage and the auditorium, an encounter and a constructed event.

I compared it to a notion of hard choreography that to me at the time meant: a choreography written down to the smallest detail without much space for deviance. A performance that would not change when you would get up and leave, nor expand according to your desires. It would keep its autonomy and its objecthood and could even play without anyone watching it.

What I wanted to do with *69 positions* was something else. I wanted to create a choreography that could not exist without the public. A performance that would be defined by the moods, relations, desires and tensions within a specific group of people at a certain moment in time. I wanted to make something that would risk to not succeed; a fragile situation asking you to share the responsibility for it.

I'm not sure if this is actually what I made finally? What I created became a fixed script, a choreographic score and even strategies to save myself when it felt too tough. Nevertheless, I still think of my relationship to you as a defining factor for *69 positions*, connecting it deeply to this initial text.

As I was working on the piece, I realized that the softness I was interested in creating was not only something to apply to human physical movement, but also to the organization of space, the organization of you in the space and of our collective behavior. I observed from the try-outs I did, that my experience of soft space happened mostly when the environment was undivided, when the circulation in the room was open and when you were free to go where you wanted, not immobilized sitting on the floor. I became increasingly obsessed with the idea that the sensation in the space had to be transformable and that your bodies had to be part of constructing this transformation of sensation. It was important that the space would not have only one configuration, but many. And, that the 3 parts of the performance would each offer a completely different quality of being together. This meant working on enabling you to change your activities without necessarily noticing when you would pass from one mode of watching into another. I did this to make shifts in our relation possible; from you watching at a distance, to physically moving into proximity, to becoming one of the performers being described, to literally dancing, maybe finding your

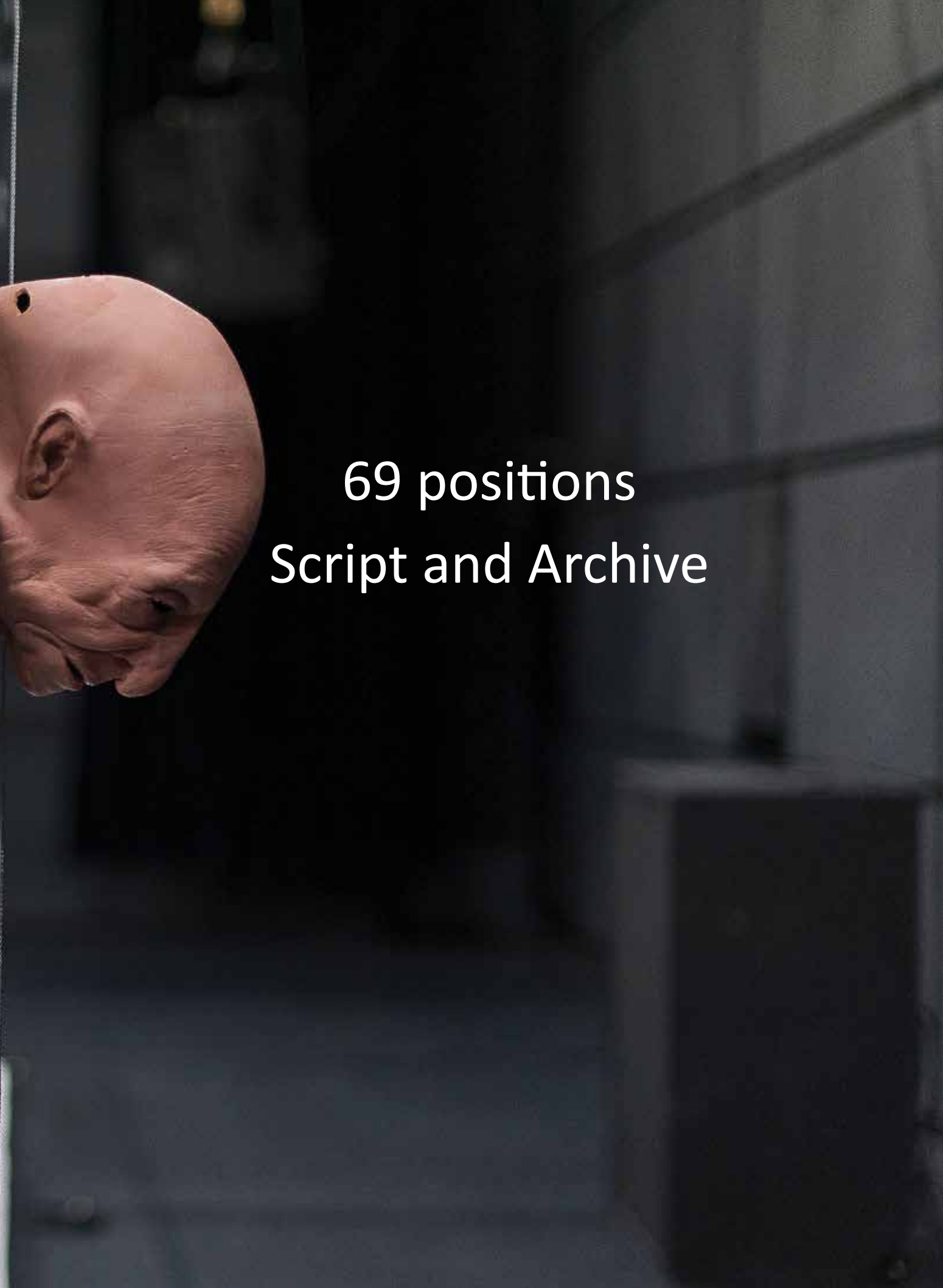
self in a sexual position with me or even performing an orgasm choir in front of the rest of the public. I hoped that when these different modes of spectating would start to intermingle, your mind could maybe grow soft as well. Like for instance when critical reflection dissolves into embodied description, when a text changes its meaning because of an action, when a thought becomes a sensorial movement or tonality, or when a tonality turns into a rhythm to allow the music to transform into a screamed protest.

Through how I was performing, I tried to find ways that would make you feel invited to explore questions precipitated by naked, sexual, intimate and also political bodies but without this creating a confrontational situation (which so often has been the case in the history of the body and performance art). I rather wanted to create an environment where intimate experiences could be activated in a public space without it feeling like an insult or an aggression.

While writing this original text on *Soft Choreography* I thought about the history of performance that this poetics could be connected to. “Interactive”, “collaborative”, “relational”, “democratic” and “participatory”[4] were some of the words I found to describe the types of theater that attracted me.

What I started to search for in making a performance, was an actuating quality; something that would set bodies and things in motion to instigate and motivate action. And even though action and the idea of a collective body, mobilization and resistance today tend to feel like unreachable utopias from the past, it was, nevertheless, what motivated me to work. Too much hardness in the field of choreography, and also within my own work, made it urgent to think about how the theatre could once again take up its social function and be a place to come together to share the responsibility for a performative situation.

In this way *69 positions* came into being.
Softly choreographed,
Mette



69 positions
Script and Archive

Hello and welcome to *69 positions*, a guided tour through sexual performances. All the videos, images and texts that we are going to look at for the next two hours have been selected according to how they expose an explicit relationship between sexuality and the public sphere. That is how they reveal that sexuality is not only something personal, intimate and private that we should keep behind closed doors, but rather something that participates in how our society is built and the way politics function.

The tour starts in the sexual utopia of the sixties and ends somewhere out in the future. It's divided into three different sections, and throughout the tour I would like to invite you to have a look at what is on the walls.

The first document I would like to present to you is over here. It's an email correspondence that I had with Carolee Schneeman about two years ago. Carolee Schneeman is an American visual artist who is still very active today, and who already in the 60's and 70's became famous for her films and performances using nudity and explicit sexual representations. On the 25th of January 2013, I wrote her this mail to ask if she would be interested in reconstructing one of her old performances called *Meat Joy*, which she made in 1964. My idea was not only to reconstruct this piece for the fifty-year anniversary of the performance, but also to remake it with the original cast of performers. I was interested in how their old and aging bodies would transform the joyful choreography and what it would mean for us to see this transformation today.

Fra: Mette Ingvartsen <mette@aisikl.net>
Emne: meatjoy
Dato: 25. jan. 2013 19.38.43 CET
Til: cschneemann@hvc.rr.com

Dear Carolee Schneemann

23rd of January 2013, Rennes

On may 29th, 2014 it will have been exactly 50 years since you premiered your performance "Meatjoy" in Paris at the festival of free expression. On this occasion I would like to ask and propose you something. I hope this proposition finds you well.

I would like in collaboration with you and the performers you were working with in 1964, to make a reconstruction of "Meatjoy". The reasons for this reconstruction are many and I will try to explain some of them in this letter. But, first and foremost this proposition comes from a deep interests and fascination with the images and testimonies I have been able to find in relation to your performance.

My Name is Mette Ingvartsen and I am a danish dancer and choreographer working in most of Europe since 10 years. Through my studies at P.A.R.T.S in Brussels I encountered your work in my performance history classes and felt already then a deep connection and fascination with your performances. At that point I had a great interests in sexuality, pleasure production and the materiality of the body, however working as if history did not exist. I wanted to make strong statements in relation to gender and worked a lot with nudity and extreme expressions. Little by little these themes went away in my work. After having been occupied in a quite different area of interest, making choreography for non-human performers, immaterial flows, affects and sensations, those other topics have started to resurface and I can no longer go on without taking them into consideration. I find myself ready to dive back into the mysteries of the unspoken, or maybe largely too outspoken topics relating to sexualities today. I see a need in theater as well as in society to reconsider structures of relations, sexual encounters, sexual rights (gay marriage debate), but also simply the physical materiality of bodies today.

As questions of sexual liberation and freedom seem to have been strong motivational forces in the 60's in general, I would like to understand better what precisely was going on in this period and also what the exact questions were within the performing arts scene. Today reconstructions and the interest in the past has become a trend in the european dance scene. And even though I have been very resistant and critical towards this trend, thinking that art is not there to conserve and repeat history but rather to reinvent and develop itself, I think that these specific questions deserve a reactualization.

The urgency of this appeared when I found myself performing in an exhibition, with only live performers and no actual art-objects, pretending to be one of the performers in "Meatjoy". I tried to describe the feeling of biting a dead chicken, or the sensation of having wet paint on my body. The audience around me obviously started asking questions and I began to invent whatever I could imagine. I got really curious about what you and the performers were experiencing while making this performance. I also got really curious about what redoing the performance with bodies that are no longer young, would create as a friction. This exhibition took place more than 2 years ago and ever since I continue to wonder what it would be like to redo "Meatjoy".

What I would like to do, through interviewing you and the other participants about the performance, is to figure out how we together can re-actualize the performance that was made 50 years ago. In that sense it is an homage to the original performance but also an interest in how looking at it again might allow us to think differently about the issues it addresses today. I have a feeling that this particular performance would transform completely by being redone with older bodies. The relationship to the dead matters (chicken, fish, paint, plastic) would be entirely changed and the meaning altered. I do not know exactly what this new meaning would be, but I think this is why it is worthwhile doing.

I don't know if you have ever considered to reconstruct this performance? I neither know if you have any interests in going back to something that is so far away, nor if the performers would have any curiosity to feel their own bodies in this situation again after 50 years. What I know is that I would be extremely happy to start a dialog with you and to get to know more of how you think and feel about this performance today.

With joy

Mette Ingvartsen

After four days of waiting, she answered me with this:

Dear Mette,

Thank you for your very thoughtful, engaging letter with it's unexpected proposal to consider representing *Meat Joy*. Unfortunately, or inevitably, most of my splendid participants are dead. Others are somewhat incapacitated, or they are completely overwhelmed with their own work, or have disappeared into the desert or mountains and I cannot locate them.

Insofar as I was able to google your work, I am impressed by the way you have extended principles of movement in an outreach to very varied participants. The dilemma with using obviously older performers is an interesting one. Somehow it is never made culturally very clear that by the time you're in your sixties or seventies, people have lost flexibility, mobility, and the sort of ecstatic sensuality that is best communicated by young bodies which are obviously flexible and mobile.

Older/aged performers physically embody distractions, which have not been codified within western culture. Obviously, men typically lose their hair, usually women's hair will thin and if you look closely you will see there is often almost a bald spot at the top of their heads. Women's breasts have moved down towards their waists and are wrinkled; men's breasts usually acquire a layer of fat as does their stomach... that ripped statuesque torso has normally lost its definition. Female upper arms almost always have a flabby layer. Many men do as well. Viagra is so very popular because in order to still fuck with an adequate erection, most older men require it! If women in their sixties and seventies remain genitally viable-- desiring, lubricating, and muscular, the venus mound has nevertheless put on a layer of fat. The dilemma for older sexually active women is that unless they are in a dedicated marriage, it's very difficult to find an erotic partner.

The exquisite ballerina who is 80, the irrepressible mountain climber who is 90, the 65 year-old Hollywood star surrounded by lovers.....What do they represent? An exceptional displacement of reality, a fantasy of younger people who can never imagine they will become old, and the kind of physical adventure that process will entail. Popular culture only introduces subjects of aging or old age as anomalous, sorrowful, or ridiculously optimistic.

Mette, do not try to recreate *Meat Joy*!

My thoughts for your sensuous outreach of work would be to explore the possibility of choreographing with a retirement community, an old people's home. The cultural surround intensifying my sensuous rituals were motivated in contrast to the endless brutalities of the Vietnam War... my propositions of ecstatic connection were in reaction to a government shaped by assassinations and militaristic aggressions. The inherited cliche of "sex, love, and rock and roll" has survived the dark undertow, the anguish and anxiety to which a younger culture defined its alternatives.

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We never wonder why old people walk around in slippers and flat shoes. They are content to miss our raves, dancing parties, pot smoking celebrations... Why do we conventionally see them curled up with their books and a dog or cat?

The exquisite ballerina who is 80, the irrepressible mountain climber who is 90, the 65 year-old Hollywood star surrounded by lovers..... What do they represent? An exceptional displacement of reality, a fantasy of younger people who can never imagine they will become old, and the kind of physical adventure that process will entail. Popular culture only introduces subjects of aging or old age as anomalous, sorrowful, or ridiculously optimistic.

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I am not a fan of "redo" or "reconstruction", which has become such a current tradition. Radicalize your own images, sensations, and beware of overintellectualization.... a kind of entrapment of intuition, uncertainty, and creative will.

Well, I had no idea I would have such a full response to your lovely proposal; your thoughts on *Meat Joy* are very precious to me, I'm thrilled that the choreography of 1964 is still within your performing considerations. Thank you so much for that. As for the present tense, I'm overwhelmed with new work... I like to look back, but I'm not going there. What do you think?

With all best wishes,

Carolee

I am not a fan of “redo” or “reconstruction”, which has become such a current tradition. Radicalize your own images, sensations, and beware of overintellectualization.... a kind of entrapment of intuition, uncertainty, and creative will.

Well, I had no idea I would have such a full response to your lovely proposal; your thoughts on *Meat Joy* are very precious to me, I’m thrilled that the choreography of 1964 is still within your performing considerations. Thank you so much for that. As for the present tense, I’m overwhelmed with new work... I like to look back, but I’m not going there. What do you think?

Over here there are four women lying on the floor. Their asses are almost touching while their legs are pointing up towards the sky. They are moving their legs in a delicate kicking action and they look as if they are enjoying it immensely. The image looks a bit like an erotic flower opening its petals in all directions. Now four men come and pull the women out of this first constellation. They are carrying the women on their backs, you have to imagine them bent forward. The women look strangely dead and at the same time in positions of total submission or devotion. This continues for a short moment before the men grab the women in a new position; they are now carrying the women in front of them and the women are playfully kicking their legs, until the men put them down in a circular configuration. *(I ask 4 women from the audience to place themselves closely together and I move them by grabbing them around their waists)*. The men are moving the women like this while the women are holding their hands up in the air, like branches swaying in the wind. Then, all eight of them fall to the floor.

This joyful sensation is very quickly replaced by a much more morbid image. The bodies are now lying completely immobile starring emptily into the void.

The women are wearing little bikinis with fur stitched on to them and the men are wearing black tight underwear. Now there is another woman, dressed completely differently entering the scene. She's wearing a black dress and a white apron and she walks around them carrying a tray in her hand. On the tray there are dead animals. There are fish, chickens that still have their feet and heads, and there are some sausages as well. When the woman starts throwing the dead animals onto the bodies of the performers, they react with almost spastic contractions. It is the encounter between the cold, slimy meat and their warm bodies that produces a very visceral reaction, provoking almost a state of shock. The discomfort only lasts a little moment and then the performers again seem to be enjoying themselves, smiling and taking a lot of pleasure in this encounter with the dead meat. The performers are rolling around while their movements are becoming more sexually connoted. A woman is being dragged across the floor holding two huge fish in her hands.

In the middle of the space another woman is putting a fish into her bra while down on the floor someone else is stuffing a chicken into his underwear. In the back corner over there, there is a guy who is holding a dead chicken in his arms, he is holding it as if it would be a little child, even a little dead child.

Fra: Mette Ingvartsen <mette@aisikl.net>
Emne: Vedr.: meatjoy
Dato: 4. feb. 2013 17.08.06 CET
Til: Carolee Schneemann <cschneemann@hvc.rr.com>

Dear Carolee

Thank you so much for your long and detailed letter.
I understand completely that you have no desires to go back to the past, and I agree with you that remakes and reconstructions are not the way to go forward.

They other day I read an article in the news paper. It was written by a 94 year-old man, who were in a similar way to you daring to look at the negative sides of aging. He said; too often going on retirement is idealized as a time where you again can find moments to read, spend time with your grandchildren, take care of the garden...the only problem is that your eyes will have become to bad to read anything at all, your grandchildren too big to want to hang out and your garden too low to be reached with an aching back...When families were still living together across generations, taking care of the old like we take care of our children, aging was quite a different thing.

I read this article right after having seen *Amour* by Haneke. The film shows the very end of life of a loving couple. It is a very beautiful and also very sad film about how difficult aging can be, how painful it is to see the person you love suffer, and somehow also about how society has only one way of imagining old people...in retirement homes. The idea of working with people in a retirement home, trying to re-inject sexuality and pleasure into the sphere where it no longer flourishes is interesting.

However I have to admit that when I wrote you I had quite something else in mind. After having seen you on youtube videos I was idealistically imagining you with a group of old but strong, inspired and desiring artists ready to redo anything. Obviously not a very realistic idea, but I would like to explain a little more where it came from.

I am currently preparing a new performance entitled *"Time for another sexual revolution"*. In my head this is an entirely new thing that has nothing to do with reconstructions or the past. However, in some strange way it is about a historical perspective, about trying to understand the social and political conditions that gave rise to the "make love, not war" or the students protests in the 60's. It is in the context of this research that I found *Meat Joy* so important to know more about. The few lines you mention in your letter, about it being a counter action to the vietnam brutalities, makes me even more convinced that there is something about the performance and also about you that I would love to find out more about.

I understand that going back and reconstructing is not the right way, but I wonder if there is another way that you and I could do something together.

What about making a film? A film where we speak about Meat joy, about it's social and political context, it's relevance today, possible traces it had or did not have on your work, about how you think of it today...I imagine it in your living room (can't help to think you live in the little house on the image you sent me?) It could be only a conversation, but it could also become some strange performative doing that we do together while we talk about it. In this manner it would be doing something new together. Like you say looking back but going forward.

Could you imagine spending a few days working together on something like this, if I would come to you to do it?
I know you are a very busy woman with many current projects, but I would simply love to do something with you even when it would be done in a few days only. Let me know what you think?

Only my very best
Mette

He is crouching down on the ground like this. Here is a couple rolling around on the floor in a big embrace. Between them is a chicken and the man is biting into the flesh of the chicken. You can almost feel the blood in your mouth and the taste of iron just from looking at this image. The other women in the room are now sitting on their knees and put their hair up, wrapping big pieces of plastic around their heads, creating these very decorative hats. There is also a big piece of plastic that is covering the entire floor. The woman with the white apron now comes back, this time with two buckets of paint. She gives the two buckets of paint to two of the men in the room and they start painting the women who at first are laughing ecstatically. To begin with, the men apply the paint very carefully, then they do it more vigorously. *(I apply imaginary paint onto one of the spectators and ask).* Is it ok that I am using you to demonstrate?

In this moment we sense that the women start to have had enough. It is all the time them being dragged from right to left, manipulated and carried around and they now take the buckets and throw the paint towards the men. *(I talk directly to one of the male spectators)*. Here you have to imagine that the paint is now running down your body, there is black and red paint that starts to cover the entire floor.

In the space you still have all the dead animals; the chickens, the fish and the sausages. You also have pieces of paper, ropes, the black and red paint and of course the 8 performers who are actively manipulating all these dead matters. The space starts to look more like a huge battlefield than a performance area. The women are lying on the floor, their bodies completely covered in sticky paint and the men are now dragging them towards the corner of the room. In the corner there's a lot of paper stacked up.

The paper looks a bit like a pile of trash or waste lying around. This situation evokes the kind of torturous punishments that were used in the middle ages to humiliate people by first dipping them in tar, then rolling them in feathers and forcing them to walk through the city. The performers are now in the corner, joyfully throwing the papers into the air. This is also what you see on these images over here.

The space has become very messy, and you can see the paper sticking to the bodies. There are some ropes here as well. This is in fact the score of the whole performance, which lasted about sixty to eighty minutes. The performance starts when the performers enter carrying a table. They sit down and start doing everyday actions, like drinking, smoking and someone is stitching the fur onto their costumes. On this picture you for instance see a couple undressing each other very slowly, using one hand only, making this everyday action into a choreographic proposal. It is only much later that the scenes with the dead animals, which I just described to you, appear. Nevertheless when people mention this performance they only mention this final sequence and I have been wondering why that is? It is surely connected to the spectacular and striking effect that the dead meat has, and to the fact that the title *Meat Joy* refers directly to it. But I think it might also have something to do with the fact that there is only one film easily available documenting this piece. It shows the entire piece compressed in 5 minutes, focusing primarily on the last scenes where the dead animals get introduced into the performance.

(I start the film[5] and let it play for a couple of minutes before continuing)

MEAT JOY

May 29 1964 Festival de La Libre Expression, Paris

June 8 1964 Dennison Hall, London

November 16 17 18 1964 Judson Church NY

Meat Joy developed from dream sensation images gathered in journals stretching back to 1960. By February '64 more elaborate drawings and notes accumulated as scraps of paper, on the wall over my bed, in tablets. I'd been concentrating on the possibility of capturing interactions between physical/metabolic changes, dream content, and my sensory orientation upon and after waking: an attempt to view paths between conscious and unconscious organization of image, pun, double-entendre, masking, and the release of random memory fragments (often well-defined sounds, instructions, light, textures, weather, places from the past, solutions to problems). I found the transition between dream and waking, envisioning and practical function, became so attenuated that it was often difficult to leave the loft for my job or errands. My body streamed with currents of imagery: the interior directives varied from furtive to persistent: either veiling or so intensely illuminating ordinary situations that I continually felt dissolved, exploded, permeated by objects, events, persons outside of the studio, the one place where my concentration could be complete.

The drawings of movement, and notations on relations of color, light, sound, language fragments, demanded organization, enaction, and that I be able to sustain the connection to this imagery for an extended time—through the search for space, performers, funds, during painstaking rehearsals, the complexities of production down to the smallest details—all to achieve a fluid, unpredictable performance.

Meat Joy has the character of an erotic rite: excessive, indulgent, a celebration of flesh as material: raw fish, chickens, sausages, wet paint, transparent plastic, rope, brushes, paper scrap. Its propulsion is toward the ecstatic—shifting and turning between tenderness, wildness, precision, abandon: qualities which could at any moment be sensual, comic, joyous, repellent. Physical equivalences are enacted as a psychic and imagistic stream in which the layered elements mesh and gain intensity by the energy complement of the audience. (They were seated on the floor as close to the performance area as possible, encircling, resonating.) Our proximity heightened the sense of communality, transgressing the polarity between performer and audience.

In precisely determined patterns, vertical, diagonal and horizontal shafts of movement and lighting cut through the overall circular structures of **Meat Joy**. The popular songs occurring throughout most sequences are "circular" in their thematic and rhythmic three-minute disc-spun durations, and they introduce a literal, istoric time—popular "ritual" sound centering the sensory flow. Tapes of Paris street sounds were superimposed: the cries and clamourings of Rue de Seine vendors selling fish, chickens, vegetables and flowers beneath my hotel window where I first composed the actual performance score. These shouts dominate a layering of traffic noise, and displace the songs' recognizable continuity, interfering with their associative range.

Certain parameters of the piece function consistently. Sequence, lights, sound, materials—these were planned and coordinated in rehearsal. Other components vary with each performance. Attitude, gesture, phrasing, duration, relationship between performers (and between performers and objects), became loosely structured in rehearsal and were expected to evolve. For instance, "The Paint Attack" was rehearsed as a **projective** exercise with brushes and dry sponges: the actual paint, fish, chickens, hot dogs introduced during performance came as a visceral shock.

Lighting is keyed to the larger rhythms of the work—sound and action—by washes and sudden concentrations of strong illumination on energy clusters. Here again, within certain determined bounds (I knew when I needed, for example, "a muddy light in a pool over there which then turns to diffuse gold" or in another place, "something blue and wet-looking with a blast of green") the lighting and sound technicians were free to improvise. They followed formal cues but had to be able to make choices relating to energy shifts of both performers and audience. Four black-outs were used to compact or shatter sequences, to insert a **blank** in which perception is halted and the imagery settles into the mind.

Harold Chapman

Seating audience, with Ben Vautier. Free Expression visual exhibit in background.

As the audience enters, the tape of "Notes as Prologue" begins: a collage of my voice reading the written notes formative to **Meat Joy** (so that the work is verbally revealed before it begins, including discarded unrealizable imagery), beginning French exercises (from a book titled Look and Learn and a dictionary), a ticking clock, the noises of the Rue de Seine.

Cast

CENTRAL MAN and CENTRAL WOMAN: hold the focus, are the main energy source.

TWO LATERAL MEN and TWO LATERAL WOMEN: perform as complements/ doubles.

INDEPENDENT WOMAN: sets up a private world on her mattress at perimeter of action; she joins the others during "men lighting women under plastic."

INDEPENDENT MAN: joins Independent Woman from audience.

SERVING MAID: functions throughout as a stage-manager-in-the-open, wandering in and out of the performance area to care for practical details (gathering discarded clothing, spreading plastic sheeting, distributing props, allocating fish and chickens, etc.). Her matter-of-fact actions are deceptive, since cues and coordination of material & sequences often depend upon her.

Clothing color is coordinated with lighting. Independent Man arrives dressed in street clothes over bikini pants. Other men wear work clothes over bikini pants. The women wear bikini pants and bras covered with stringy, colored feathers. Central Woman enters dressed in blouse and skirt. Independent Woman wears a kimono over a bikini covered with scrappy tiger fur.

SCORE

As the audience is seated, the performers enter carrying a long table, chairs, trays with make-up, cups, brandy, water, etc. The table is set facing the audience, close to the entrance-exit area. They wear old shirts and robes over their costumes; they face the make-up mirror, their backs to the audience. The "Notes as Prologue" tape recording continues for twenty minutes during which the performers sit casually at the table, completing their make-up, sewing last feathers on, smoking, drinking. The tape ends. The audience is restless. The table is carried away. **BLACK OUT.**

Tony Ray-Jones

Lateral Men climb to balcony. Lateral Women lie down in audience area.

Narrow spot from balcony to floor below. Rock'n'roll Rue de Seine tape at full volume. "Blue Suede Shoes."

From the balcony Lateral Men drop crumpled lengths of paper into central spot light. Slow fall of paper mounts to crescendo making the central pyre five feet high. Music begins when first paper has fallen.

Low light fans into center. "Tutti Frutti" Street Sounds

Lateral Men slide down rope from balcony, cross floor to find their partners (lying in audience area). They pull them out by their feet, lift and carry them to positions in front and to sides of central paper pile.

Central Man and Woman enter from under balcony, begin Undressing Walk—slow motion. **Soft spot, following.** She walks backward; no more than a few paces apart, their eyes on one another. Undressing occurs as a series of rhythmic exchange motions, one after the other, a pause in between. Only one hand at a time is used in a clear, sustained, slow reaching to the clothing of the other. If the action of undoing a button or pulling a skirt free takes more than a few moments, the action is left uncompleted; the other takes a turn. As they walk each article of clothing removed is dropped slowly, clearly.

Harold Chapman

Side lights to Lateral Men beginning Body Packages. The women rest on their backs where they have been carried; their arms remain free as the men slowly walk into the paper pile, select a few large sheets, and place them on the torsos of the women. Street sounds. They pile up a fat mound of paper and tuck it around the hips, some vertically up over their shoulders. "From Me to You." When the Body Package is sufficient each calls to the Serving Maid: "Rope!" A length is brought for each, and they tie the papers at the women's waists. Each man walks away, breaks into long, circling runs of approaches/feints to his Body Package.

Parker Moore

Dull amber-gold light.
Independent Woman walks in from the audience several times, bringing her mattress, tea set, pillows, books, cakes, and oranges, and sets up her space at the edge of the audience (their feet nearly in her bed).

After several feints, Lateral Men skid at top speed by Body Packages (like skidding into first base), gather the women in their arms and in unbroken motion begin Body Roll. "Baby Love." Their actions are not precisely coordinated; each pair has a particular speed and direction to their rolls (one cutting space laterally, fast; the other with short, slower rolls in eddying circles). Street sounds. If they roll into each other or the Undressing Walk or the audience, they stop, rest, shift directions.

Al Giese

"Where Did Our Love Go." **(Cue.)** When they wish, each man stops, raises his partner to her feet. Papers flutter and spread; he adjusts the papers attentively, goes down and takes her on top of himself, begins the rolls again. Street Sounds. Or he may rise onto his knees and lift her to hers: they stretch arms out slowly and exchange slow pushes, bending back as far as the push propels them. They embrace and roll.

Central Man and Woman, now undressed, exit. **Brief BLACK OUT.**

Enter Central Woman, who hides in center paper pile completely covered. Street sounds. Serving Maid with flashlight walks about gathering discarded clothing. Independent Woman continues to eat, pour tea, shift things about her space. "That's the Way Boys Are." Central Man sits in audience on the floor opposite the pyre. Lateral Couples lie where they were at BLACK OUT, resting.

Diffuse gold light.
Lateral Men carry women forward close to the pyre. (The women are acquiescent, relaxed.) The women are placed on their backs, their legs tucked up against their chests. **Brightening light.** The men then run to and from the central pyre carrying armfuls of papers, which they drop and spread over the women. They are brisk and conscientious (and do not expose the Central Woman).

Street sounds. Independent Man comes from the audience; he walks slowly to the Independent Woman and speaks, asking if he may join her on the mattress. "Baby Love."

He carefully removes his jacket, shoes, and pants, and settles onto the mattress. She offers him tea and cake. They read something, talk, play a game of bouncing oranges on their stomachs and then exchanging them by bounces.

When the Lateral Women are completely covered with papers, the Lateral Men rush to the central pyre; rummaging, they find the Central Woman's feet, which they seize pulling her straight up into the air.

"From Me to You." Raised on her hips beneath the paper, she immediately begins Leg Choreography—legs moving as if dancing upright, walking, pedaling a bicycle, etc. Street sounds. The Lateral Men quickly pack the loose papers down around her hips to expose the legs; they run around the pile punching and hitting loose papers into the center. They return to their own partners, repeating these actions, and then crouch down to watch the three pairs of legs they have set off.

Flickering amber beam follows Central Man. Central Man comes slowly, deliberately from the audience, across floor to central pyre. He seizes moving legs of Central Woman and drags her out of the pyre, papers

Al Giese

streaming behind her. He lifts her into an Awkward Hold, moving across the floor.

Lateral Men slip off their outer pants and jump into the pile of papers; they lie flat on their backs, hips raised, buttocks touching the women's buttocks. They scoop and scatter papers over their heads and torsos until only their legs show: Leg Mixture.

Central Man comes parallel to the paint table, suddenly drops Central Woman. "Anyone Who Had A Heart," street sounds. They freeze, look at each other. She raises her arms slightly. He grasps her hands and jerks her up as high in the air as he can, taking her weight against his chest. He shakes her long and violently until they fall over onto the paint table. He has fallen on his back, she on top of him. **Soft spot light on paint table.** Very slowly she slips off him, crouching to reach under the table with one hand, and pulls out brushes and paint bowls. She rises, moves toward his head, and begins Love-Paint-Exchange. Slowly painting his face, chest, arms, thighs, sex, feet, legs, she moves around in back of the table.

"Wishin' and Hopin'." Lateral Men stand up, begin running jumps across floor and back into the pile. They then leap over the women, between short circular bursts of running. Street Sounds. The women, still with their legs in the air slowly swiveling, complicate the hurdle they make.

Al Giese

As the Central Woman comes around the table painting his legs, the Central Man sits up, reaches for the paint brush in her hand. He drops his legs over the side and begins gently painting her face; then, slowly standing, painting her body. "My Guy" She takes another brush and bowl to exchange body painting. Street Sounds. "That's the Way Boys Are." Gathering speed across the floor (where the Lateral Men still run), they drop brushes and bowls, mix wet paint on their bodies directly, surface against surface, twisting, turning, faster and faster. Exit. **BLACK OUT.**

(Lateral Couple exits. Serving Maid hands out plastic sheets to the women; flashlights attached to cords are given to the men. She then enters bringing one plastic sheet to the Independent Couple, and gathers up brushes, bowls, & clothing. Lateral Women and Central Woman enter performance area. There each covers herself with a sheet, arranging themselves into a roughly triangular formation. The independent Couple cover themselves, remaining seated.)

Silence **Flashlights only.** The men gradually release the flashlights into widening arcs. This proceeds into very large slow patterns of movement. The lights are red and blue. The men coordinate directions and rhythms as they stalk in wide circles: faster light arcs; variations of vertical, horizontal, diagonal patterns; as high as possible, over heads of audience, as low as possible, with sudden shifts of light

Peter Moore

shafts back toward the center. They come closer together—staccato light as they pull in the cords; drop quickly to their knees, fanning into Alarm (starfish) Positions. Wrist movement light. The Women begin slow, angular movements, shaping plastic with elbows, knees, feet. Independent Couple perform a variation of this together. Rustling in the dark—men move to crouch and light fragments or details of moving forms. Abruptly, back and forth. Movement subsiding as women slowly move under sheets into the center of the floor; men crawling on their stomachs, closing in, flickering lights on/off into the plastic. All figures are now grouped closely together. They lie still.

"Non Ho L'Eta." **Slow central lights.** From this pile the performers call for "Rosette"—the Intractable Rosette: a sequence of attempts to form the women into sculptural shapes which can move as a unit. Street sounds Men gather the women into a circular formation, back to back. All improvise. "Non Ho L'Eta" Street sounds. Women link arms and legs; the men may tie their legs with rope, arrange them lying down, sitting up, spread-eagled, rolled in a ball, and then try to move them as if one solid structure (star, wheel, flower, crystal). "Maybe I know" Street sounds Each time the "unit" falls and falls apart: all shout instructions, suggestions, advice, complaints. "My Guy" Street sounds. But each time the women are set and the men begin to move them, they roll apart, lose balance, fall over. The men may choose

Mosical

The Tree as the final arrangement: here the men stand the women up, raise their arms and hands over their heads touching together in the center. Each man stands against the grouped women, encircling with his arms as many as he can. They all try to move as a free-wheeling circle (impossible). All fall over and lie motionless.

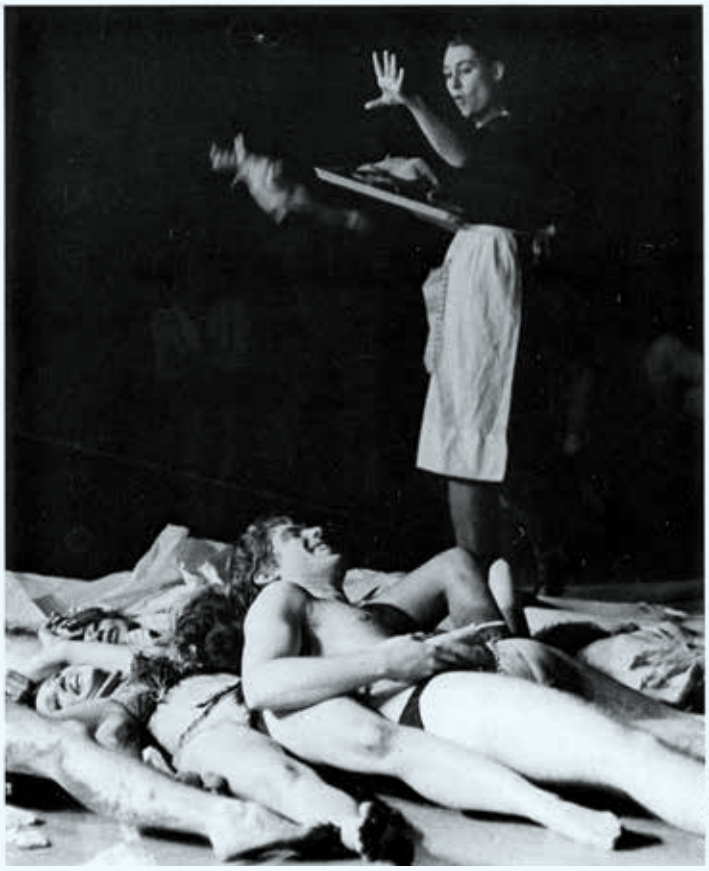
Full light. "Non Ho L'Eta." Serving Maid enters, carrying a huge tray of raw chickens, mackerel, strings of hot dogs. Street sounds. Slowly, extravagantly she strews fish, chickens and hot dogs all over the bodies. "My Boy Lollipop." Street sounds. Wet fish, heavy chickens, bouncing hot dogs—bodies respond sporadically; twitching, pulling back, hands reaching, touching, groans, giggles. "Where Did Our Love Go." They sit up to examine their situation. "Baby Love." Street sounds. Individual rules are evolved: slips, flops, flips, jumps, throwing and catching, drawing, falling, running, slapping, exchanging, stroking. Tenderly, then wildly. All are finally inundated with fish, chickens, hot dogs.

"Bread and Butter." Street sounds. A call goes out for "hats." Women again are propped in a circle, back to back. Serving Maid brings plastic scarves and hairpins. Each man makes a secure but wild hat for a woman. "Anyone Who Had a Heart." Street Sounds. A call goes out for "paint." Serving Maid hurries back with large green and orange buckets full of colored paints, brushes, sponges—these she

Al Giese

distributes among the men. "That's the Way Boys Are." Street sounds. Deliberately, with care, each man paints a brilliant linear face on a woman (in the Egyptian style). Then each man thoughtfully paints a woman's body; faster and faster, through three thousand years of techniques, they continue to cover them with paint: stroked, streaked, thrown, hurled. The women may smile amused at first. "I Only Want To Be With You." They watch the movement of the paint until finally they are yelling, howling, twisting, turning, trying to rise slipping and falling on the splattered plastic flooring. They retaliate, throwing buckets of paint over the men. Each man grabs up a woman and carries her out over the littered floor into the paper pile where everyone buries everyone else as the Central Woman yells, "Enough, enough!" **BLACK OUT.**

Time: 60-80 minutes.


Manfred Schneider

Carolee Schneeman also wrote a book called *More than Meat Joy*, *(showing the front page of the book to the audience)* and as the title indicates it is a book containing many of her other works from the same time-period. Here is one here called the *Naked Action Lecture.* It was a performance where she lectured about her own work, while dressing and undressing several times. With this performance she posed the following questions; *Can an art historian be a naked woman? Can she have public authority while naked and speaking? Was the content of the lecture less appreciable when she was naked? What multiple levels of uneasiness, pleasure, curiosity, erotic fascination, acceptance or rejection ware activated in an audience?* [6]

Over here you have an interview with Anna Halprin.

(I undress till I am naked. I start speaking again the moment I begin to put my clothes back on.)

In this interview Anna Halprin speaks about two of her performances from the sixties. The first one is called *Parades and Changes*, from which I'm performing an extract right now. In the interview, she describes how this scene was transformed when they performed the piece in a museum space for the first time. Halprin realized that it was impossible to maintain the theatrical distance that she was used to having on more conventional proscenium stages and she decided to embrace this impossibility by including the intimacy and proximity to the audience as a tool to use when performing the sequence.

So, in this moment I am supposed to be looking into the eyes of one of the spectators in this room. *(I keep eye contact with one spectator and talk directly to him or her).* I'm supposed to keep this intimate eye contact until the situation grows uncomfortable. Right now it seems to be going ok, right? *(I rephrase this sentence depending on the reaction of the person*). The uneasiness could either arrive on your side or on mine, and the moment the situation would become too awkward, I would then have to shift my gaze and start looking at someone else. While keeping this intimate eye contact I should at the same time be undressing and putting my clothes back on again without looking at it, as if it would be the easiest thing to do. The second piece Halprin speaks about is perhaps an even more interesting piece called the *Blank Placard Dance*. It's a piece to be performed in public space, where a group of people march through the streets carrying empty placards above their heads. As in the sixties one could not just assemble in public space, to march and protest without asking for a protest permission, they had to ask the city hall for their accord in order to be able to realize this piece. It's also what you see on the image over there. *(I point at the image on the wall)*

What they did was to walk through the streets, respecting the rules of walking with a certain distance between their bodies. Every time someone would come up to them to ask what they were protesting against, the performers would answer by asking that exact same question; "what would you like to protest against?". Memorizing the statements they collected, they later wrote down phrases on the placards in order to be able to continue their march.

Exhibited Archive - Photograph of the *Blank Placard Dance* by Anna Halprin.

Interview with Anna Halprin

This is the second of a two-part interview with the legendary dancer, teacher, and choreographer Anna Halprin. The conversation below took place a few weeks following the final performances of *Parades and Changes* at the University of California, Berkeley Art Museum (BAM/PFA) from February 15 to 17, 2013.

Patricia Maloney: One of my favorite performances is *Blank Placard Dance* from 1967, in which a group of dancers are protesting, but the signs they are holding are all blank. As passers-by and witnesses encounter the dancers, they ask, "What are you protesting?" and the response from the dancers is, "What do you want to protest?" I am very intrigued by the idea that a dance could function as a blank slate on which the audience can project their intentions. It creates an entry point for participation.

Anna Halprin: That dance is still being performed; we did it at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (YBCA) recently. That was one score that I took out of the studio and into the environment to see what might happen. People wanted to protest but their voices weren't being heard in any effective way. So we marched with blank placards, and we collected a lot of protest statements and wrote them down. Then we marched back with the protests written on the signs. But you need to get permission from the city authorities, and you have to stand ten feet from the person in front of you; we did that so we wouldn't get arrested. We had previously been arrested during protests against the Vietnam War.

PM: You haven't shied away from social issues during your career. How has that manifested in the dances?

AH: I've always been involved in social issues because they are part of our lives. I don't like to disengage from what is going on in the world. For example, the gun violence right now is horrendous; my niece was just murdered. How can I not be involved? I don't think of it as politics so much as this is what is affecting us as a community or a nation or part of the global consciousness.

I created *Planetary Dance* in 1980 in response to a series of murders by an individual nicknamed The Trailside Killer. He killed seven women from our community on Mt. Tamalpais, which is a place you go to have picnics or weddings or to meditate; to be on the mountain is a beautiful way to enter into nature. But for two years, we were not allowed on the trails because of the murders, so I decided that we needed to reclaim the mountain. My husband and I created a series of workshops in which Mt. Tam was a recurring motif. With the community, we performed a dance starting at the top of the mountain, and as we came down the mountain, we made offerings at the sites were the seven women were murdered. About a week later, the killer was caught. He had been on the loose for two years. It became a myth in this community [that the dance led to his capture]. The dance has evolved into a pattern of running in circles, and every year we dedicate it to a community issue. One year we performed the dance for women with breast cancer because Marin County has the highest rate of breast cancer in the country. Another time we dedicated the dance to AIDS and another year to bullying in the schools. Because we have a training program with students from all over the world, and these participants want to bring the dance to their communities, now it is performed in forty-six different countries.

Dance has many different faces and many possibilities if you convey the experience of a movement that everyone recognizes and can participate in. Most people can walk or run to a drumbeat and create their own movements around the running. It's accessible. I'm delighted because it's happening everywhere now. Dance is enacting a tremendous shift to being available to all kinds of needs.

Helena Keefe: Could you talk about how your concept of dance evolved early on, in contrast to other choreographers such as Yvonne Rainer or

Simone Forti? My understanding is that everyone was reacting to theatricality and drama or virtuosity in dance, but the paths away from that approach diverged.

AH: They were my students. I was close to forty while they were in their twenties. I was exploring a different way of teaching, in which we were learning how to score and how to work in the environment. I was collaborating with the Tape Music Center, with painters, filmmakers, and poets. I was leading my students in explorations of movement beyond modern dance. Trisha Brown was teaching at Mills College at the time; Simone Forti had just graduated from Reed College. So they were mature, but there weren't as many outlets for them as there are now. I had a family, so I was rooted here, but they weren't rooted here. So, like the painters, they went to New York because the opportunities were there. They started the Judson Dance Theater.

There was tremendous discrepancy between the way the Judson Dance Theater originated here and how it evolved in New York. The Human Potential Movement—which evolved [at the Esalen Institute] in response to Fritz Perls [his concept of gestalt therapy], and [the theories of] Erik Erikson and Abraham Maslow—was influential here but not in New York. There, people are surrounded by buildings, while here we are surrounded by trees. The dancers who moved to New York became involved in the New York conceptual approach to art. I was more interested in the humanistic aspect of using everyday movement, so it would be accessible not only to me but also to everybody. Even when I teach now, I don't think of what I do as task-oriented. I work with the science of movement and ordinary experience.

I begin with awareness and simple movements in order for people to become comfortable using their bodies, but then I begin layering responses to images and feelings. Something like dressing and undressing, which I would call an ordinary rather than a task-oriented movement, can prompt an inquiry into how you feel when you are naked in front of others or into the sequence of movements of taking your shirt off.

AH (cont.): You start with something the audience can connect to, even as you're thinking about that movement changing.

PM: But those movements become performance. Could we delve into that transition from movement to performance? It seems to be a very porous boundary, because of the way the audience is asked to acknowledge the motivations and gestures of the individual dancers. For example, during the performance of *Parades and Changes* that I attended, one of the dancers locked eyes with me as he was undressing; it was a very intimate and unsettling experience. And it was a fantastic one, but it is not necessarily one we're accustomed to as members of an audience. How do you enable this intimacy to exist and yet still be performance?

AH: That is the risk you take. It is really a risk. Making eye contact was done very deliberately. In a proscenium theatre, there is a natural separation between audience and dancers. But at BAM/PFA, there was no separation. What are you going to do in that environment? Are you going to pretend the separation exists or are you going to use it? I thought, "Let's use it." The dancers were to lock gazes with an individual member of the audience but instructed to shift and give them space when they felt the person grew uncomfortable. It's not meant to be intimidating. That is an example of inclusiveness, of trying to make it very personal. Then, the dancers shifted their gazes to each other in the mirror-image sequence, and the movements intensified.

PM: That was one of the most notable parts of the performance, during the second sequence of undressing. The dancers paired up, and some of the pairs were immediately apparent, whereas others were across the stage from each other, and you only recognized the pairs as other dancers finished undressing.

AH: The dancers chose their partners and the distance they wanted to be from each other; it kept the performance more spontaneous and not as rigid. That was a very courageous part of the dance for them to do; it wasn't easy. Choosing the distance gave them more control and something to focus on.

Dena Beard: I was speaking with Simone Forti; she and Bob [Robert] Morris were painting in San Francisco, but she had always been interested in movement. She took a workshop with you, and Bob was interested in the actor John Graham's approach to working with objects in theater. There was this convergence of energy on your dance deck and this amazing situation at the time, in which people had come to San Francisco seeking the resurgence of Abstract Expressionism that was happening in the visual arts, and they found you. I found it interesting to see how the visual arts and movement [came] together. When I was putting the exhibition together at BAM/PFA, many people commented that the material was just documents and ephemera. I said, "If you collect all the variations on this theme together, what you have is an image so profound, it exceeds the walls of the museum and becomes alive in the resources of the human body." That's what you did; you took these impulses from the visual arts and made them alive in the resources that these impoverished artists had at the time. You showed them they could do this work within the scope of their bodies. That was incredibly radical. That's why the dance deck became this place of saying, "We are each other's resources. We don't need the paint, the canvases, or the camera."

AH: I was doing a performance with a group at San Francisco State University, and Bruce Conner got up on stage and started dancing with me. We did this incredibly funny, stupid little dance act together, and it was perfectly natural. There were all kinds of craziness going on at the time. The Bay Area never quite got the acknowledgment it deserved. It seems like everything happened in New York, but everything seemed to start here. Unfortunately, at that time, there wasn't really the financial means for the dance world to stay here.

DB: All these different minds and disciplinary skill sets found a home on your dance deck.

AH: It is very important that we had a place to work, and this wasn't a traditional, indoor box. You have a different relationship to your body in nature; you feel part of a bigger body. It took us out into the streets, and we performed *City Dance* (1960–69, 1976–77) throughout San Francisco. It was like a flash mob except we started at Twin Peaks and moved from one neighborhood to another. We did *City Dance* for about three years, and then it evolved into Carnaval in the Mission district.

HK: Which young dancers are you interested in and curious about now? Are there dancers who are innovating in ways that you find of interest?

AH: I'm not necessarily interested in what dancers are doing; I'm interested in everything; I'm interested in life. I've connected to dance in so many different ways. When I had my family, I worked with children for twenty-five years. When I had the studio at 321 Divisadero, I collaborated with artists because they shared the same space. That pushed me in a much broader direction than I had previously been working. After we lost that building, my husband Larry built the dance deck. Larry studied at Harvard with Walter Gropius, who had been the director of the Bauhaus; working with architects had a big influence on me, especially Larry, who was a landscape architect. Fritz Perls made me very comfortable working with people's emotions—that movement could trigger some feeling, state, and it was fine.

There have been a lot of touch points in my life that have thrown me into different directions, and it all accumulates. One direction leads to another. It always involves other people. Different people have enriched and moved me to incorporate ideas that would not have occurred to me on my own. It's been a journey, like the one everyone goes through in life. I have a passion for dance; our bodies are our instruments and carry everything that we are,

every memory that we've had. Every feeling that we are capable of is in this body. That is true of all the arts, and the most characteristic thing of what I am interested in is how we can use all the expressive arts to create change and transformation. Some people call this spiritual. I don't think of it so much as spiritual as becoming whole. Hopefully the organism continues to grow and change, and I am still learning. I am not ready to let go yet.

Anna Halprin (b. 1920) has possessed a singular career spanning the field of dance since the late 1930s. She founded the groundbreaking San Francisco Dancer's Workshop in 1955 and the Tamalpa Institute in 1978, with her daughter Daria Halprin. Her students include Meredith Monk, Trisha Brown, Yvonne Rainer, Simone Forti, Shinichi Iova-Koga, and many others, some of whom became involved in the progressive and experimental Judson Church Group. Over the years, her famous outdoor deck has been an explorative haven for numerous dancers and choreographers, including Merce Cunningham; composers such as John Cage, Luciano Berio, Terry Riley, LeMonte Young, and Morton Subotnick; and visual artists such as Robert Morris and Robert Whitman. Halprin is an early pioneer in the healing expressive arts. She has led countless collaborative dance programs with terminally ill patients, as she has long believed in the healing power of movement. Halprin has also investigated numerous social issues through dance and through theatrical innovations. She has created one hundred fifty full-length dance-theater works, which are extensively documented in photographs, books, and film. She is the recipient of numerous honors and awards from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Guggenheim Foundation, the American Dance Guild, and many others. In 1997, she received the Samuel H. Scripps award for lifetime achievement in modern dance from the American Dance Festival. The Dance Heritage Coalition has named Anna Halprin one of "America's Irreplaceable Dance Treasures."

Right now they are all standing on the sidewalk somewhere in downtown New York. They're standing in a huge line together with other people who are all waiting to get into a garage to see a performance by Richard Schechner called *Dionysus in 69.* It's taking very long to get in and some of the people in the line are getting worried that the performance has started without them, others are angry with having to wait for so long, but mostly the mood is good and a social situation is developing already out on the street.

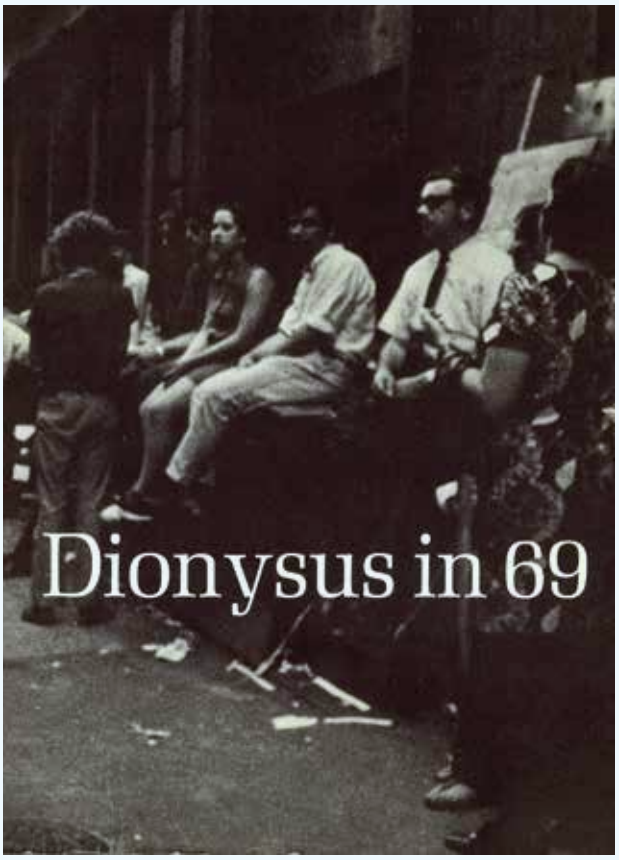
The reason why it's taking so long is because the audience can only enter the space one by one. The first person coming in is confronted with an almost empty space. In it there are these high scaffolds where one can climb up to sit high up. There are also places directly on the floor and it is only when the first person is nicely installed that the second one is invited to come. In the space the performers are already busy, doing some vocal exercises to warm up, a bit like this. (*I lay down on the floor and produce vocal sounds).* As you can hear, very 60's inspired vocal exercises! And then, once all the spectators are sitting down, one of the men in the group rolls out of the configuration and starts talking directly to the audience. He says:

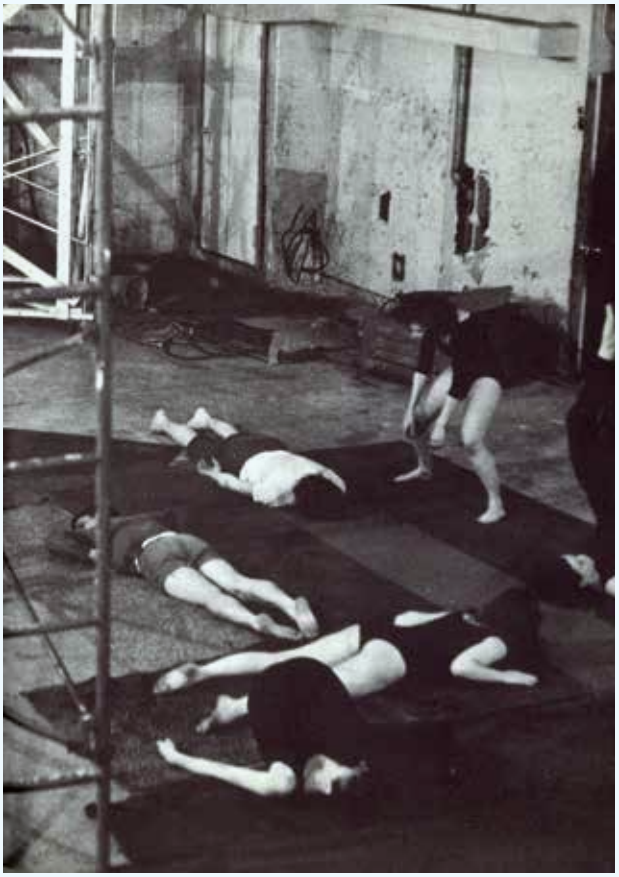
Good evening.[7] *You all seem to be comfortable in your seat, this is very good for what is going to happen next. I have come here tonight for several important reasons. The first and most important is to announce my divinity* — basically he tells them that he is a god — *the second is to share my rites and rituals. And the third is to be born, so if you'll excuse me . . . .*

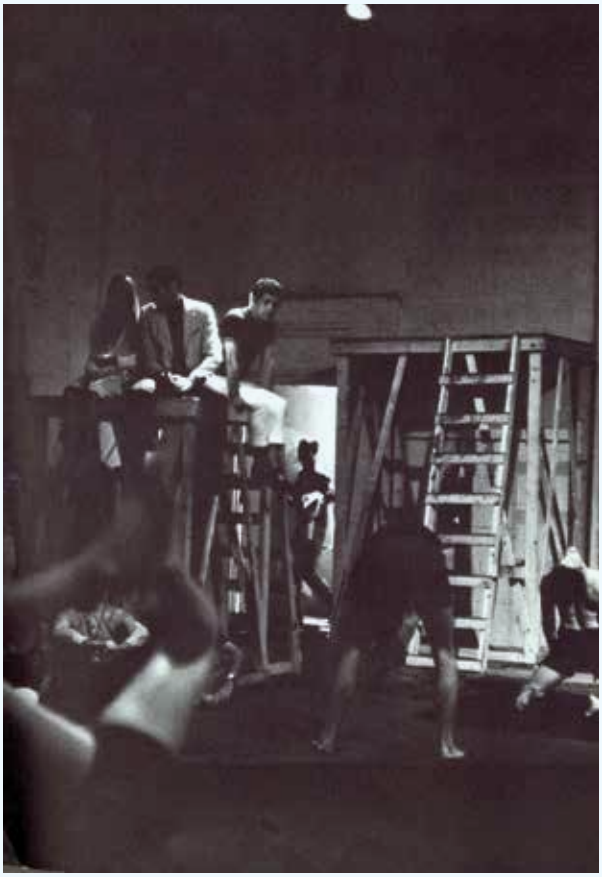
Here you have to imagine that the performer dives into a tunnel of human flesh. The tunnel is made of five men lying on the floor on their bellies next to one another. Between their legs, five women have planted one foot while the other foot is squeezed down between the shoulders so that their legs create a triangular opening. The women are doing undulatory movements like this *(I demonstrate)* and also sometimes creating vocal sounds. The actor continues.

I noticed there were a lot of disbelieving faces in the audience when I announced that I was a divinity. (I interrupt the text and make loud vocal sound). It is in fact the women standing who are making these vocal noises as if they were giving birth. They all do it in their own way, which creates a very noisy sound space that makes it almost impossible to hear what the actor is saying.

He nevertheless continues.... *the kind of faces that doubt that I am a god. That shouldn't be. Because to say that I am not Dionysus is like saying that this performance is not happening right now. Or to say that that I am not being born right now, even if only metaphorically speaking, is of course completely wrong, because.....here I am, once again born as Dionysus. I became aware of who I was when I was eleven or twelve years old. I used to go to this place called the Laff movie—it burned down and doesn't exist anymore — But it was a cinema where children could go to watch cartoons on weekends. I was sitting there on a Saturday afternoon watching a particularly interesting Bugs Bunny chase scene when I noticed a rather fat, obscene-looking man who came to sit down right next to me. He was eating a falafel sandwich*


Dionysus in 69



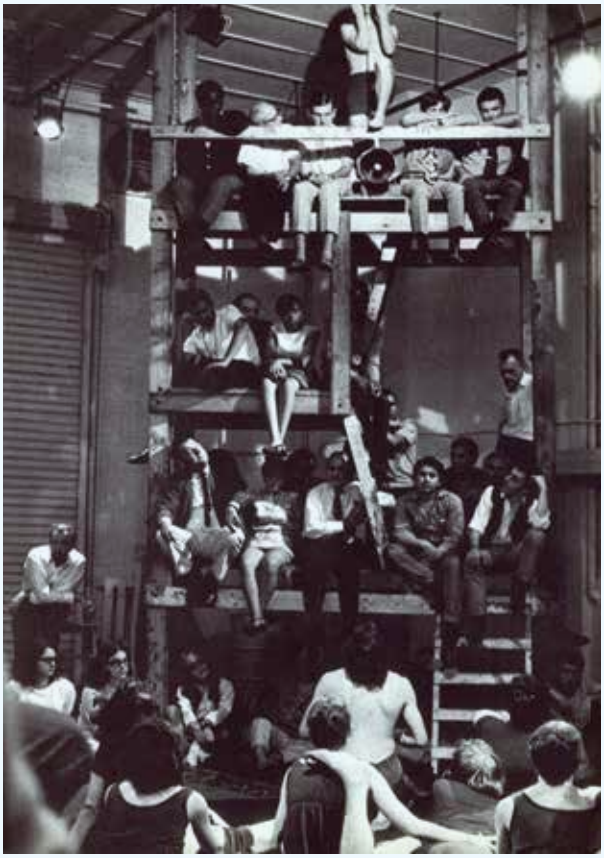


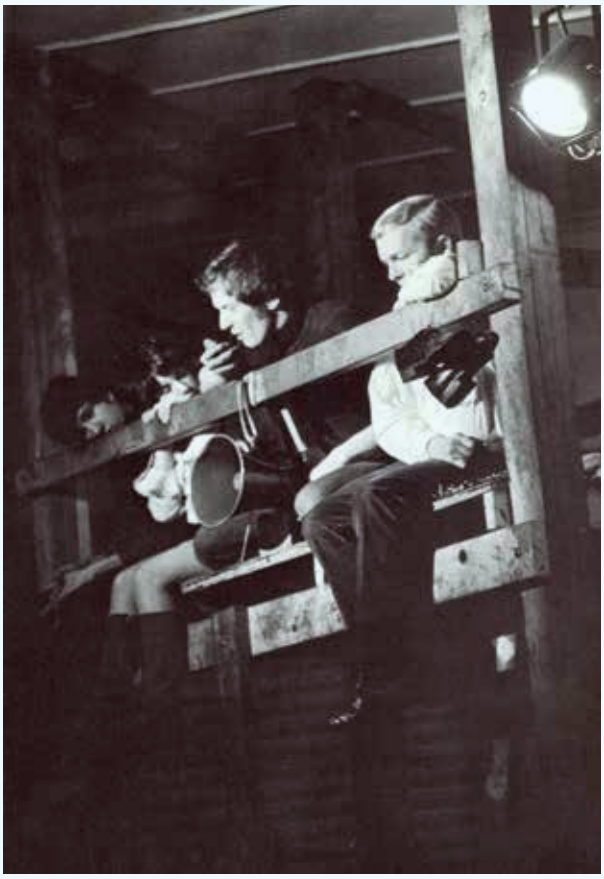
which smelled really bad and at a certain moment he turned to me and said; Hey kid . . . hey kid . . . yeah, you kid, you know what - you look exactly like Dionysus, I dig that. So, I called the manager and moved down three seats. But the funny thing was that he was right— I'm it.

For those of you who agree with what I just told you—you are gonna have a wonderful time tonight. The rest of you are in trouble. You still have an hour and a half of being up against the wall. But for those of you who did agree with and believe what I just said you can join me in what we'll do next, which is a celebration dance, a ritual, an ordeal, even an ecstasy. An ordeal is something you go through and ecstasy is what you feel when you come out on the other side.

You have to promise me one thing: if you feel the impulse to dance or do anything with your fingers or clap your hands or...anything at all—just do it! Oh, there is one last thing I have to say before we start this thing. No matter how carefully the preparations are made, the conclusions are always in doubt—so now we can dance.

(I turn on the video of Richard Schechner's Dionysus in 69 and start to dance)





(I scream as loud as I can while facing the panel.)

STOCK IS A FRAUD!
STOCK MEANS NOTHING TO THE WORKING MAN.
STOCK IS A LOT OF CAPITALIST BULLSHIT.
We want to stop this game. The money made with this stock is enabling the war to continue.
We protest this cruel, greedy instrument of the war establishment.
STOCK IS FOR BURNING.
STOCK IS FOR BURNING.
STOCK MUST BE BURNED.
Don't pay taxes. Stop the 10% tax!
Burn Wall Street.
Wall Street men must become fishermen and farmers.
Wall Street men must stop all of this fake 'business'.
OBLITERATE WALL STREET MEN WITH POLKA DOTS.
OBLITERATE WALL STREET MEN WITH POLKA DOTS ON
THEIR NAKED BODIES.
BE IN...BE NAKED, NAKED, NAKED.

(I continue screaming my text while the music from the film of Dionysus in 69 is still playing)

STOCK IS A FRAUD!

STOCK MEANS NOTHING TO THE WORKING MAN.

STOCK IS A LOT OF CAPITALIST BULLSHIT.

We want to stop this game. The money made with this stock is enabling the war to continue.
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OBLITERATE WALL STREET MEN WITH POLKA DOTS ON
THEIR NAKED BODIES.

BE IN...BE NAKED, NAKED, NAKED.

Yayoi Kusama's press release for Naked Protest at Wall Street. New York. 10.30 a.m. Sunday 15 October 1968.

There are six naked people dancing in front of the stock market on Wall Street. There is a sculpture of George Washington over there and they are dancing wildly in front of him. They are all completely convinced of their actions — one hundred percent engaged in their movements — jumping amazing jumps, almost in a trance-like state.

There's this drummer going boomboomboom boomboom boomboomboomboom. A lot of people are gathering around them, watching them dance. And after a while a policeman arrives, but they continue dancing. Then a second policeman arrives, but they continue dancing. Little by little there are so many policemen around them that on the count of three, two, one; they run in towards the dancers and brutally grab their bodies and put them in handcuffs. They take them away in a police car and bring them down to the police station where they put them in isolation cells. The day after they are asked to explain the political motivations behind their action.

(I stop my physical actions)

With this attack on the stock market, I would like to finish this first section of the archive with the work of Yayoi Kusama. As you might have noticed, the works in this section are all dealing with sexuality, and in particular with the use of nudity, often as a political tool. For instance, when Carolee Schneemann considers her performance a protest action against the brutalities of the Vietnam War, it is not so different from when Kusama protested naked in front of the stock market to resist the profiteering war-machine

that she regarded the stock exchange to be. In addition to her *Anatomic Explosions* — clearly political actions performed in public space — Kusama also made several sexually explicit experiments addressing the more intimate conventions of sexual behavior in society, in accordance with the sexual liberation movement of the 60's and slogans like "make love, not war".

Here for instance *(I show a picture from the book),*[8] she made *The Grand Orgy* that was performed in the courtyard of MoMA in New York. On this picture we see 4 naked performers in the fountain, while one of the security guards quite desperately tries to get them to come back out again. Here is another nice one *(I show another page)*. It says Kusama presents an orgy of nudity, love, sex and beauty for adults over 21 and it costs 35 cents. So, finally, free love was not entirely for free, but there was nevertheless no lack of participation at this time.

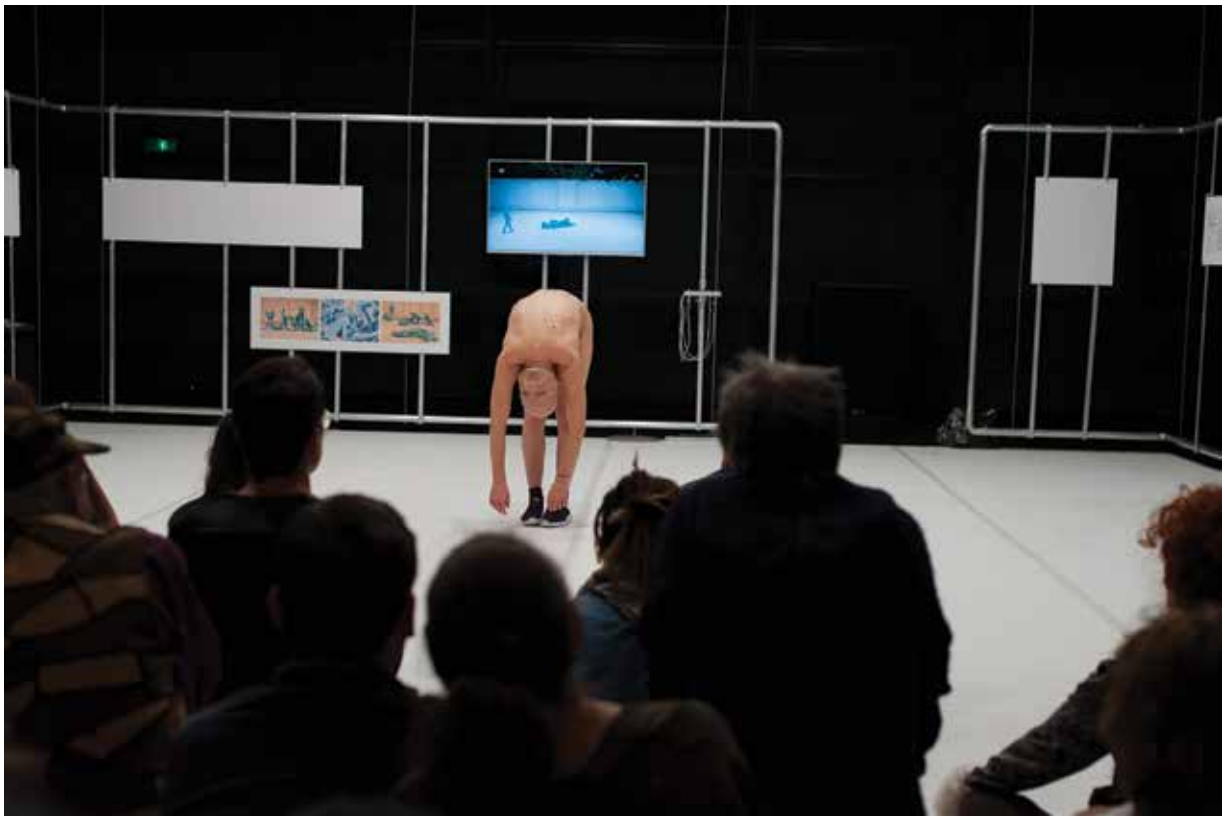
The very last thing I would like to show in this first section is a little excerpt from a film called *Flaming Creatures*[9] by Jack Smith, a film that was banned in 1965 for its use of explicit sexual behavior as well as obscene and violent imagery. For this we are just going to lower the light a little and I will turn up the sound as well.

(I walk around the space to flip the panels on the walls, leaving the audience time to watch the video extract of Jack Smith. When done I stop the film of Jack Smith, introducing the second section of the archive.)

Script and Archive
Section 2

We are now in the second section of the archive, where we are going to look deeper into the codification of bodies in relation to sexual behavior, not from the perspective of the 60's but from 3 pieces I made about 10 years ago. In these pieces I dealt with how desire does not belong to the individual body, nor to the couple relation, but rather to the collective and societal structures that surround us. To see what I do next, it is best to stay on the side of the room where you already are.

(I walk across the space with a mask in my hand, placing it on my back head to perform a 5 min extract of Manual Focus, a performance of mine from 2003)



(I remove the mask).

After they have been standing in these headless positions for about one minute, the performer in the middle starts walking towards the back wall in the room. She starts pressing her body against the wall, and it is a very striking moment because it's the first time you see one of the bodies in an upright position, which brings you back to the reference of the human body being disfigured with the head turned 180 degrees. This moment crystallizes how opposites are merging in this piece. The male and the female, the naked and the masked, the old and the young, even the artificial and real turn into one single image. It's as if wearing these masks allow the bodies to erase their personal identity, making it possible for them to transform into all these different shapes and figures that you see on these images.

Over here you will find the *Yes Manifesto*[10] — so if you would please come a little closer. The *Yes Manifesto* was written in 2004 and it goes like this. To say yes instead of no as a strategy is about defining an area of interest as a positive-of rather than a negation, we live in the times of "everything is possible," so why not spectacle, virtuosity, glamour, style, involvement and so on.

This is a reference to Yvonne Rainer's *No Manifesto*, written in 1965, where she basically says no to everything.

No to spectacle
No to virtuosity
No to transformations and make-believe
No to the glamour and transcendence of the star image
No to the heroic
No to anti heroic
No to trash imagery
No to involvement of performer or spectator
No to style
No to camp
No to seduction of the spectator by the wiles of the performer
No to moving and being moved

The *Yes Manifesto*, on the other hand, continues like so: "Why not moving and being moved as long as it is a choice and not simply an affirmation of the conventional procedures that we already know how functions. In spite of manifestos belonging to the past—here comes another one."

YES MANIFESTO
Yes to redefining virtuosity
Yes to "invention"
Yes to conceptualizing experience, affects and sensation
Yes to materiality
Yes to expression
Yes to un-naming, decoding and recoding expression
Yes to methodology and procedures
Yes to editing and animation
Yes to multiplicity, difference and co-existence

The yes manifesto was written as a preparation or a score for the work you see over here, a solo called *50/50. (I start the video of 50/50).* In this work nudity is worn as a costume. It is made very clear by the shoes and the wig that we are not dealing with a natural nudity, nor with a liberatory nudity, as was the

To say yes instead of no as a strategy is about defining an area of interest as a positive of rather than a negation, we live in the times of "everything is possible", so why not spectacle, virtuosity, glamour, style, involvement and so on…why not moving and being moved as long as it is a choice and not a simply affirmation of the conventional procedures we already know how functions. In spite of manifestos belonging to the past - here comes another one.

YES MANIFESTO

Yes to redefining virtuosity

Yes to "invention" (however impossible)

Yes to conceptualizing experience, affects and sensation

Yes to materiality/body practice-investment

Yes to expression

Yes to un-naming, decoding and recoding expression

Yes to non-recognition, non-resemblance

Yes to non-sense/ illogics

Yes to organizing principles rather than fixed logic systems

Yes to moving the "clear concept" behind the actual performance of

Yes to methodology and procedures

Yes to editing and animation

Yes to style as a result of procedure and specificity of a proposal

Yes to multiplicity, difference and co-existence

case in the 60's. No, instead we are dealing with nudity used as a tool to allow the body to transform from one figure into another, from being a go-go dancer, as we see it here, to become a rock star, then an opera singer and later on even a deformed circus clown. In this first scene, we see the image of the go-go dancer being dismantled through a system of doubling. I'll see if I can do it for you.

You are not supposed to just shake your ass to the music. No, you literally have to double the sound down to its smallest detail by imagining that the drummer is actually hitting his drum sticks on your ass. Each quiver of the flesh is created by the encounter of the drumstick with your ass. You should be one hundred percent synchronized with the music, at the same time as attempting to change the way your ass is moving in a very gradual manner, so that it keeps evolving as modulations of vibration.

The effect is a kind of haptic gaze. Haptic watching is when your eyes all of a sudden start to behave as hands and you should be able to feel the vibration of my ass just from looking at it. I don't know if it is working but at least that would be the idea.

What I would like from this doubling, is that the image of the go-go dancer is transformed or dismantled to the point where you can no longer recognize it, so that the image starts to dissolve into an affect, a sensation or vibration. In just a second the body will be transformed into a rock star, and I'm just going to turn up the music before that happens. *(I turn up the music and let the spectators look at the video for a few minutes before again lowering it)*

50/50

by Mette Ingvartsen

Premiered in March 2004 during the Frankfurt Summer Academy. The first part of this score is meant as a document for reconstruction and reproduction. The second part of the score is an attempt to share the ideas and concepts behind the work that might lead to other works.

Solo: 1 female performer
Costume: A clown wig that covers front and backside of the face and a pair of sneakers.
Stage: 10x10 meters covered in black dance floor, general light and a line of floodlights placed at the back of the stage facing the audience.
Duration: 21 min
Music: Deep Purple ("Strange kind of woman"), Leoncavallo (I Pagliacci: Prelude and "Un tal gioco, credetemi"), Cornelius

Principles/procedures behind the choreography:
1) Doubling, making un-inscribed expressions graspable through doubling.
2) Deformation, recoding the understanding of voice, face and body expressions.
3) Traveling/transformation, to create a simple structure that doesn't repeat but move from one material to another. The structure of the piece is based on combinatorial scheme drawn below. It should be read in relation to the description of the scenes on the next page to understand what is being doubled.

50/50 Doubling system	Body	Voice	Sound	Face	No face
Body			Scene 7: Tits/drums	Scene 5: body going first/ face following	Scene 7: Tits/drums
Voice	Scene 2: Recorded voice/ Embodied rock-star	Scene 3: Recorded voice/ live voice reproducing			
Sound	Scene 1: Drums/ass			Scene 5: body going first/ face following with opera	
Face	Scene 4: Face/body going through expressions				
No face	Scene 6: Wig/ Pantomime body		Scene 6: Wig/ Pantomime body		

Scene 1: Drum-Doubling
Pretend that your ass is a drum kit. Move your ass as if the person playing the drums is in fact hitting the drumsticks on your ass. Try to be 100% synchronized with the music, at the same time as you attempt to change the way you move your ass gradually so that it keeps evolving as a modulations of vibrations.

1. **Scene 2: Rock Star Impersonation/Embodiment**
Impersonate the lead singer from Deep Purple, trying to find him within you. Simulate that the voice is coming from your body, while you are facing away from the audience, imagining that there is a huge sea of people in front of you listening to your fantastic concert. (in fact you facing the back wall)

2. **Scene 3: Voice Reenactment**
Listen to Leoncavallo's "Un tal gioco, credetemi" through headphones and record yourself singing the track the first time you listen to it. This new sound track, of you singing, you studied carefully with the help of looping technology in order to be able to relearn all the faults, intonations and mistakes. Perform the sound of this track as if it was a spontaneous expression doubled by the pre-recording.

3. **Scene 4: Operatic Deformations**
Perform a series of face expressions that have been detached from their origin and deformed to the point of non-recognition. The faces could depart from either circus, rock concerts or opera but they should not be recognizable as such. At the same time let your body double the sensation you have in you face. Open your face as much as you can, equals spreading your body as much as you can etc. The expressions should not be clearly readable but can pass though things people might recognize from operatic gesture.

4. **Scene 5: Monstrous Deformations**
The body and the face, that were doubling each other in the previous section goes out of sync. You still should think in terms of doubling but you move the face into a new state before you change your body or you change your body before you change your face.

5. **Scene 6: Face Erasure/ Body Reconstruction**
At the end of the face monster deformations you sit down to put on the wig that is lying on the floor. With the wig on covering your face you reconstruct a scene from a staging of Leoncavallo's opera, where the clown is performing an intermezzo number. The wig is covering your head entirely and you are working on putting all your expression into your gestures as it is done in pantomime. The idea about face/body dissociation is connected to the pantomimic principle of the body and the face always amplifying one and the same expression.

6. **Scene 7: Rhythmic Imitation**
In the last part of the performance you again duplicate the rhythm of the music as it was done in the ass shaking part. However in this part it is your tits that you are shaking, try to follow all the changes in the music and to produce an intensive plane of vibrations by shaking your tits to the beat of the music. The first and last image is connected: shake you ass, shake your tits!

A SERIES OF QUESTIONS THAT THE WORK EVOLVED AROUND

What are affects and how can they be an object of investigation, can they be produced/constructed or are they a kind of bi-products?
What is the difference between affect and affections/emotions?
Is it possible to decompose expressivity in such a way that it recomposes itself outside of the usual categories of expression? So, using the old to make the new?
What kind of movement propositions produces material that expresses without producing a clear "expressed", represented or signified?
How can the body be understood as something else than a linguistic system, or what happens to representation when the construction is not about concrete readability (language/body+)?
How can sensation, kinesthetic experience transfer without an actual point of contact?
How is it possible to work on qualitative states, speed, intensity and force?
How do you discipline the body to be body?
How do you produce a body that is capable of shifting in between different kinds of expressions?
Why are hands and faces more expressive than the lower arm?
What notions of virtuosity does opera propose and how can they be redefined.
What kind of relationships can be made in between opera, codification, expression and movement?

WISHED FOR EFFECTS:

1. A traveling through different spectrums of readability, not aiming at the outside of language but the limit spaces.
2. A redefinition of what the relationship between body and language can be
3. The emergence of un-namable expressions
4. A haptic visibility or a tactile watching, as if the eyes could touch
5. The production of a spectatorship of doubt, not as an aim in itself but as a political activity of un-naming
6. Opening possibilities of expression:

Expression as orality/as sound rather than language
Expression as posture manipulations
Expression as re-coordination (of face and body)
Expression as hybrid, dismantled code (the singing)
Expression as muscle tone/tension level (the faces)
Expression as emotion
Expression as affect
Expression as intention/concentration/focus
Expression as code
Expression as cliché (the clown)
Expression as accentuation
Expression as kinesthetic experience
Expression as quality and quality as form

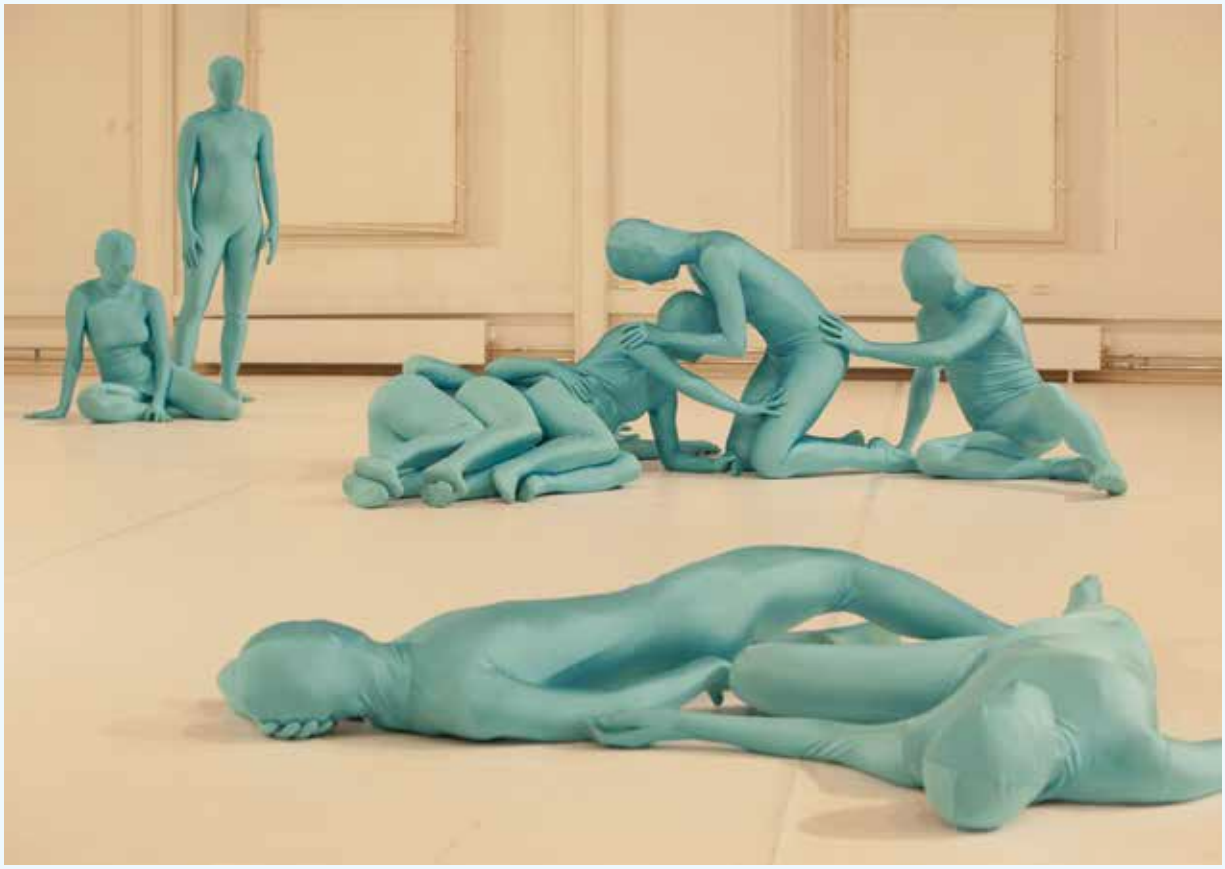
Expression as texture
Expression as the senses/sensation
Expression as speed
Expression as precision
Expression dissociated from the expressed

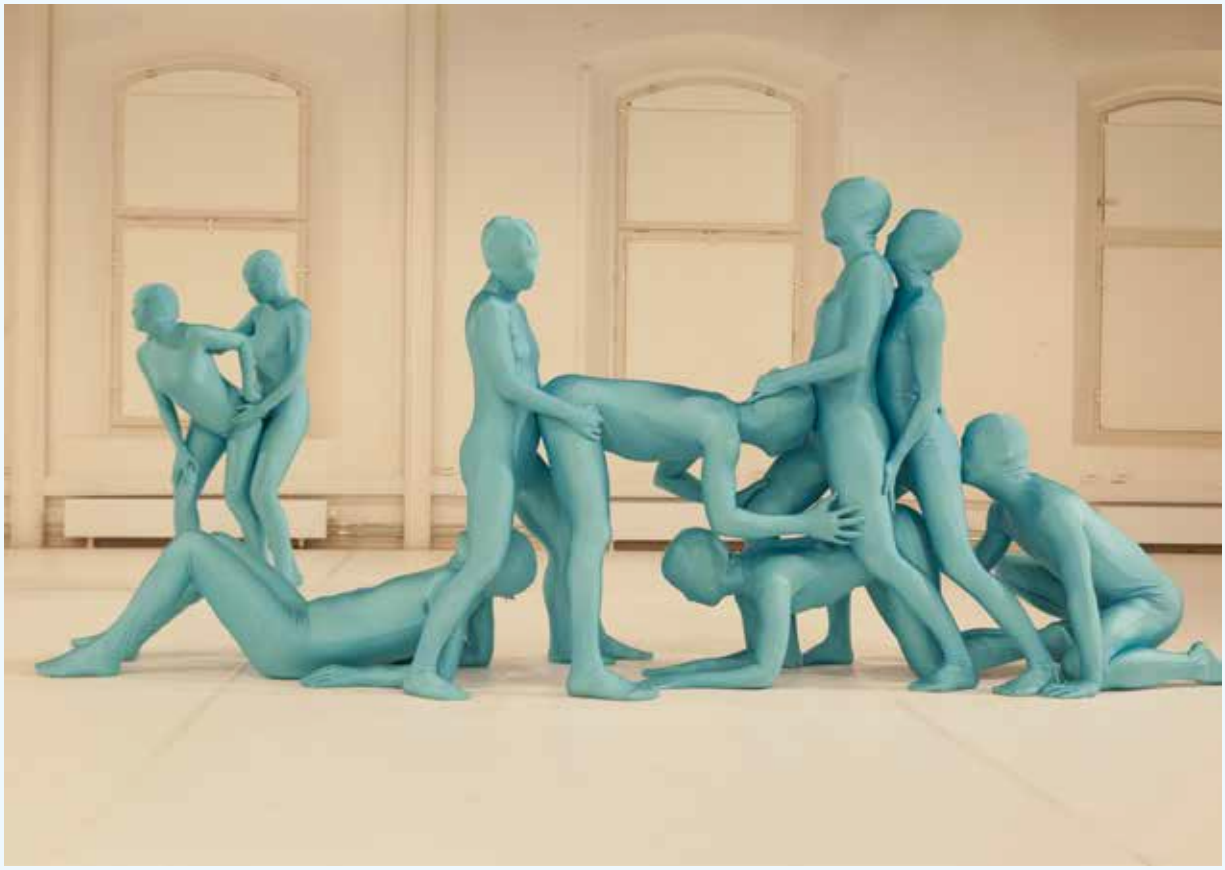
In this scene, wearing nudity as a costume again becomes very obvious. You could almost imagine this body fully dressed, even though it is in fact totally naked. I am wondering if the opposite would work as well — that is, imagining a fully dressed body being totally naked.

Let's try. Let's start by imagining that I'm not the only one who is naked in this room and that half of you have already taken off your clothes, while the other half of you are just about to do it. What is going to happen will happen in the middle of the room, so you can come and stand around it. We are going to imagine a huge orgy sculpture composed out of all our bodies. The connections we are going to imagine between our bodies have to be explicitly sexual, like for instance a hand to penis connection, or a mouth to breast connection, or why not a finger to butt-hole connection. It should be a proper sexual connection that deals with the erogenous zones as we know them, so not a hand to armpit connection, even though that might also be very pleasurable for certain among you.

I'm going to lie down in a very available position and you are going to imagine that you *(I address one spectator specifically)* already naked, come in to sit right next to the left side of my head to bend your head down and place it very close to mine.

As we are kissing, someone else comes in to join, it has to be someone tall and very flexible. Perhaps you *(I address someone else).* It's very important to be flexible because you need to place your feet far away, your pelvis here on top of mine and then your head here up high. Your head has to be here so that it can tilt in this direction.





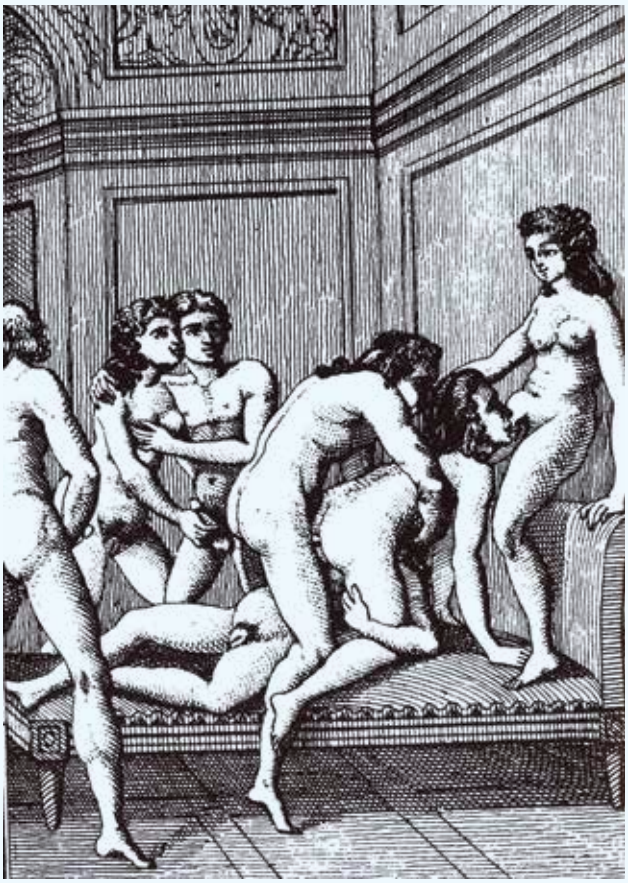
It is very important that your head is in this position, because the next person – don't worry it's not me but I am going to demonstrate for clarities sake — is going to take your head and place your tongue deep inside of her.

Now you *(I invite a last person)* start crawling in towards this woman. You start grabbing and massaging her buttocks, quite vigorously, and after a while you stick your hand through her legs to remove the head and the tongue that is penetrating her.

She now takes a step away from the orgy constellation that is slowly forming in the space with all our bodies in front of her eyes. She is surprised to see how difficult it is to distinguish men from women in the constellation. Maybe it's because of the exchangeability of the positions the bodies are in and the fact that no one follows the bodily conventions of passive and active behavior. In this constellation anyone can be the one licking or being licked, the one penetrating and the one being penetrated, the one on top and the one on the bottom. Preferably more of these things at the same time.

Searching for her next sexual encounter, the woman considers all the possibilities of desiring connections, and finally she sits down, placing her hand on someone's neck. It is in fact my neck that she is grabbing, because I am now sitting right in front of her, with my ass on top of the head of a man, sticking out my cheek like this.

(Pause)



From here it starts to go much faster. *(I still address people directly but without giving time for them to actualize the movement).* You arrive from the back and start doing this *(I make a physical movement suggesting fucking someone from behind),* at the same time the woman over there comes in to put her fingers into your mouth. She's actually standing over here while she places her fingers deep inside your throath. Now you walk in behind this woman and start to caress her breasts, while down on the floor there is another man sitting with his foot placed exactly there *(I place my foot at the level of an imaginary woman's genitals).* The woman being caressed is enjoying it immensely, yearning in pleasure, while the guy on the floor starts to vibrate his foot. In this moment, she seems to be discovering some sort of foot fetish that has been hidden in the very depths of her desires. The man on the floor tries to keep up with this increasing pleasure he sees arriving on her face. Right before she reaches the highest peak of her pleasure, he has to give up because he has a cramp in the muscles of his foot.

(I drop down on the floor lying still as the man and wait a bit)

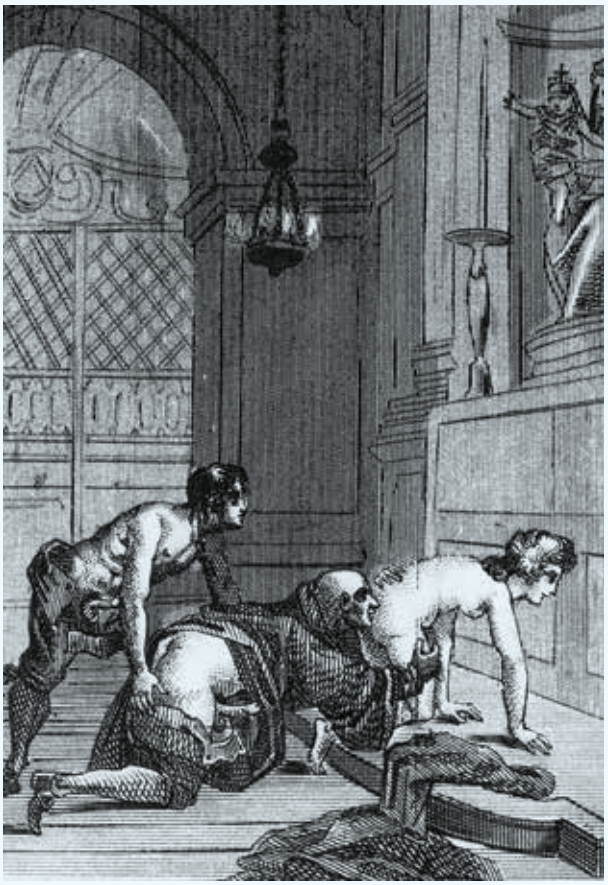
Now four of you start crawling in from all sides very slowly. You are playing a sort of game with this guy. The game is that he is supposed to lie completely still while you are supposed to do whatever you like to him. Suck, bite, lick, anything you can come up with to make him move. It is extremely difficult for him to lie still, as tongues and teeth traverse his entire body. To make him lie still, two of you grab one of his legs each. Up by his head there is another man sitting, holding his arms down so that it is finally only his head that is still free to move.

Now you enter the scene with a rope.

You grab the arms of this man and tie his hands together before you throw the rope over one of the bars up there. You pull the rope up until he can only just reach the floor. Around him, six of the women create a kind of circle around him, caressing him very softly. He seems to be enjoying it tremendously. Until one of you hit him extremely hard. At first he is completely shocked by the sudden change of the quality of touch. Then another one of you hits him really hard, and then another and another. Very quickly it seems to become a new game that establishes itself in the room, a game you all want to partake in. The more you hit him, the more red he becomes.

(I interrupt the action and walk to one of the walls)

He comes back with a whip in his hand. It's one of these old fashioned whips made of long thin brown branches. The four of you who just hit him the most are now lying in a huge ass-pile here on the floor. One ass at the bottom, another ass right above and even two more on top. The guy now stands with his hand on the back of the last person with the whip suspended in the air. And here he hesitates...maybe he hesitates because he doesn't know which of the four asses he should hit first, or maybe he simply hesitates because he doesn't know if he wants to become a torturer himself. It's also what you see over here.



These engravings were published to accompany one of Marquis de Sade's novels called *Justine, or the Misfortunes of Virtue*. The book tells a story about a girl who is being sexually abused, raped, tortured and humiliated by all the different men she encounters. It is really an awful story about power and submission, but what is interesting about it is that the sexual act is taking place within language and not within the body. In the novel Justine is telling her story to another much older woman, which disembodies the sexual act and makes it imaginary, something taking place in the virtual space of language.

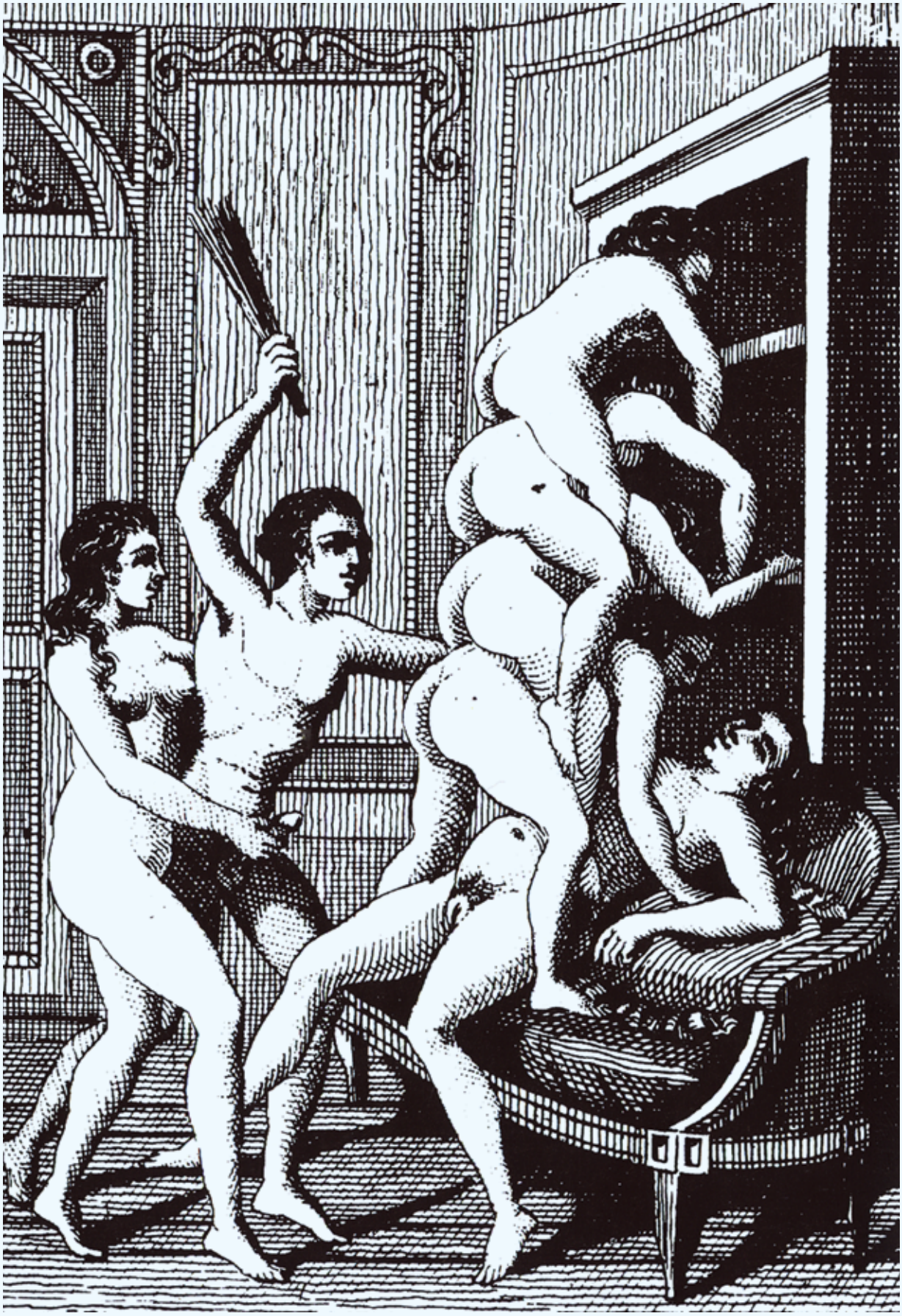
You might also recognize some of these images from the choreography we just did here together. The expression of this choreography changes quite radically, if you now imagine that we would be wearing the blue suits that you see on the screen over there *(I point to a film of to come (extended) on one of the screens).* The suits cancel the explicitly pornographic aspect of the images, that appear when you perform them naked. They cover up all the holes of the body and take away the wetness and all the facial expressions, making it impossible to identify with the performers.

In this piece the suits serve to isolate part of the sexual act; in the first part of this piece, we see the positions, rhythms and movements of the sexual act but we do not see the facial expressions, the sweat, the penetration, nor do we hear the sound. However, in the second part of the piece the performers focus on the sound of sex by performing a collective orgasm choir. Since it's very hard to have multiple collective orgasms each night in the theater, the performers are helped by a soundtrack that they listen to through headphones. And since I actually have this soundtrack and the headphones, I thought maybe we could continue by performing this sound piece together. Would anyone be interested in having a multiple collective orgasm?

The score is for four to five people, so it would be great to have two male and two female volunteers, to balance out the highs and the lows of the composition. It's very simple to perform: you just put these headphones into your ears and try to reproduce the sound down to the smallest detail, following all the increases and decreases in volume, intensity and rhythm. You focus on reproducing the sound quality as carefully as you can, at the same time as you perform it as if it were a normal a cappella choir piece. *(I negotiate with the public until four people have joined the choir)*

I am very happy that you accepted to do this, and I am sure all the rest of the spectators are as well, so we are going to applaud enthusiastically no matter what happens, so basically you can only succeed!

Ok, here we go.



Thank you very much!

Now that we are already clapping, I would like to ask you to continue clapping. The next thing I would like to show you is a social dance, and a social dance of course needs a social situation. So if I could please ask you to stand up and form a circle in the space. We are just going to lower the lights to change the atmosphere as well. The dance I would like to show you is called Lindy Hop and it was originally developed within the black communities in America. Rather quickly it was, as it has happened many times before, appropriated by the whites. Perhaps you all know the white Charleston, which is a very uptight dance looking a bit like this *(I demonstrate)* which was in fact based on the black Charleston that was a dance with a much lower gravity point with very complex rhythms and jumps.

During this dance you are welcome to snap your fingers, step side to side, do the head nod or even start to dance. I am just going to put on some music to help us get into it.

Script and Archive
Section 3

Welcome now to the third and final section of the archive. In this part I'm going to demonstrate a number of different sexual practices for you, with you and perhaps also on you. These practices have been selected for how they use a nonhuman element in order to produce or increase human pleasure. By nonhuman elements, I do simply mean objects but also more abstract things, like molecules, vibrations or sounds. What is particular to these practices, beside using external nonhuman elements, is that they also aim to transform the inside of the body on a molecular level. And by that the borders between the inside and the outside, or between private and public space start to dissolve.

The first object I would like to show to you is a book. It's a book that describes a very particular form of pleasure, namely testo-pleasure. It was written during a one year long body experiment that the author performed on her own body. What she did in specific was to apply testosterone gel on to her body everyday for 9 months, while at the same time she was observing how it changed her appearance, but maybe more importantly her inner affects, sensations and desires.

Testogel is usually used to treat hormonal deficiencies in men. Besides making people very lucid, energetic and wide awake, it is also a drug that is said to increase libido and produce prolonged erections when used in a higher dose than prescribed. It's not at all a drug designed for women, but nevertheless gender hackers and gender pirates, as they call themselves, have for a long time been able to access this gel without any medically prescribed or socially accepted protocol. What happens to you when you use the drug is that the molecules penetrate your skin, enter into your bloodstream and start modifying your desires.

It's not so far from any other molecular modification. If you're already using the birth control pill, Viagra, or one of the new hormonal treatments used to increase fertility, the step to Testogel is very small. The number of undesired side effects are more or less equal to any other pharmaceutical product that enters into your body and starts controlling your desires. I would like to read a little part from this book, *Testo Junkie*[11] by Beatriz Preciado, or today Paul B. Preciado that describes the body under testo-treatment. It's called

RENDEZVOUS WITH T

Paris, November 25, 2005. I am waiting until 10 in the evening to take a new dose of Testogel. I've taken a shower so that I don't have to wash myself after applying it. I've set out a blue work-shirt, a tie, and black trousers to take Justine out for a walk afterwards.

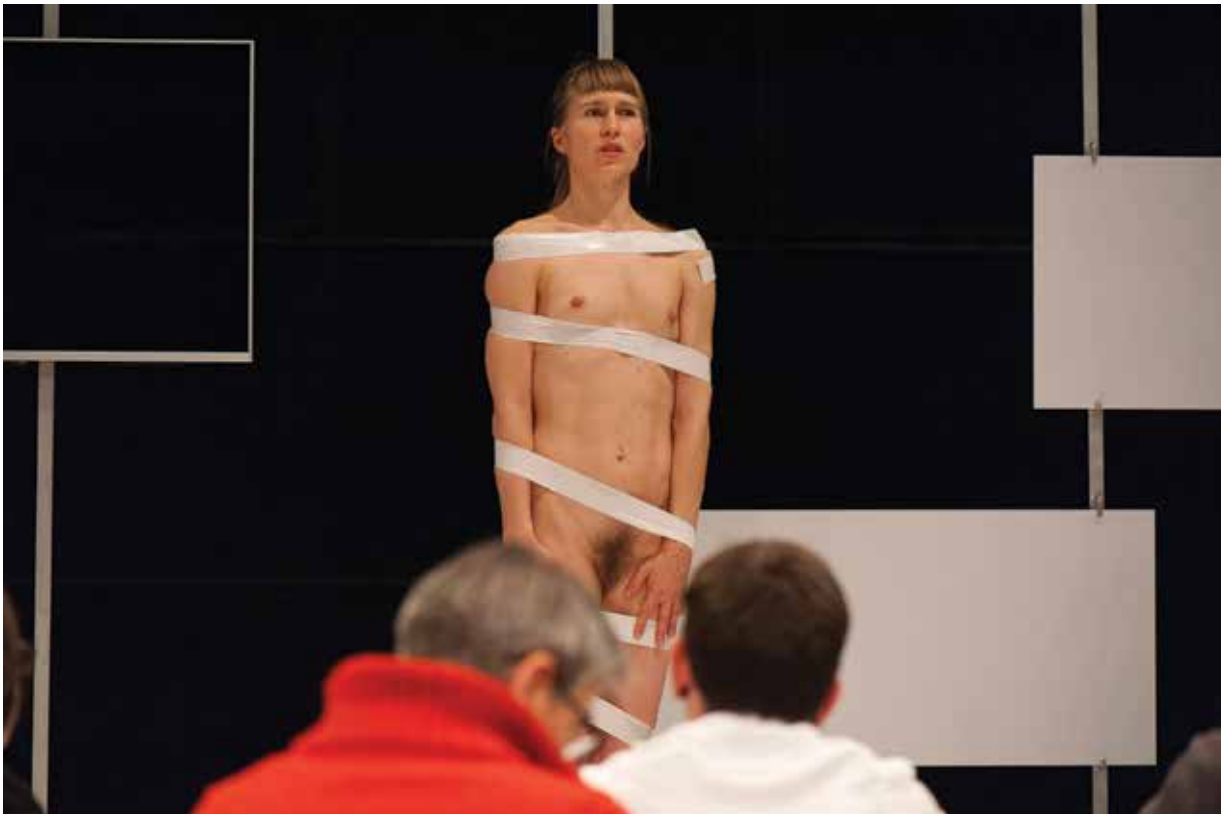
Justine is her dog and not the character from the De Sade novel.

I haven't felt any change since yesterday. I am waiting for the effects of T, without knowing exactly what they will be or how or when they'll become apparent.

No drug is as pure as testosterone in gel form. It's odorless. However, the day after I take it, my sweat becomes sickly sweet, more acidic. The smell of a plastic doll heated by the sun comes from me, apple liqueur abandoned in the bottom of a glass. It's my body that is reacting to the molecule. Testosterone has no taste or color, leaves no traces. The testosterone molecule dissolves into the skin as a ghost walks through a wall. It enters without warning, penetrates without leaving a mark. You don't need to smoke, sniff, or inject it or even swallow it. It's enough to bring it near your body and its mere proximity to the body causes it to disappear into and become diluted in your blood.[12]

When you apply Testogel on to your body, it's advised to only apply it to parts that do not come into contact with other bodies. A simple skin to skin connection can cause the molecule to transfer from one body to another and this can lead to undesired effects.

Another effect of Testogel is that you become extremely horny and ready to fuck anything.



Could I please ask you to help me wrap the rest of my body? *(I ask the person sitting closest to me)*

This practice is called sexual mummification, and you could almost imagine it being something that people would do to reestablish a private space around their own body. Because it is exactly a practice about closing off the exterior world in order to focus on the inner sensations of the body. The pleasures produced by this practice come from being entirely immobilized through mummification. What you do to achieve it, is to wrap the entire body, from the very tips of your toes all the way up to the top of the head. The only thing that is left uncovered are the holes in the nose so that you can still breath. It can be done with this kind of tape, but also with cloth, or latex vacuum bags.

While we're doing this, I would like to ask all of you to stand or sit completely still, because like that the sensation I'm about to feel can maybe transfer into your bodies as well. To feel it better, you can also imagine that it is in fact your naked body that has been wrapped and that you are now standing in a public space of your own choice. While standing in this public space, you might have sounds or thoughts invading you from the outside, but what you try to do is simply to focus on your inner sensations.

Okay, so we're going to do this for one minute, and I would just like to ask one of you to place a piece of tape over my mouth, because it's very important that all the different cavities of the body are closed off. *(I talk to an audience member helping me).* You place the tape on my mouth, count to sixty inside your head while you stand completely still, and then you take it off again — and please do take it off again.If not, I will be stuck here all night. Let's try.

I don't know if you could feel anything...But when you sit still like that, you look almost like human sculptures. This is very good because the next thing I would like to show you is exactly that—an immobile human figure in the form of a marble sculpture.

Now I need to ask you again to help me get back out of this tape. *(I again address the person sitting closest to me).*

About 130 years ago, a book called *Psychopathia Sexualis*[13] was written. It was a book about sexual pathologies containing some 243 case studies, describing all kinds of sexual deviations. One of the cases was about a man who fell in love with a sculpture and made love to it on several occasions. Today, agalmatophelia, as this practice was named at the time, is no longer considered a pathology, but rather a sexual practice that can be done with both sculptures and also other humanly shaped figures, like dolls or mannequins.

As you now already look like human sculptures, I would now like to imagine that we are out in a very big sculpture garden and that you are all sculptures in it. I'm going to be the gardener who spends his days on all fours, weeding the flower beds that surround you. I like my job very much. I also like all of you very much, but there is one of you that I have a special feeling for. It's the very beautiful sculpture called Venus de Milo. It is in fact a white marble sculpture of Aphrodite, the goddess of love and beauty. It has lost one arm so it is also a very fragile sculpture. And one night after the sun has gone down, when all the visitors of the garden have left, I make my first attempt of coming closer.

(I lick the finger, neck or leg of an audience member, depending on where the skin sticks out.) Your finger is really wonderful, but this will never work with human flesh. The pleasure of this practice depends on the interaction one can only have with an entirely lifeless figure.

It is exactly the encounter with the ice cold marble that excites and creates an almost electric current that runs through your veins, when your tongue touches the marble. But since we do not have a marble sculpture here, I would like to try to give you this sensation in a different way. For this I would like to ask all of you to close your eyes. Don't worry, I promise not to touch you while you have your eyes closed.

(I speak softly into a microphone that distributes my voice into the entire space.)

You are now sitting in a waiting room. You don't exactly know what you are waiting for, but the people in front of you are being led in through two large swinging doors, one by one. It's very clear that you can only enter on your own, and when the woman comes to picks you up, you follow her without asking any questions. She leads you into a very dark room where she asks you to take off all of your clothes. Once completely naked, she guides you to sit down in a chair that is inclined so that your body is halfway lying, halfway sitting. The woman, who is entirely accustomed to working in the dark, separates your legs carefully and place two electrodes on your inner thighs. She places two on your buttocks and two on your genitals as well. After placing these external electrodes, she asks you to relax completely and take a deep breath in while she places the electro-insert into one of the cavities of your body.

As the low-frequency electric stimulation starts entering your body, you feel your nerve endings respond. There is nothing shocking or painful about the impulses. Quite the contrary. You start to have a tingling feeling in the areas touched by electrodes. As the frequency of the impulses increases, you start to feel a pumping or a stroking of your sexual organs. It's a very pleasant and visceral sensation, almost as if the stimulation would be coming from within your own body, but without you having to do anything to feel it.

The more impulses you get, the more your cells start vibrating from the stimulation, and as the stoking goes on, you are overwhelmed by an ecstatic pleasure. The blood rushes through your veins and all of a sudden you no longer know if you are deep asleep or wide awake. When you come back to yourself the woman in charge of your electro-stimulation has already removed the electrodes from your body.

Now you can open your eyes.

This practice is called electro stimulation or e-stim, and it is in fact something you can do at home in your living room, because you can buy a little electro-stimulation kit for home use. It also comes with a specific musical feature, that makes it possible to hook the box up with a musical device, which then transforms the musical vibrations into electro-stimulation. People say this heightens the pleasure even more. To show you this I'm just going to put on some music. (*Breaking Bones* by Will Guthrie)

With this last object and also last practice, I would like to finish the guided tour that started in the 1960's, went up through the 2000's, and that ends here with you today. I would like to thank all of you for your attention and also wish you a very pleasurable night.

Thank you.

Letter to the Public #2: Intimacy and Privacy

Dear Public

I'm writing this letter to you imagining that you have just seen or read the script of *69 positions*. I am writing because I would like to continue discussing the questions that making and performing this piece have evoked in me, specifically in relation to you. While writing I'm imagining who you are and what you might have thought during *69 positions*. But, I am also writing while remembering all the conversations, discussions, letters and emails I have exchanged with other members of the public throughout the two years that I have now been performing.

In this letter I would like to think further about the status of intimacy and privacy within our society, by reflecting upon how today's borders between the public and the private are dissolving. This relates to concerns regarding the public sphere and what it means to "create a public" in a theater space and with that, touching upon notions of participation. I also have a desire to better understand the bodily effects created by *69 positions* through performing in close proximity to you. A question that addresses the affective and sensorial exchanges that occur during the performance and how these propose a specific politics of being together operating at the edges of intimate experience.

So where to start? Why not for once from the end or at least with a description of what happens right after the performance finishes?

When I exit the performance area of *69 positions*, I'm always totally out of breath. I walk around randomly, as if my body would need to keep on moving, as my breath returns to its normal rhythm. Then, mostly lying or rolling on my back, I start thinking about how the performance went. I try to recall your faces, how you moved and positioned yourself in relation to each other, your proximity, direction, even your touch and smell. I compare my sensation to experiences of previous evenings, knowing I should not. No two groups, nor experiences are ever to be compared; from one night to another, at the same time and place, the shows differ like night and day. The singularity of how a community comes into existence for the time of the performance is something that each time I perform, I start to understand a little better. Sometimes the effect of performing is an ecstatic energy, overwhelming me and all of you with the affective feedback loops that are created — between my words and actions and how you receive and react to them. After more difficult performances you seem puzzled, intrigued and sometimes troubled by having to deal with zones of discomfort and negotiation. On those nights, I feel entirely depleted, as if I had given absolutely everything I had to give, into a big black hole that sucks up and swallows anything in close proximity.

When I happen to talk to you after the performances, I enjoy listening to what you have to say; your testimonies of how you received the shows, your problems and difficulties with handling the nudity, or the total ease with which you felt allowed to follow a path through a landscape of multiple representations of sexual and erotic bodies. Many of you talk about how the piece makes my body entirely non or a-sexual, in spite of the topic constantly evolving around sex, orgasm, pleasure and desire. As the conversations progress, I start to understand some of the connections you make between my performance and the world outside the theater.

After the premiere of the piece at PACT Zollverein in Essen, I was slightly surprised by what the performance produced in terms of conversations. One of you — a woman I had never meet before — came up to me to discuss what she had experienced. Instead of talking about what I did, she started telling me about her sexual experiences, from being a young child and teenager up until today. There was one description that she related directly to the moment in the performance where I am licking a warm light bulb, and she told me how she used to do this alone in her room to practice kissing when she was 14 years old. Her descriptions were slightly surprising to me for two reasons: First, because I have rarely experienced that a total stranger so blatantly would expose their sexual life to me. Secondly, because I was not prepared that the piece would have as much to do with the creation of an intimate space and a private reflection on one's own sexuality, as with the questions I believed I was addressing between sexuality and the public sphere.

Of course at the heart of my research, questions of intermingling private and public space were central and her comments made sense. Still what I wanted to render visible was exactly the opposite of what she expressed to me. Instead of identifying sexuality as a private concern happening isolated in our bedrooms. I wanted to extract the naked, sexual and intimate body from the private sphere to place it in the public. I wanted to do this because I thought it would show how this process is already happening within our society, not only on the level of the sexual body but also in relation to other, more political areas of expression.

I remember thinking about this – the political character of the exposure of intimacy and privacy –when watching a movie by Laura Poitras called Citizenfour (2014). It was a documentary about Edward Snowden in exile, just after he exposed how the U.S government had been surveying people's private information. In the film he explains how this surveillance was done in a top secret manner, under the auspices of exceptional laws made in the name of homeland security, yet, according to his understanding, breaking fundamental democratic rules regarding the right to privacy. Parallel to this, I was thinking

that on a more daily and voluntary level, this is also what is constantly happening to us when we click accept to “cookies” or endless incomprehensible agreement forms, without knowing exactly what information we are accepting to give access to. Or, what happens when all of a sudden people find out that their full identity has been stolen and is now for sale for less than 15 euros on Alphabay, including their name, birthdate, phone number, computer IP address, passwords and credit-card information.

While making *69 positions* I remember questioning how the loss of privacy growing within our societies, is affecting our bodies and our subjectivity today. I also remember thinking about how to understand the control exercised on bodies through the permanent surveillance of personal information or simply through the permanent visibility of intimacy that people voluntarily expose on social media networks.

In relation to this, the sexual descriptions of this woman kept on ruminating in me. Did she miss the whole point in relation to the publicness of my performance and my attempt to make sexuality into a social and political rather than a personal field of investigation? Or did the performance perhaps open up a different kind of intimate space than the one offered by social media that I was suspicious of? Was the piece perhaps proposing a way to create a collective performance experience that people could become intimately invested in by socially being together through theater?

I realized that my attempts – of showing how borders are dissolving between private and public space – were at work when the intimate narratives of this woman traveled across social limits as a consequence of having seen my performance. But more than reinforcing the breaking down of social inhibitions, demonstrated by the free flow of words regarding private sexual experience, I was hoping that the piece would also evoke understandings of how our intimate and personal practices are directly political. In the piece I try to evoke how we embody political structures on a molecular level when we, for instance, consume pharmaceutical products like birth-control pills, Viagra and fertility hormones; all aimed to alternate our most intimate desires. I’m also thinking about this on the very simple level of how our sexual practices are formed by historical inscriptions of power iterated by our physical behavior. The concrete physical movements we perform with our bodies during sexual acts confirm or question these divisions of power according to how we are passive or active, how we penetrate or are being penetrated, how we lick or are being licked, how we place ourselves on top or at the bottom of a sexual relation.

With intimate concern for the private,
Mette

Letter to the public #3:
Pornography, Affect and Economy

Dear Public

"I have no need to remind you – not you, who are already reading this book – that the province of sex (and I mean your sex) is not the individual body (your body) or the private domain (your private domain) or any domestic space (your domestic space). That not the individual body, or the space called private, or the domestic space, escapes political regulation. Sex, excitation, the demand for erection and ejaculation are at the center of the phamacopornographic political production and economy. Accordingly, the situation can be defined in the following terms: labor sexus est.

[...] Sex is work." *Beatriz Preciado, Testo Junkie*

While reading *Testo Junkie* I was struck by the concept of "the pornification of labor".[14] It was the perfect mix between two elements consistently present within my work since the very beginning; my interests in immaterial labor, together with my interest in sexual and bodily expression. When starting to work on *69 positions,* I had the feeling that there was a close relationship to be found between the material naked body and the choreography I was trying to create through the immaterial presence of words. My desire to create "language choreography" while at the same time being busy with the naked body was a way of trying to understand the relationship between sexuality and immaterial labor economy. An economy where material objects but also the production of language, information, services, experiences, affects, sensations, excitations and frustrations are included in what is considered a commodity.

In his book *Testo Junkie*, Beatrice Preciado, today Paul B. Preciado, makes an analogy between explicit pornography and other types of cultural production, by claiming that all cultural production in fact is porn envy[15]. He explains, that the efficiency of bodily satisfaction mastered by pornography is not so far from how other domains of expression try to incite and stimulate cycles of excitation-frustration-excitation. This means that any audio visual material capable of modifying and functioning through the production of desire, pleasure, excitation and frustration could be considered pornographic, whether or not they show actual images of naked bodies fucking. He calls these Post-Fordist models of production and the process by which they create commodities, the pornification of labor. What this means is that the *pornographic* not only describes sex-films made to excite, but also a whole new era of understanding images, bodies, sensation and affects.

After performing *69 positions* and through that explicitly thinking about how to deal with being a worker within this pharmacopornographic labor economy, I started to think about my motivations and strategies

for wanting to address the relationship between sexuality, pornography and immaterial labor. Throughout the process of making *69 positions*, I enjoyed experimenting sexually by interacting with all the objects in my living room for weeks and months while preparing for the show. However, this practice had little to do with the expression of my personal or intimate desires, but more to do with wanting to understand the notion of the pornification of labor as it happens within the performance and experience economy. My investigations were about taking standardized principles of sexual representation to an extreme, to examine how this could transform our understanding of them. At the same time, I was thinking a lot about commercial images and how pleasure and desire are being used to sell products. When anything from Levis jeans, Bacardi rum, Magnum ice-cream, Nespresso, to various cars and furniture are being sold through the promise of pleasure and almost direct sexual gratification, this renders visible the interdependencies between sexuality and capitalism that I was trying to understand. Through my experiments I developed a strategy: I adopted the approach of over-sexualizing space and objects to find out what kind of expression it would evoke if I would seriously make out with these "desirable" object. I did not want to be ironic about it, directly commenting on commercial or sexual imagery, I wanted rather to undo by overdoing. Or maybe, I wanted to search for how the affective and sensorial manipulation of our bodies – going on within capitalism's explicit use of desire and pleasure – could become visible by creating an estrangement. My concern was to find out – through working on the materiality of sexual bodies – how affect is connected to notions of bodily control. How affect is subject to manipulation that easily becomes a mechanism of power acting inside our bodies in ways that are close to impossible to detect.

In terms of performance, instead of refusing affective engagement, I tried to focus on creating sensations, that would demand a conscious investment and effort to be received. Rather than criticizing mechanisms of control from an objective point of view, I tried to give an experience that would externalize the production of affect in the body. One approach I developed was to ask you to imagine the effects different sexual practices could have on your body, so that sensing would have to become a conscious doing. I used a similar process on my own body as well, imagining and speculating about what testosterone stimulation as a sexual practice would feel like and how it would transform my body's desire until I would literally be ready to fuck anything.

Another strategy I developed in relation to pornographic representation is directly articulated in the second part of the performance evolving around the restaging of my own previous works. In this part, I invite you to create an imaginary orgy sculpture made out of all of our bodies. I invite you to create this

sculpture within your imagination, but leaving a crack open for the possibility of it being actualized. And, as I place my body into this explicitly sexual image, I wait for some of you to accept my invitation to do so as well. And in the split second of waiting, I feel a major hesitation running through you, “does she really want me to come or am I suppose to imagine it”, “if I do it will the others do it as well”, “is this ok to do this in a public space”. At the same time as I try to maintain this hesitation, I also try to create another rupture in the pornographic image to disturb it functionality and question its efficiency. This rupture is created by splicing the image into two parts: the bodily and sexual positions we inhabit contrasted by the spoken words accompanying them. The aim would be that the situation, the hesitation and the voice that speaks back to you (instead of moaning and screaming), would make the ultimate goal of the pornographic image (ejaculation) impossible.

I thought that what could perhaps be found, by interrupting the efficacy of the pornographic image would be a way to momentarily elude the economic capture of the sexual potential of bodies. As if, efficiency and standardization (prescribed models of fast ejaculation) would be two sides of the same coin. A relation that could be ruptured by creating an image without a clear goal in terms of what *particular* effects the performative situation should have on your bodies watching it. I thought that perhaps the moment of hesitation within the show, where you were unsure if I wanted you to join me or not…could provoke a destabilization of subjectivity, where other behaviors than those prescribed by standardized goals could be created?

My strategies; estrangement through over-sexualization, interruption of pornographic image efficiency and rendering the production of affect perceptible through conscious imagination, were meant as ways of disturbing the smooth functioning of the “pharmacopornographic” immaterial labor economy, which uncritically exploits the sexual potential of bodies, including their affects and desires.

With an understanding of porn envy,
Mette

Letter to the Public #4:
Orality, Storytelling and Language Choreography

Dear Public

After the performance, there is always one of you who start telling a story. Your stories vary from more or less personal or political experiences, to more or less theoretical or affective reflections, or simply positive or negative reactions. As your stories are being told, I realize that what you are transmitting to me is the experience of the performance in its oral existence, discursively modified, retold, rechanneled, reinterpreted through the words you return to me and to each other after seeing the show. I realize that the performance makes us all into storytellers.

The role of the storyteller has always been to transmit or mediate experience from one mouth to another, from one body to another, or even from one generation to another. In Walter Benjamin's text entitled *The Storyteller* from 1936, he argues that in a world that is increasingly mediatized, where communication has become equivalent to information and image circulation, the risk of losing the type of experience transmission that oral cultures symbolize is great. He explains that the storyteller takes what he tells from his own or other's experiences, and he turns it into experience within the body of the listener through the act of narrating a story.[15] He also brings our attention to how the oral is never just oral, but always filled with gestures. An insight rendering his concerns directly appropriable in the frame of dance, with its history of non-verbal expression. In this sense, oral tradition does not only transmit history through repetition of narratives and stories but also through how the body of the storyteller is moving; the body's gestures, postures and facial expressions becoming part of what creates the transmission of oral experience.

The narrative approaches used during the making of *69 positions,* were not motivated by this notion of the storyteller, but retrospectively the close connection is appealing. At the time of making the performance, I thought about my work on the performances of the 1960's as a way of exorcising ghosts from the past that I felt my topics were haunted by. To develop these narrative approaches, I entered into a direct physical dialog, not with the living bodies (except in the case of Carolee Schneemen) but with the traces and archives of the bodies I was searching for. I also thought about my physical investigations as movement dialogs with these mediated ghost bodies. I encountered and learned about these bodies through books, descriptions of situations and rehearsals, interviews, images of performances, edited film and video documentations and from the testimonies of the performers. My desire was to activate the time spirit of the 1960's in a way that would make it palpable today – an exercise in imagination and speculation, but also simply in physical experimentation and bodily becoming. In terms of narrative and performative techniques, I used and developed very different strategies for how to involve you into the soft choreography I hoped to create. Your bodies had to be directly implicated in the action, through

the way language was used. The linguistic pretext of the museum guide – that came to frame the whole performances – allowed my body to step in and out of different rhetorical figures. The figure of the tour guide and of an explanatory use of language, was quickly dissolved into other performative approaches. Already when I read the letter of Carolee Schneeman out loud, my very first action within the piece, it became clear to me that I'm not only speaking about artworks from the past; I'm also speaking *through* them, using voices and positions produced by them, and in that way making my body into the vessel for the history of others.

Ekphrasis was another approach I used, employing verbal descriptions of performances, while at the same time physically embodying all the positions and bodies visible in the videos I was observing. Ekphrasis is a rhetorical term used in literary theory to describe the way in which an act of speaking or writing about an artwork can produce a reality of its own, equally as physical, intense and strong as the original event it describes (or imagines in the case of invented artworks). To achieve this autonomy of the re-enactments, I started to work with the combination of language, actions, postures, gestures and movements that I would perform, but also with how this could be expanded onto your bodies as spectators.

The idea of re-staging historical performances in order to produce a physical experience of them, while at the same time creating a new reality, became crucial. In this new reality, your bodies were always taken into consideration as potential participants of the historical performances described; either as spectators of those performances or as actors, performers, dancers, sculptures or things within them.

I hoped that the language choreography that these approaches gave rise to would create a world of virtual relations. Relations established through imagination, speculation, verbalization and their direct link to the physical actions, movements, dances but also to the archival images, texts and videos placed on the walls. What I tried to do was to use language as a medium of expression that would allow these connections to be made, to create an extended choreography permeable to history, politics and social structures. Language was meant to function as the interconnector of these different mediums exposed on the walls, being affectively mediated through my act of speaking, and thereby making my body into a processor, transmitter or vessel of the historical works. And even when my voice in *69 positions* is unamplified and I'm disconnected from any actual digital device, I think my body in the performance can still be understood as a technology that is shaped and formed by the different mediums surrounding our bodies today. At least I like to think about how the creation of an immaterial "word-reality" through speech choreography could materialize a specific expression of inter-medial subjectivity.

This inter-medial understanding of subjectivity would have to do with articulating the relationship between live and mediated bodies, or between live performance and all those other modes of digitalized performance that dominate how we can sense our bodies today. It seems to me that it no longer suffices to think that we can preserve the corporeal body and the experience of the flesh by simply avoiding to make live bodies into digital images and spoken voices into written texts. For this we have progressed too far. Rather, what needs to be articulated is how the flesh, the lived body and its subjectivity are already composed by the digital, the mediated, the immaterial and the imaginary.

To perform in close proximity with you is, on one hand, to propose a relation to the flesh that troubles the safe distance from which we usually observe sexualized representations of the body. On the other, it's a way to propose an experience of how our imaginary reach has little spatial limitations if we connect it to the virtual.

The experience of the naked and sexual body that I propose to you in *69 positions*, is not only a way to counteract dominant and decorporalized conceptions of the naked body as they circulate in the image and media economy today. The spoken choreography that accompanies the movements of my naked body is also a way for us to experiment with how to experience and rethink relations between material and immaterial, bodily and non-bodily, actual and virtual, concrete and imagined realities. As if the production of a virtual choreography, through language and imagination, could elude (image) economy, or the incorporation of the subjectivity into economy, even if only for a moment.

With imagination,
Mette

Letter to the Public #5: Freedom and Expression

Dear Public

After the performance of *69 positions* in Montpellier on the 7th of January 2015, I came out of the show feeling that everything was completely wrong. The performance in itself had gone ok, but the political situation I was playing in overpowered everything. On the train on my way to Montpellier, my sister sent an SMS asking me if I had heard about the shootings in Paris, wanting to know if my family and friends were ok. I had not yet seen the newspaper articles describing the brutal slaughtering of the cartoonists and co-workers of Charlie Hebdo, nor of the events that followed, but it did not take long to understand that it was a symbolic attack on the right to free expression. When I arrived at the choreographic center, the discussions were already going on and when the "deuil national" was announced, we assumed for about an hour that this meant I was not going to perform. At first I was relieved, as it occurred to me that dealing with the topic of sexuality and the public sphere, without being able to quickly adapt to the current political situation, was not a good idea. After a little more research, the woman who had invited me found out that "deuil national" did not in fact mean that cultural institutions should stop their activities and I found myself back in the dressing room starting to warm up for the performance.

I performed with a certain malaise, feeling incapable of articulating the relationship between the actual events, the climate it had created in the public sphere and what I was doing. The day after, I managed to say some two sentences at the end of the show, about how the need to defend the right to free expression was more important than ever – and then again, I was struck by the feeling that something was completely wrong.

It had something to do with the notion of freedom and the understanding of free expression. I felt uneasy with the fact that in the context of this new political situation, suddenly my naked-body-performance was being read as a way of defending the liberty of expression, a concern I had not specifically thought about when I made it. I was reminded that the autonomy of the artwork, something I always believed in, reaches far beyond the intentions with which an artwork has been produced. Regardless, I needed to understand what was happening to how the signification of the performance was changing within the current political context.

Prior to the event, I had understood my performing as an attempt to physically reflect upon the effects that the (neoliberal) immaterial labor economy has on bodies in general and how it produces certain forms of control with respect to affects, sensations, desires and pleasures. The question of control appeared to me as an inherently political one, a difficult question to tackle when trying to understand a

system that sells itself as being based on free choice and individual freedom. I was helped by an interview with Michel Foucault,[16] where he insists on understanding freedom not as a thing to be obtained, but a practice of liberation that needs to be…practiced! He speaks about this when he explains the relationship between actual liberation and practices of freedom, saying that, for instance, the actual liberation of a people, when they succeed to free themselves from a colonizing power, does not suffice to install a new political structure and a society that would be more acceptable or desirable than the previous one. (A political fact we currently see being played out in the Arab world)

Foucault also applies this distinction of liberation from practices of freedom, clearly opting for the second one, when it comes to sexuality:

"I encountered that exact same problem in dealing with sexuality: does the expression "let us liberate our sexuality" have a meaning? Isn't the problem rather to try to decide the practices of freedom through which we could determine what is sexual pleasure and what are our erotic, loving, passionate relationships with others. It seems to me that to use this ethical problem of the definition of practices of freedom is more important than the affirmation that sexuality or desire must be set free".

This helped me to respond to comments like "you seem so free and comfortable with your naked body". To not think of what I do as a form of sexual liberation to be achieved (this is where my performative approach differs radically from those of the 60's) but rather as a freeing practice, or as a way of practicing freedom, of being aware that freedom is constantly at risk of being recuperated – by the economy, by the gaze, by hegemonic structures, by notions of identity etc. I felt that this permanent flexibility and alertness that is needed to practice freedom, was somehow reflected in how I always performatively attempted to adapt and alter the choreography to the social situation that unfolded in the room as I performed. The notions of soft choreography and soft space helped me to think about how to propose a space where some sort of solidarity could be created. To be close to you, was a way to let myself be affected by and concerned with what was happening to you throughout the performance. And to also let you encounter this intimacy in relation to each other, or at least in relation to how you could find yourself able to care for the comfort or the discomfort of the others throughout the show.

With alertness,
Mette

Letter to the public #7:
Sexual Self-Experimentation

Dear Public,

After yet another night of performing I return home to my flat in Brussels. In the schoolbag of my 4-year old daughter I find a paper saying, we are celebrating carnival in the school; the boys will be disguised as pirates, the girls as princesses. I read the paper again to be sure that I got the French right. This time I read: The boys will be disguised as bloody power hungry tyrants, while the girls will be beautiful, silent, obedient, yet aristocratic women. I ask my daughter if she wants me to buy her a pirate costume. She answers NO and explains to me that ALL the girls will be princesses and that besides that she already has her princess dress. The note reminds me that I still have to teach my daughters that even the oldest feminist concerns remain unresolved. Equal pay for equal work, parity between the sexes within governing structures, shared parental responsibility for children, the battle against sexism, the discrimination of LGBT and transgender communities and the representation of women's bodies in media, are only a few of the issues that they will also have to work to transform. I start to think about what they will have to do to resist the bodily techniques that are operating on their bodies. I also start to think about how I will have to resist or question the bodily techniques that are operating on my body, knowing that my bodily experiments have at least made me aware that they exist. Sexually interacting with objects has made me notice how much my hitherto anthropocentric sexual practice of interacting with humans, has been defined by an entire history of bodily techniques exercised on my body. Techniques defined by heterosexual sex practices and by heteronormative societal structures. Structures that inherently exclude marginal, estranged and transgressive expressions of sexuality, or alternative models of living because they threaten the foundation on which power structures are built.

From this realization, I am reminded of the gender struggles I found myself in 15 years ago, struggles that led to the early works I present in the second part of *69 positions* and specifically in *Manual Focus*. I'm also reminded of my initial starting point when returning to work on questions regarding the sexual; how self-experimentation is not only a private concern but also something that becomes important to insist on at a social and political level, as a way of creating affective counter-practices that challenge those generally dominating the behavior of bodies. In this way, bodily self-experimentation is a political and a collective concern that potentially transforms bodies, social imaginaries, affects and desires and how they relate to political action.

"Political struggles over imaginaries may not transform what a structure is, but they shift what fantasy does, how it arcs, what it reaches, and what's available to be in play. The subject is an effect of such play. […] Affect affects worlds and is impacted by them. [...] It involves discovering and inhabiting disturbances in the relation between one's affects and one's imaginaries for action."[17]

The disturbances created by *69 positions,* which arise from how we encounter each other without knowing what this encounter will do to us, I would like to think of as an opportunity for us to rethink social imaginaries; how we create and are affected by them, what they do to our bodies and to our ways of forming social relations. What affect does to our bodies on a very concrete level and what the affects of *69 positions* does in particular, makes me think of the qualities and textures of your bodies and how they are transformed throughout the time we speand together. Most of you walk out after the show in a very different bodily state than the one you were in when you entered. Very often all of you start by standing, not knowing exactly where to go in the space. Whereas towards the end of the 3rd part of the performance most of you are sitting or even lying completely relaxed on the floor.

This relaxed sensation in the space is always interrupted by the loud music that signals the beginning of my last dance. This last dance does not leave any explanation behind. It does not explain the status of the sexual and naked body within our society today. It does not explain how sex is everywhere, not only in bodies but also in objects, instruments, environments, media technologies and in social and political relations. It does not exemplify the "pornification of labor" or the exploitation of sexual potentials of bodies and how they are permanently being capitalized on. Nor does it demonstrate the meltdown of the distinction between private and public space and how this raises questions regarding the intimacy and the privacy of bodies. Neither does the dance resolve the elusive problems resulting from contemporary processes of subjectification – manifested through the manipulation and control of bodies, affects and sensations.

I am not entirely sure what the dance does, except that it dances. Perhaps it practices a specific from of exaltation, an almost trance like state of the body entering into connection with a chair. It experiments with how dancing can be a way of experiencing one's own body, its desires and pleasures, in a different way than what the "conventional" sexuality of inter-human sex can offer. In either case, it feels like the chair dance is confronting my body with its own limits of resistance, pushing towards some unknown mode of experiencing an almost violent intensity. An intensity that has nothing to do with an ultimate sexual liberation but all to do with engaging in a permanent practice of sexual self-experimentation.

Sexually and politically yours,
Mette

69 positions
Interview with Mette Ingvartsen by Bojana Cvejić

What was the first idea that triggered the creation of* 69 positions*? Could you unfold the history of the project?[18]

It was in fact exactly as I say it in the performance: it all began with the email I wrote to Carolee Schneemann. But the letter I addressed to her was prompted by the interest I had developed in sexuality and nudity in performance beforehand. These notions were present in my early work. Yet in the last few years I entirely focused on choreography for non-humans, including inanimate materials, so I was wondering why the concerns with sexuality resurged ten years later. The 50th anniversary of *Meat Joy* was approaching, and I thought that if I wrote Schneeman in January 2013, we would have enough time to prepare and reinterpret *Meat Joy* in Paris on the 29th of May, 2014.

So your original plan was to re-stage* Meat Joy*?

My idea was to work with Schneeman and the original cast of *Meat Joy*. It wasn't about just redoing the same performance, but restaging it with bodies that would be fifty years older than they were at the time when they originally performed *Meat Joy.* I thought this would allow us to examine the difference between the original and the revival fifty years later. I proposed Schneeman to use interviews as a method of collaboration, so that the additional layer of this reconstruction would include the reflection on what it meant to create *Meat Joy* in the 1960's, the conceptual and political underpinnings of the work. I became interested in this work when at several occasions I tried describing and doing it at the same time, and began thinking about how it would *feel* to perform *Meat Joy*, especially the bodily contact with dead meat.

Apart from the interest in the performance of sexuality and nudity, and* Meat Joy*, there is also speaking and doing in the format of a lecture demonstration. How do you relate your wish to enter the experience of performing* Meat Joy *with a solo lecture performance?

[…] In the past, I've explored various interviewing formats in writing and speaking. This led me to search for how a discursive inquiry could shape a new performance, as a way of reconnecting to history and to *Meat Joy*. I prefer to call it a "discursive practice performance," instead of lecture performance, a familiar genre with its function and history. With a discursive practice performance I am trying to define the format by which the process of the production of discourse gives life to something else than that which it speaks about. Therefore, I shied away from trying to truthfully reconstruct the historical works because my aim was to create another reality of those works today. I've experimented with this in *Speculations* (2011), the solo performance based on speaking that I made in preparation for another larger-scale choreography, *The Artificial Nature Project* (2012). It was also a way for me to reflect upon the thoughts and ideas I was going to develop further in the next choreography and make this reflection public in discourse. What is the performative reality of words and discourse? How can one produce imagined or virtual realities through speech? These were the questions I was concerned with then, and I took them into *69 Positions* as well.

There is perhaps a new rhythm of research that shapes your work: a solo that searches ideas for and thus pre-figures a larger scale group choreography.

Perhaps there is a parallel between *Speculations* and *The Artificial Nature Project*, on the one hand, and between *69 positions* and the group choreography I am starting to prepare for next year, on the other hand. I don't yet know what this group piece *(7 Pleasures)* will finally be, so the comparison between the two processes is for now only tentative. But to start from language, ideas and concepts and to try them out in a solo format before working towards a group performance seems indeed to become a new methodology. Conceptual ideas of course never translate directly into choreography, as nonverbal movement expression communicates in other ways than language. But what I know is that thinking in concepts and concerns that clearly relate to society is strong in my work and for the moment it feels important to expose those ideas in an explicit manner through language. I also like the process of preparing a new work alone, which gives me time to think and search, and what I search for is a performative form, a discursive model that expresses these thoughts, concepts and ideas.

Perhaps this is a way to extend the duration of thoughts. What makes you a theater maker in a broad sense is dialogue. So you want to launch those ideas into a sphere where they can rebound; you want them to be there, resonating with an audience for a while and you test them on a scene of thinking, before you take them on another level, into a collaboration with performers.

Now what is the occasion in which you actually did explain and do* Meat Joy *before you started the work on* 69 Positions*?

It happened in the context of *Expo Zéro,* a project by Boris Charmatz and Musée de la danse, which was based on inviting ten artists to create their own history of dance, taking as a point of departure their own body as a container of history. My intention was to select three works from the past five decades on the basis of strong preferences: works I would have liked to make, and works I wouldn't have wanted to make although they interested me for various reasons; only extreme and no lukewarm feelings about them. In the course of two editions of *Expo Zéro* I participated in I realized that my interests gravitated towards naked women doing extreme actions of various kinds. *Meat Joy* was in my first selection, and so were actions by Marina Abramović and Ulay, the works from the 1960's and 1970's. I thought it weird that nothing from the 1980's and 1990's caught my interest, it felt too close and I wanted to take distance from it. Since *Expo Zéro* is a dialogic situation where the audience talks to you, I encountered strong responses to my working with *Meat Joy*. For instance when I would speak about how it would be to bite my teeth into a dead chicken, people reported that they had a strong visceral experience of imagining the relation between the dead meat and the living body. At that time, I was working on the relationship between the animate and the inanimate in *The Artificial Nature Project.* So I think that that's where my interest in dead meat and *Meat Joy* came.

You presented a version of this performance in Kortrijk. Could you put the chronology of the creation in order?

My letter to Schneeman dates from the 25th of January 2013. When Schneeman declined my invitation, I sent her another proposal, but I never heard back from her. Then I thought: does it mean I should let it go of this idea? After a while, I decided that I would pursue my interest in examining the interaction between the dead and the living, and see where it would take me. Furthermore, I started looking for other works that would be dealing with nudity, with sexual representation, as well as questions of participation in terms of direct political engagement in the 1960's. This is how *Dionysis in 69*, Yayoi Kusama and Jack Smith, for instance, resurfaced. What began to preoccupy me was how to think of my own body becoming multiple, being multiplied by various perspectives. At the same time, Agnès Quackels, the programmer of BUDA cultural center in Kortrijk invited me to present the references in my work. It was a carte-blanche invitation on the basis of the idea that artists would exhibit their work in an indirect way, through the references relevant for them. I first wanted to call my presentation *Ten references that I would like to share with you*, meaning a selection of ten works from the 1960's I wanted to plunge into. I remember you questioning it.

I asked you why it was that you were doing this, and what you wanted to achieve with describing nude and sexually explicit performances from the 1960's today.

It should be said that in that early version the historical and political context was missing. I deliberately evacuated it so the description seemed as if I was inventing something on the spot. It was conceived as an imaginative choreography. After our conversation, I realized that my actual interest was in the relationship between these works and the sexual liberation movement in the context of the Vietnam War. So removing the historical and political context also weakened the operation of the works that I was referencing. That led me to the idea of producing the frame of an exhibition, where the referential works wouldn't only be identified, but would also interact with my imaginary transposition of them today. The version from Kortrijk consisted of three parts – three rooms – starting with the works from the 1960's, my own works and ending in reading the book by Beatriz Preciado.

Let's get into the subject matter of this work. Nudity operates in three registers: firstly, as a gesture of liberation in the social movement in the 1960's in the West; secondly, in the end of the 1990's it was present in contemporary dance, and so it was in your work too; thirdly, in this solo you are performing everything naked in close proximity of the spectators.

I recall you were speaking about the failed utopia of the 1960's, which was the creation of the communal body, and the idea that people can discover their natural self underneath the clothes as a matter of freedom, also with the notion of "free love." And that sexual liberation would ultimately lead people to political action and social change.

Right, and then the moral codes in public order didn't change, people aren't walking naked in public spaces. But in the mid 1990's, with the work of Jérôme Bel and Vera Mantero, and later on Xavier Le Roy, Boris Charmatz and others, nudity becomes an instrument for intervening on the body, interfering with the human figure in the identifying criteria of gender, the human, animal, or monster as living body, machine etc. How did that play out in your own work?

In *Manual Focus* and *50/50*, nudity was a means

of erasure of the identifying features which would increase the body's capacity to transform. Already in *Manual Focus*, I was interested in deforming and disfiguring the actual body through our perception of its mechanics, turning it upside down, so that it would appear as an animal or a cripple, or just something other than a functional upright body. We were wearing masks of old men over our heads, which short-circuited oppositions like old/young, artificial/natural, male/female. In *50/50*, I was much more busy with the codifications of the body in movement: the spectacular expressions of the body in rock concert and opera pantomime, go-go dancing. I was thinking about language, and the body as a vehicle for language, and at the same time differing from it or surpassing it through affect. People go like "woooow" in the rock concert and they basically cannot control their own affective stimulation. So I was very much interested in looking into the spectacularity of expressions in high/low culture, and their power of affective manipulation. How can I work on the affective potential of images that would be hard to perceive and place in a recognizable context? I remember thinking how to produce a noise in the image and a scratch in the sound.

But to get there, you had to defacialize the body: in* Manual Focus, *it's the masks that do it, in* 50/50 *it's the wig. And in* to come *the blue suits cover the whole body, thus blurring the gender of the performers. If we make a rapid comparison with the nudity performed in the 1960's-1970's, performing naked was supposed to produce the "real", a situation where reality should or might yield pleasure, for instance. The situations you create in your pieces forty years later are deliberately artificial, a matter of construction, and pleasure is barred from them. The implicit rule in the past twenty years in performance is that the performer isn't allowed to have (or show) pleasure so that the audience can have a different experience.

I was trying to disconnect pleasure and desire from the individual body against the idea that your desire belongs to you.

But belongs to the space, the situation…

To the social structures whose power is to produce and control our behavior. I was concerned with thinking desire in relation to capitalism. For instance, how commercials sexualize products: you eat an ice-cream but you actually have an orgasm. You know what I mean? What you buy is the orgasm and not the ice-cream.

Or orgasm is supposed to coax you into buying ice-cream, because that's the point.

Exactly. If you could just buy orgasm without having ice-cream, they would probably prefer that, it would be cheaper. In *to come*, I was keen on understanding how desire operates. I remember reading Freud and strongly disagreeing with his associations of desire with the drive, or with "warmth", or the notion of lack. I was looking for other ways, and the principle of desiring production in Deleuze and Guattari echoed with me. They speak about desiring machines and assemblages, and I wanted to make a choreography that would expose the mechanisms of sex. What we basically did was to apply sexual actions onto a group. So instead of understanding fucking through movements of rocking, pumping or vibrating between two people, it's a whole group of bodies that is now rocking, pumping or vibrating together.

Manual Focus ***uses nudity to undo the identification of the body.*** **50/50** ***exploits the erotic potential of the body spectacle especially in the scenes of shaking buttocks or breasts up-in-yer-face. Yet it is primarily and mostly*** **to come** ***that deals with sexual desire. And there is a narrative order of three parts, somehow revolving around sexual***

intercourse: the foreplay stage of a dancing party which woos bodies into an exchange of sexual desire, the soundless mechanics of group sex as the very act of sex, and the concert of orgasm as the peak of the intercourse. Three components laid out horizontally in an upset order.

Starting with the sex mechanics, moving to the orgasm and ending with the dance. The underlying idea of this structure was that if you put the three parts on top of each other, then you would have the full sexual act. You would have positions, you would have sound and you would have the sweat and the more exuberant movements.

Alright. But how did you decide to include your own work in* 69 positions *and place it in the middle, so that it copulates with the first part? It raises the question whether you are inscribing your works in the neoavantgarde of the 1960's.

The choice of all materials in *69 positions* had to do with the topics of sexual performances and nudity. I could have chosen the work of my colleagues from the 2000's, but my priority was to re-examine my own work with respect to these topics. I wanted to analyze what it was I was interested in ten years ago, and how my interests linked to sexuality now shifted from the questions of identity coinciding with the body to the questions of private-public spheres. Thus, sexuality proved to be a good instrument to investigate the merging of the private and the public, or where the two spheres overlap today. Another thought behind using my past work was the question of how I could disown it. All those pieces were made to contest the identitarian approach to the body, and they are not about me, they are more about questioning the importance of the personal. So my wish was to consider my work not only from the perspective of how it was made, but as a material for producing another choreography through speaking. For instance, when I describe and do an orgy scene with the audience, it's not just a description of a sculpture that results from it, but a social situation in which the audience deals with the limits between the private and the public.

Why this is a different mode of participation from watching the same orgy on stage perhaps has to do with turning the work into a score of instructions. There is more space in the distance from my seat to imagine myself in those positions. The identification is intensified and accelerated when you address the spectators "you do this, and now you do that."

My original intention in *to come* with using the blue uniform color of the suits was to stimulate projection. But I don't think this happened so much for the audience just from looking at the performance on stage. In *69 positions* I am trying to create a passage of the sexual act into the public sphere, which I literally mean is the audience in theater. This also happens when I ask the public to do the orgasm choir, I literally give it to them.

But you wouldn't be happy if they were going to do it for real, would you? Even in the performance* to come *the blue suits prevent the exchange of fluids between the performers, it's a safe image. Here there is a danger that the audience could potentially join. Yet you ask them to feign it, that is, fake it?

It has happened already that some people would join, and this means that they actualized the imaginary choreography. It's not that I don't want it to happen, but I think I prefer when it stays on this virtual level and not acted out. The whole piece operates through language choreography. It should stay in your head, happening in the imagination. This also raises the question as to what participation is. The kind that I am attempting here involves thinking, placing yourself in the situation, not necessarily making the steps.

Hesitating?

I find the moment right before you make the step to do something most interesting. Because I wonder what it finally is that makes one pass from not doing into doing something, and that's actually political. Throughout the whole performance people might be – at least that's what I heard from some spectators – in this awkward position of not knowing how exactly they should behave: Should I sit? Should I stand? Should I be close, should I be far? Do I want to be a part of it or not? Should I participate? And all these questions, they are very important for me because they provide the possibility of coming out of the prescribed mode of behavior. We know we have to walk on the sidewalk, stand on the right, walk on the left – you know, all these rules that make up the public order.

The moment of turning inactivity into activity is what interests you as long as it's also uneasy.

Yeah, because participation involves negotiation. Refusing to participate, in terms of interaction, is also an option. So when I'm jumping around like an idiot in *Dionysus in 69* and no one is joining me, in a certain way this is almost more interesting than when everyone starts to dance around with me. The opposite is also fine. But the impossibility, difficulty or resistance to participation is symptomatic nowadays, and that's what this work is also about. So, what does it take for us to gather and do something together? I propose the space and the audience are part of defining what this space will be.

Lets speak about the third part in relation to sexuality, because it is the one that the audience might be the least familiar with to identify, except perhaps for* Testo Junkie, *the new practice of interfering with the physiological basis of gender expressions through hormonal therapy.

What interests me in this third part is to look at how the public sphere invades and controls the private body. The testosterone example shows how the body is invaded by pharmaceuticals, an invasion that is also connected to governmental policies of who can have legal access to testosterone treatment. Another hormonal example that Preciado invokes, through which governments control the sexual development of bodies, is the treatment of non-gendered babies: all governments, except Germany which recently ratified the third, neither feminine nor masculine gender, prescribe that the gender be defined at birth. Hormones are used to channel the baby's sexual expression into the one of a boy or a girl. The birth control pill is another nongovernmental example, where the body is inducted into control in a soft way, as if it is a voluntary action of the individual to take the pill and feel the freedom because "now I can no fuck how I want."

I wouldn't say that it is the public which controls the private, because the public sphere is supposed to be the third stance between the state and the people, mediating and monitoring their relation. As such, it hardly exists today. It is the alliance between the private capital and the state, which creates policies that control consumership. The medicalization that you are describing is propelled by the ideology of individual freedom.

You think you are a free individual when your sensations are affected and you feel good. This kind of affective manipulation dominates today, and it happens despite your awareness of the power of images operating on you. The third part of 69 positions to me addresses these kinds of bodily and affective manipulations. So, after *Testo Junkie*, which deals with the invasion of the body through biopolitical control, we shift to a pleasure mode. I ask people to become aware of the production of sensations that I narrate, because I ask them

to imagine them, and therefore, actively produce sensations in their own body. And whether this happens or not, I don't know.

This exercise of imagination is entirely voluntary.

And the conscious activity isn't meant to morally preach to the people that they should be aware of their sensations. I am probing another way to deal with one's sensations and affects along the borders between the private and the public. As I am performing among them, I am also testing the degrees of proximity and distance, the intimacy of being together in such space, immersed in one's own sensations. I am looking for ways of coming close, or going far. And lastly, the third part opens up another area of sexuality, where sexual practice no longer takes place in between the bodies, as a heterosexual, heteronormative or homosexual relation, but involves humans interacting with non-human objects. It searches into the possibility of radically altering how humans could experience their sensations.

The three practices that you enact here are, what you refer to as, "sexual mummification," the closing off of one's own body by wrapping it in tape and producing total immobility; then making love with a marble statue, which recalls the myth of Pygmalion; and finally electrostimulation, which might probably exist, at least in the form of machines that osteopaths use to relax muscles in orgasmic-like sensations. The outcome of this journey through sexual performances ends with a shift from a we, a social formation of collectivity in the 1960-70's, and multiplicity in the example of your work, into a self, the private and solitary asocial individual. If I socially reframe the practices you describe I can imagine that it is emancipatory for any gender to dissociate his or her desire from the dependency on a sexual partner. Nonetheless what distinguishes these practices from being like sophisticated practices of masturbation? Is this making a claim for an oversexualized or omnisexual way of being? What concerns me here is that sexuality falls on the independent individual, which has replaced family as the social unit. One model of living is destroyed for better and worse, but no new happier alternatives are established. So where are we at?

I know that some people find these practices to be samples of extreme masturbation, which is solitary, alienating and sad. This is not at all how I consider it. For me they have more to do with the oversexualization of all objects and the omnipresence of sexual currencies being exchanged.

The sexual acts with the objects that you are describing are in most cases mimetic of the traditional human image of sex (rubbing, licking, bobbing the body).

Yes, but doing it with an object rather than a human can threaten the normative modes of behavior and install possibilities for having pleasure in a non-normative fashion. And if these practices produce other kinds of pleasure than the ones we know from interaction with humans, then this will have social consequences. So when I lick the lamp, I hope that there is a transference of some sort of thing where you could say "hmm"- you know?

The spectator might salivate, and at the same time think, "Oh this must be disgusting, what am I doing?"

And for me this is about how you question "what do I know my pleasure to be and how could I think it otherwise?" This would be a simple way of changing the normativity of sexual practices that control how we think we can feel or experience desire.

What's potentially interesting about this, should

it be a path of emancipation, is that it does it in an outlandish way, avoiding conflict that would jeopardize the value of social relations, as it were. Perhaps it dismantles the power structures, by divorcing desire from violence in the power to dominate others. This might be worth more thinking.

In* 69 positions *the spectators travel through various modes of participation, linking to different formats that the performance takes. It starts as a guided tour through an exhibition, but soon it turns into a demonstration, rather than a lecture that would explicate something. How do the ways you approach the audience evolve in the course of two hours?

In the first part, the guided tour serves as a framing device: people come with the expectation of a theater apparatus, and they find themselves in an enclosed space, standing with many others without the possibility to sit on a chair. The guided tour is also a pretext to keep them standing, and moving with me through the space. It is very important that they aren't just watching the choreography, but find themselves entangled with it, being part of it. Soon enough it becomes clear that this is finally not about guiding the audience through an exhibition because I never leave them time to contemplate an exhibited document. There is a drive that moves me from one thing to the next. I have a score that I'm going through, but it's constantly being adapted according to how the audience is responding.

People look at each other in those fluid movements. They observe each other's behavior and they are trying to detect the other's sensations. They perform surveillance on each other.

The audience members gazing at each other seems to mean "is this ok or not?", "how are we supposed to behave in the situation?" In a recent try-out presentation of the first part, I was doing, as in every performance, the undressing from Anna Halprin's *Parades and Changes*, and, as usual, I was fixing my gaze on one spectator. He looked as if he was calm and comfortable with it, and I also said, "It's going well." In the discussion after the presentation, he said that this was the most intimidating situation that he had ever been in. It is a clear demonstration of power reversed: I'm a naked woman looking at a man who is looking at me being naked, but I am returning the gaze that forbids him to look at anything else except right into my eyes. I wasn't aware of the power I exercise with my own gaze in that part. The participation in the first section is centered on the return of the gaze. The strategy of the second part is objectification: "I put myself in the position of being watched". Again it is about the reversal that recuperates the power of the objects in pornographic images. Not unlike Annie Sprinkle, who spreads her legs and invites the audience to look into her vagina, which empowers her by making her reclaim the ownership of her self-objectification, I use excerpts of my own pieces and I self-objectify. I try to all the time have this: that the body in the image has a voice and a capacity to think, contrary to women in pornography whose voice is about sexual moaning. In *50/50,* the ass-shaking scene is a silent image. In *69 positions* the image speaks back, and hopefully, in this way undoes the objectifying gaze of the naked body in pornography. And about the third part, I don't know yet, and still have to think about it.

There is something distinctive about your tone that you keep throughout the whole piece. It is a tone that affirms joy. Nothing offensive, unacceptable or manipulative in the way you address the audience. Everything you do bears a positive connotation. And your tone makes the participation easier, as if its subtext is: "don't worry, I'm not going to embarrass you too much. It's

not going to hurt, it's nothing bad... if I can do it, you can do it, too…" It feels like an antidote to the uneasiness of the invitation to participate. Sometimes you exaggerate your joyfulness, and this reads like "why not dance like an idiot here." This makes people react in a positive way, they mirror your joy because they also enjoy being in the aura of the performer.

There are several things to say about this. A lot of work on nudity revolves around the shock effect. This produces distance and rejection in the audience, which doesn't interest me. Generally, I am for joy and inventiveness – YES to invention! We can't change societal structures only through critical analysis, however, necessary this analysis is. We have to be able to imagine alternatives. So either you say: these are the structures that suck that we need to change, we can criticize them until they break. That's one option – that's not my way. And the other way would be to say, if we want to change then we have to have desire, we have to have energy, and we have to have joy. Maybe I'm also just a naïve optimist who believes in life... So yes, we need to critically address the structures we want to change, but we also have to be able to desire change in order to effectuate the changes. That's why I invest in the imaginary and the potential.

And then we have to go back to the society and act according to these imagined desires, which isn't easy, because it meets resistance and requires violence to be implemented. People aren't only unwilling to give up conventions, it is the power of domination which won't allow it. Look at the conservative right-wing turn in politics everywhere.

This conservative backlash that we see now all over Europe, is linked with the incapacity to deal with difference, with change, whether it's religious, sexual or political… No matter what type of difference, there is a kind of conservative "we have to keep to what we have or else our society falls apart." But we actually need to think: How to include difference? How to include the other and those modes of functioning that might destabilize the functioning and well-being of Western society? Should we go into the streets and do sexual mummification?

First of all, nudity would already disturb the public order and therefore, the work would be immediately swept off the streets by policemen. However, if you framed it as art and asked for permission to perform it in public, you might be immunized from law. This is an interesting political strategy to hijack art in order to provoke public order.

This question came up several times since I began this project. People asked me: Yes so, what is your action? What is it that you want to change? And I am not too naïve to imagine that my show can change the world, but it can at least express the desire for change, especially in the sense I explained before: how to resist the affective manipulation and experiment with one's own sensations and affects, beyond the normative grip of individualist consumerism. […]

This performance might realize its political potential when it can include a multiplicity, a heterogeneous mixture in the audience. You would exactly go against the advice Schneeman gives in her letter: instead of redoing **Meat Joy** ***with the original aged cast, go to the retirement home and work with the old people. You are definitely not targeting a certain audience?***

Indeed not. My principle is that whatever public is there, is the public that I'm dealing with. So I think, if I am observing something, it is this: how sometimes the joy passes into the public and they are very much with me, and other times, there is a kind

of skepticism, a stiffness that makes that there is a lot of tension in the space.

And how do you work with this tension?

I stick with my performative score, but while I am going through it, I am adapting and accommodating my actions to the situation. For instance, if people glue to the walls, I literally go behind them and try to mobilize them and redistribute them in the space by way of my own movement. I've developed different strategies, also in terms of, for how many people I am visible in the space. I train my awareness of how people displace themselves, so that I know how I can deal with them. There are techniques, like I all the time keep on turning and so on... It's also important how I go in and out of the documents on the wall, because it allows those spectators who have phased out of the performance to reconnect, it happens that they can come back. I see people with faces like "oh, no more orgy for me, I can't deal with it" and then they go and look at what's on the wall. So these shifts in attention are important for the piece.

And my last question would be: what are the implications, or conclusions, that you take from this work into the next work, which will deal with sexuality, nudity, with a larger group of performers?

The ideas I develop in the third part of *69 Positions* are haunting me: how to undo conventional modes of sexual behaviour through experimental practices. This is something that I would like to elaborate more. And this comes through relations with objects and non-humans, but it also comes by reconsidering the body as a thing, or as a non-human. It might be a way to compose a group beyond personal identity or human dialogue, which is at the core of sexual interaction. The other aspect I would like to extend from this work into my next choreography, and I still don't know how, is the bridge with the history of the normative structure to be undone, from which a future can be reimagined.

7 Pleasures
A running commentary

This lecture was presented at the POSTDANCE conference at MDT in Stockholm on the 15th of October 2015. The format was a running commentary spoken on top of the video recording of the performance.

What plays on the screen next to me is a video recording of *7 Pleasures*, a performance I have just finished about 3 weeks ago. What I'm going to do over the next 55 min is to talk along with this video as a running commentary, to address some of the concerns the work was developed out of, in close connection to how it appears on stage. This will only leave us about 5 minutes for comments and questions afterwards, so I will dive straight into it.

Pleasure # 1: Undressing

The loud music you just heard is playing when the audience comes into the performance space. It serves to produce a rupture in the usual flow of how people enter into the theater; how they greet each other and talk while waiting for the performance to start. Once everybody is seated the performers start undressing within the audience area, continuing the general movement of removing clothes that is anyway happening in the room, except the performers continue taking everything off until they are completely naked. This action creates a proximity to the bodies of the spectators, where the nakedness, the flesh and genitals of the performers are passing at two centimeters distance from the noses of those watching. The suggestion is very clear; what will happen on stage could also happen in the audience area, perhaps even within the bodies of the public. The performance starts by erasing a division of space. In the theater it's the division between the auditorium and the stage that is abolished, but on a more metaphorical or conceptual level it is the space between the private and the public body that is put into question.

Pleasure #2: Viscosity

What we are looking at right now is a scene we refer to as viscosity. In it the performers imagine that their bodies are not separate entities but part of *one* viscous mass that invades the entire space. The performers follow surfaces, heat and the movement of other bodies, while the mass moves over the ground, crawls up a sofa and melts down on the other side. The quality of their movements is fluid, like a liquid that runs over surfaces and encloses itself around the objects it encounters. The liquid is thick and modular, almost sticky. They let go of the expression of their individual identities and bodily distinctions, replacing it with a kind of amoeba like awareness. This merging into a collective mass is made possible by removing the agency of hands and facial expressions, parts of the body where individual will and desire usually manifest itself through hands reaching out, grabbing or pulling, or by facial movements showing intentionality. When willfulness is reduced, the presentation of the self and through that self-expression,

is replaced by how the group dislocates desire away from a recognizable social situation. While creating this scene we discussed how the resulting image serves to create another proximity to the body. As if you would be looking through a microscope enabling you to see the body as a material or a thing, almost as if you would be looking inside the body on a cellular level. We also spoke about how nowadays the cellular level of the body is no longer a natural place, but a space for digital manipulation. Biotechnologies, like artificial inseminations, pharmaceutical hormonal treatments, human-genome science or the growth of tissues are just some of the examples of how the natural body has grown technological. We were also inspired by a sci-fi trash movie,[19] where a black bio-mass invades and swallows everything. It crawls up tables and doesn't behave according to natural laws of gravity; a digitalized image of nature going awry due to technological developments.

The mass is spreading out in the room. The interaction with the objects and the space that has already been going on for about 10 minutes gets more clearly articulated as a form of sexual interaction with the environment. The performers start to appear as individuals with diverging desires. At the plant a woman is licking, biting and kissing its leaves, on the right side of the room another person is interacting with pieces of clothing that were left behind in the very first undressing scene. On the Togo sofa chair someone else is looking out, attempting to transfer the sensation of the furniture into the audience with her gaze. Other bodies are spilling into the audience area, even onto the legs of the spectators treating them as just another surface to be followed, making the image into something to be felt as much as looked at.

Sexual and counter-sexual practices

All the physical situations that we do in this piece are conceived of, first and foremost, as sexual practices that would alter normative and habitual patterns of sexual behavior. To "counter-practice" means to make a conscious choice to physically embody other structures of behavior than those incorporated into our bodies by cultural and historical production. In that sense, the counter-culture of the 1960's relating to sexual liberation was an interesting attempt (that unfortunately failed) to act physically to change sexual and societal structures dominant at the time. This idea is also connected to the concept of contra-sexual practices articulated by Paul B. Preciado in The Contra-Sexual Manifesto,[20] which clearly addresses and articulates an idea of counter-practice as a political tool to resist hetero-normative behavior. His manifesto is centered around dildo practices, not thought of as a replacement of the phallus (because as he says why would men who already have a dick then use dildos as well) but thought of as an experimental practice that allows bodies to question structures of power and domination in a physical sense. His perspective is gender activism, which explains why the practices he develops are highly repre-

sentational in relation to the *images of sex* that they produce and the appropriation of the dildo. One of the principles in his physical theory that interests me a lot is the idea of displacing the erogenous zones onto other body parts than those we usually attribute pleasure to. This directly leads to a different way of interacting physically with one another.

Another notion I find stimulating to think about is the definition of sexual practices through sexual contracts. Contractual sex is interesting to observe. Through making the agreement explicit, it renders the nature of the sexual relation visible, including its implicit hierarchies of powers and mechanisms of control that are always already there. This gives rise to a certain awareness of one's own body while having sex in a rather unusual way. It also opens up the possibilities to reflect further on how sexual power relations are directly related to other structures of power that are active within our society.

Foucault and Deleuze speak about such embodied mechanism of powers within their definition of the society of control. Through it they articulate how it is not only the external disciplinary powers like prisons, schools, factories, armies or hospitals that control the behavior of bodies, but also all the internalized mechanisms that are active inside us, even as we close the door to our bedrooms and turn off the light. This is interesting to think more about: how the ways we practice sex behind closed doors, in so-called "private spaces" is connected to these societal mechanisms of control. To me it seems evident that the way sex is practiced in "private" spaces, is deeply interconnected with internalized mechanisms that actually emerge from the social sphere, operating underneath conscious awareness. And very often these mechanisms seem to go unnoticed exactly because they are internalized as our "own". It appears to me as "my" decision to *do it* how I do it, "my" decision to be penetrated rather then being the one penetrating in "my" sexual relation...I think it is exactly these mechanisms of "ownership"; of thinking that our sexual actions belong to us, that needs to be made explicit in order to render models of control visible. And I mean this in a choreographic manner; through how our movements are so bodily engrained from cultural repetition that we consciously need to counter-practice in order to manage to escape the prescribed models of (sexual) behavior.

So... back to the bedroom. What would happen if we would take away the standardized models of sexual interaction and replace them with other estranged sexual practices? What would it do to our sensation of our bodies and to power relations in between them? What interests me here is how a change on the "intimate" level of desire and pleasure could perhaps also have consequences on the larger public and political functioning of our society. The *7 pleasures* we physically elaborate throughout the duration of this piece, are attempts to invent these kinds of different modes of experiencing pleasure and ways of being together.

Pleasure #3: Vibration

The 3rd pleasure that is starting right now we refer to as vibrational pleasure and it's a movement practice that you can do on your own or within a group. Basically it's about stimulating an almost mechanical drive

in the body by vibrating to create an almost trancelike state. In terms of choreography, this part, together with the viscosity that preceded it, belongs to the cellular or molecular level of sexual expression. Later on in the piece we move into what we think of as social or political choreographies of sexual bodies. I know these distinctions are rather tricky to maintain, as in theater anything placed on a stage turns into a representation, nevertheless it was helpful to define the different physical approaches in these terms to work on them.

With our bodies we try to create a vibrational object that is constantly transforming its shape. Through direct physical contact, we attempt to loose the borders of our bodies in order to have an encounter with this fleshy, meaty vibrational object. We also use the idea of transposed erogenous zones, so that an arm or foot is as shakable as the asses, tits or dicks. So instead of thinking Peaches "*shake your dicks, shake your tits*"[21] we try to think of shaking anything whatsoever, even to the point where the entire theater becomes part of what can be shaken. The music is a very important source of this movement. Will Guthrie, who made it, speaks about playing as an attempt of becoming a digital machine, playing with an almost impossible inhumane speed, confronting the limits of what is physically possible to sustain. In other words, to undo a conventional orgasmic logic, where the explosion last only a slit second, to replace it with an ongoing state of ecstatic energy. The scene goes on for more than 16 minutes and it escalates towards a vibrational movement that goes beyond the bodies, into the surrounding environment. What we are basically trying to do it to shake the entire space by setting all elements of the theater into motion, including objects, bodies, lights, sounds, curtains, tribune, audience members, etc.

Pleasure #4: Tactility – The Object Orgy

We have now dropped into a completely different level of intensity, where the idea of sexualizing space is slowly unfolding. We call this situation the Object Orgy, and it's an extended 20 minutes long duration where the performers interrelate with the objects in all possible ways. They are all connected to at least one object in the space that is now charged with sensual or erotic potential. The environment invites to touch, caress, massage, lick, suck or whatever other action you could imagine in order to interact sexually with the space. The activities in the room are multiple, as each performer follow his or her own logic of attractions and connections. At first the actions are not explicitly sexual, but the appearance of the bodies remains very sensual and physically available. Little by little some actions become more sexually connoted, kissing, licking and sucking the objects in the space. But it always remains rather weird in terms of connections and also in terms of what kind of pleasure the bodies give or receive. Usually when using objects in sexual practices, the objects are often used to enhance human pleasure and not to give pleasures to the object. What we attempt to do within this scene is to reconfigure and reimagine who the desire and the pleasure belong to: What happens if you really invest in giving pleasure to the object rather than receiving pleasure from it? What if the table might actually feel something from your touch? These strategies also make your body feel differently in return, through an altered sensation of touch.
We asked ourselves questions like: How is it that desire does not actually belong to the subject that experiences it, but to the relations desire produces, to an exterior environment that is composed of both

human and non-human agents? How can producing a continuity between objects and subjects reconfigure notions of agency, through understanding *everything* as sexual, as part of a sexual exchange system? Could this idea of explicitly sexualizing the non-human (space, objects and the relation between things) be a way of exposing this underlying sexual economy of relations? How can we show what the object wants and how it wants it?

These questions give rise to a rather uncanny or estranged sexual interaction, that also brings awareness of how socially prescribed sexual practices are. Once you start to practice sex or at least physical interaction in a different way, you begin to discern and question the division of passive/active, male/female, object/subject and other normalizing habits in a very concrete manner. This definitely can affect everyday life: if you spend days working on queering relations amongst human bodies and objects, you begin to reconsider your sexual preferences; what you like, how and why you like it and how it could probably be different. In this project we work on experimenting with reshaping relations that include non-human things, and how this affects the understanding of our physical bodies and our attentiveness to sensation. It's quite interesting to step out of orgasm driven sexual behavior because in doing so, you realize its efficiency in general is mainly there to increase productivity and not to enhance experiences of being together. To step out of efficiency also feels like an opportunity to create other compositions between objects and subjects through horizontality and open-ended relations.

Pleasure control

One big realization while working on these issues has been that sexuality is everywhere, not only in bodies but also in objects, instruments, environments, media technologies, social and political relations, language, and of course also modes of attending performances. This omnipresence of sexual currencies, results in a permanent stimulation of our affects and sensations, that break down borders between the inside and the outside of the body, or between private and public space. I think the core of *69 positions* and *7 Pleasures* is how desires and pleasures are constantly being captured and controlled and of course capitalized on as well. The experience, information and knowledge economy that we are currently in, constantly designates or designs the movements of contemporary bodies in relation to the consumption of images, sensations and affects. This entails the production of gender roles that are established through images, languages and behavioral patterns, the repression of desire that is created through old mechanisms of guilt and shame, and in the opposite direction, the standardization of sexual behavior that is prescribed through easily accessible pornography that is now to be found all over the internet.

I'm currently trying to observe more in detail how pleasure is constantly being capitalized on. A too simple example of this, is of course how commercials sell you products, by selling you the promise of the pleasure the product entails. The Magnum ice-cream commercial is perfectly awful; a female tongue that licks and sucks, basically giving a blow-job to the ice cream while tasting vanilla chocolate. Very quickly questions of pleasure are directly connected to questions around pornography. Pornography is another example of how capitalism stimulates the body and our desire for sexual satisfaction (orgasm). It's a

prescribed model for fast ejaculation, efficiency bought for a low price on the internet. Millions of users, spending millions of euros, dollars or whatever other currency, that run through the immaterial channels that recombine zeros and ones. And, what is perhaps more alarming than the explicit pornographic images circulated on the net, is the increasing appeal to our desires and pleasures that calls upon us in our everyday life. (YES, today internet developers are collaborating with neuroscientists to figure out how sitting in front of the screen all day effects the centers of anxiety and PLEASURE in our brains.) The affective efficiency of screen images is constantly being analyzed, surveyed, used and finally also controlled. It's no longer a matter of what happens behind the scenes, but rather what happens behind the screens.

Spilling into the audience area

In the end of this scene one of the performers again returns to her seat in the audience where she started out. This returning to the audience area is in fact something that has already happened several times, and it constructs one of the basic poetic principles of the performances; what we refer to as spilling. The idea of spilling comes from a desire to create a permeable stage where the separation between performers and the auditorium / spectators is never taken for granted. It is not about directly addressing what we do on stage to the audience in order to confirm a communication, but rather to let the bodies and the objects spill into the audience area as a way of indicating that this could involve their bodies too. In the performative situation this poses more precise questions in relation to the audience: How can images of sexuality, the naked body and pleasure be produced in a way that uncannily asks the spectator to question their own bodily desire and pleasure? What "proximity" do these practices have to people's own experiences of sex? Who do the shown pleasures belong to (the performers, the objects, the relation to the audience, the public, the sound, the light)? Through which senses do these pleasures communicate and how does this open a possibility for the audience member to imagine him/herself in an uncanny assemblage with the desire proposed on stage?

Pleasure 5 & 6: Contractual - Naked / Dressed

We now entered into the 3rd block of pleasures. Having gone from the molecular, through the social, we are now in the part exploring more explicit images of power within sexual relations. The Naked / Dressed, as we call this practice, explores sexual relations between bodies as a relation of power. It tries to understand power as something multi-directional and complex, rather than a unidirectional mechanism, trying to undo divisions of power between naked/dressed, passive/active, victim/perpetrator, object/subject, masochist/sadist or protester/policeman. The practice uses clothes as an object that has the potential to make these questions of power visible by clearly dividing the bodies into two different groups. The naked and the dressed. After the visual division of power is clear, it becomes possible to work on blurring these tactile relations through movement, intention and physical manipulations. The two groups interact in a way that makes it hard to define divisions of passivity and activity. They seem to be two opposing groups, but at the same time they are constantly exchanging roles. They are holding and blocking each other's movements, sometimes lifting and dragging, sometimes taking more violent positions but always done with a lot of care, precision and attention. The quality of the movement is entirely non-violent, even

when the positions and the difference between the naked and the dressed could evoke a more agitated or oppositional situation. This is connected to the contractual pleasure created by masochism. What we try to do is to produce a direct link between political and sexual representations (representations that usually remain separated).

As a performer doing this practice, you agree to place your body into these shifting relations of power, meaning that at certain points you will be in the *role* of the naked, the passive, the object, the victim, the masochist, the protester and at other moments you will be the dressed, the active, the subject, the sadist, the policeman. The inter-changeability between the positions is exercised/rehearsed, to blur simplistic divisions of power (that often dominate). But the divisions are also used to show how power is always at work in sexual relations and can be the source of a lot of pleasure but also a lot of pain. The practice consciously *slows down and exhausts* acts of violence, trying to undo the drama and horror of violence, as well as its theatrical climax effect (knowing that the scene still shows and communicates through powerful images of violence). It is also important that this practice is clearly a physical and choreographic practice, so that even when strong images are evoked, the way of doing them, the quality and the intention are what make the images communicate something other than what they actually represent. This, for instance, means if you see a still image of the scene, you could have a quite different imagination of what we are doing than from seeing it live.

The pleasures of this practice comes from having the time to feel the subtle manipulations of power and their undoing, at certain points allowing strong images to occur as a way of making the topic and its mechanisms clear. It is a practice to be watched, and the pleasure/discomfort is also thought to occur in the public having to deal with how they handle these images of power and their undoing. The ambiguity of the images is important in order for this pleasure/discomfort to operate. To us it was also very important that the clothes in the scene are still understood as objects, or become understood as objects, due to their use.

Agency and the political – acting and being acted upon

In relation to the previous parts, where the guiding principles of desire were directly and concretely connected to physical objects in the room, this part comes back to thinking about inter-human relations, and how objectification of bodies takes place within structures of power. Making a body into an object is a political question, of who has the power to act or decide over their own body and also of who has the power to objectify and act upon the other. I'm not speaking about this in relation to, for instance, the objectification of female bodies in commercial imagery, but much more in relation to bodies that end up in states of exception, where they are no longer treated as subjects with civil rights, but rather end up loosing agency over their own bodies and desires. This is for instance what happens in many of Marquis de Sade's novels, and perhaps specifically in *120 Days of Sodom*,[22] where young men and woman are being captured to serve the sexual fantasies, perversions and atrocities of the four main characters. They end up in a situation where resisting the governing regime means dying (if they resist the laws of

these 4 men, in the state of exception that they have created, they kill you). In Pasolini's adaptation of this narrative, the atrocities are taken to even another level of horror, which he does by locating the narrative within the historical contexts of the second world war. In his film the narrative plays out in fascist Italy in the town of Salo, which between 1943-45 was a puppet state of Nazi Germany, creating a parallel between the libertine state of exception and the Nazi camp as another state of exception, where bodies lost all agency with death as a consequence. What is extremely impressive with Pasolini's film, is how it articulates a crystal clear image of the relationship between sexuality, power and the political. What is also quite striking in the film is that the captured bodies hardly ever speak and are almost never called by their names. This is interesting in relation to Preciado's contra-sexual contract and the idea of only having sex with speaking subjects; subjects who can agree to what they are subjected to.

The idea of sexual bodies having a voice brings us straight back to what is now happening on the screen. In this scene the performers are all making a vocal sound that runs as a kind of pulse or rhythm under the actions they are doing. What they are doing is based on a strong division of power where some of the bodies are acting and other bodies are acted upon. Those who are asses, stay asses for almost 10 minutes which somehow make their bodies into objects to be acted upon by the surrounding subjects. At the same time, there is a contractual agreement between all the bodies in the situation that is permanently being reinstated by the vocal sounds that they all produce throughout the duration, like signing a contract over and over again.

This, together with the previous and the coming scene tries, to articulate a micro political understanding of power as a relational and multidirectional force, one that is exercised in between bodies in constantly shifting relations. Power is not something other than a relation in its execution. It is a relation that is being practiced and reinstated.

Pleasure #7: Vocal – pleasure protest

The vocal pulse that is established in this scene will, in what follows, be developed into a sexual vocal practice of its own, using the voice as a tool to also sexualize the relationship to the spectator. By looking into the eyes of an audience member while producing sounds, the performers try to "penetrate" or touch the spectators with their gaze and their vocal expression. It's the first time the performers are actually in direct eye contact with the spectators. We think of it as a way of bringing the performance back to the auditorium where it started, as a kind of pleasure protest, insisting on showing and confronting the sexual character of *all* relations, including the one of spectators looking at performers in the theater.

To finish, I am just going to turn up the sound, to not leave you with my exhaustive explanations, but rather with the voices of the performers.

Thank you.

7 Pleasures
Interview with Mette Ingvartsen by Tom Engels

We agreed to meet at L'Espérance on Rue du Finistère; this infamous hotel with its luscious art deco style is reminiscent of Brussels' mundane days of times gone by. Espérance in French means both hope and expectation, and gently hints at the days when desires and passions spilled out of its upper-floor bedrooms when the tavern functioned as a brothel. While waiting for the Danish choreographer Mette Ingvartsen there is but one element that gives away the era we find ourselves in: on a digital flat screen television CNN reports on the terrors of the world that confront us daily. In this setting, where walls witnessed the melding and colliding of so many, we talk about notions of the nude, sexuality and the sensuous, which are explored in Mette's choreographic works. Discussing her interest in the corporeal body and its very presentation on stage at this nostalgic place seems to bring us even further into an oblivion of time. As the interior of L'Espérance is a reminder of the entanglement of desire, wealth and exploitation, Mette demands for redefining boundaries.

In your last piece* 7 Pleasures*, we see a group of people traverse seven 'pleasurable' states in which they explore each other as well as objects, in different 'bodily' landscapes. This radiates a certain sensuousness that is not obvious or directly perceived from the outside. What is your interest in this exploration of sensibility nowadays?

I'm interested in exploring the relationship between bodies, objects, sensation and the estrangement of desire. In a way, we have become entirely accustomed to objects being over-sexualized, as if it would be the most normal thing in the world. […] My question is: 'What happens when we really seriously consider that an object has a sexual potential in itself?' In the middle of *7 Pleasures*, there is a crucial scene called 'the object orgy', in which the performers interact with each other through an object. The object becomes something with an erotic potential, something that might have feelings in itself. What if you no longer simply use an object to 'give' pleasure but try to stimulate the pleasure of the object itself? If it could feel, what would it actually want? This is of course a speculation; it gives rise to what you call difficult to identify. Whose pleasure is it? What is its direction?

This is an interesting and intriguing aspect as you are referring to both the social and the political in it.

You are right, it's indeed social as well as political. It is a question of how bodies are controlled through pleasure and desire to act in a specific way, to customize and individualize themselves, etc. In many different capitalist strategies there is a strong incitement to consume, because it would give your body pleasure and satisfaction. Pornography, of course, is a prime example, which constantly has to be bought again and again because of its orgasmic nature. Yet, the relationship between desire and consumption reaches far beyond the territory of sex itself. *7 Pleasures* refers to these questions and does so in a certain extreme and experimental way. It does not present possible solutions on stage, rather it shows estranged understandings of bodies, objects and their relations.

Are these explorations through choreography and body practices a form of subversion against the mainstream connection between sexuality, pleasure, desire and the commercial way in which it is presented?

The notion of critique is crucial, and I always question the form in which a critique can be presented. Consumerism precisely thrives on different forms of exploration, experimentation and novelties. To understand the manipulation of our affects and sensations I think we have to experiment with them to the point that our understanding breaks open. My latest group work – *7 Pleasures* – gave the dancers and myself a very strong experience of altering our physical relations. As such, as a social project it was very strong. By taking off our clothes and by experimenting with these sensual materials, certain codes of behavior were taken away. There are many things that have to be cleared in order to set up a frame to enable people to work together in this manner. We discussed the relation between performing and sex-work, and how they diverge and intertwine. We also touched upon the politics of the work and the position of being a performer within it.

In what way do you problematize the display of pleasure in relation to the audience coming to 'enjoy' a show?

We knew from the start that this choreography could be seen as one of these sensorial projects that generate pleasure, excitement and frustration. My goal has been precisely to problematize this relationship. As a spectator you might feel pleasure and excitement, next to alienation, non-understanding or disagreement. *7 Pleasures* entails a presentation of seven different possibilities of how to understand pleasure. The audience is put into a negotiation and reflection about how they want to define 'pleasure' and the kind of spectatorship coming with it. Some people question if we intend it 'as a spectacle for the audience'. In a way this happens quite often: the audience enjoys the performance and consumes it, and at the same time the question arises as to what 'giving pleasure' really means. Some people are asking in what way *7 Pleasures* differs from images that can be found on the internet. Of course, what we do is completely different. It is not a flat image, we are not showing usual sexual practices. We undo certain images of sexuality and standardized ideas of the body, reversing understandings of pleasure and how it operates.

It feels like there is a strong tension between the public and the private, or at least what remains of this distinction. On stage you propose situations with very strong references to actions and practices that would normally only happen enclosed in a bedroom, in private life. In the solo performance* 69 positions *there's a strong reference to the sexual liberation movement in the sixties and its rethinking of how nudity and pleasure need to be claimed publicly. Why do you opt for the theatre and its public capacity to tackle these questions?

Since the sixties, the breakdown between the public and the private is ongoing. It's not new that the differentiation between our public and private lives no longer exists and as we are experiencing this in

such an extreme way, it should in my opinion be reconsidered. The exposure of who you are on Facebook, and the expression of the self, has become part of people's lives and also produces a lot of tension. What do you decide to show or not? How is your profile abused or not? These mechanisms are extremely complex to think about and strongly influence the formation of subjects today. Did you, for instance, know that the average age of boys encountering pornography is eleven or twelve? This is very early and it of course strongly influences the understanding of sexuality and relations. One of the performers of *7 Pleasures* also told me that there's a new pornographic trend called 'shaming', an extreme form of disrespecting your sexual partner. Something I never heard about before. So, in my view, the theatre is a very important place to treat these topics because we still have the luxurious possibility of showing bodies in the flesh rather than as emptied out images.

Approaching this topic and dissociating it from the personal is remarkable. The topic of sexuality is embedded in a rich historical context where in artists like Carolee Schneemann or Annie Sprinkle used their naked bodies as the battlefield of their aesthetic, even political work. There's always been an implication of a 'personal life' in those works that deal with sexuality, sensuality, etc. How do you deal with that dimension in your work?

My performances have never been about the personal or the autobiographical. Instead, they are far more on anonymity, or challenging the understanding of one's own body by erasing personal identity. This does not mean that the personal is not important to me, but it refers to the history of performance where the link to the authentic, the self-expressive and the autobiographic has been very strong. Nowadays, this exposure of the private has become such a machine that it seems to be just the right moment to question these notions in my work. The constant exposure of ourselves has actually nothing to do with our 'selves'; instead the machinery merely enables these expressions. My questions on the private and public have always been about getting away from self-expression and from the demand of making oneself visible and available today. There is a necessity to define what is really private and to imagine spaces where this privacy is respected. It's clear, that when we go to our bedrooms and shut off the lights that all these mechanisms remain within our bodies. It is a very delicate work to be aware of how society's mechanisms are operating on and within our behavior, and how they are ingrained in our physical bodies through hundreds of years of repetition.

You told me about your interest in Paul Preciado's work, for example Testo Junkie and the Counter-Sexual Manifesto. In Testo Junkie, we can see the separation between a genealogical and theoretical analysis of – what he calls – the pharmacopornographic regime and his diary. This diary – which might be a fictional one – tells about strongly personal, sexual explorations. I'm wondering how you relate to that procedure. Instead of referring to your own life, you very much engage with theoretical elaboration.

My explorations are not merely theoretical but foremost physical, material and experimental. In my private life, I am experimenting physically as well. Being a choreographer and working in theatres gives me the chance to set up frames that do not correspond to what is expected and accepted in daily life. The theatre provides the opportunity to speculate. In 'real life' this speculation is far more complicated to execute. Nevertheless, this doesn't mean that our stage performance doesn't affect our lives! Instead of exposing our private lives, we reverse that procedure to see how our 'invented' practices create questions and reflect on our life and private sexu-

al practice. There is indeed a porousness between these two realms. It's not the question whether what we do is applicable to 'real' social situations; it is more about how this work transforms the understanding of our own bodies in relation to other bodies and the way this allows us to change interaction. Ultimately, there is indeed an element of trying to change something. In the sixties, the element of potential change was located in the sexual revolution, but as we know it has failed blatantly. I'd rather not think a piece can change society, but it actually can produce a tension, an awareness and sensitivity to its mechanisms. Being able to know what is happening to one's body and having the tools to create possible modes of resistance would indeed be a 'freeing' practice. The non-verbal, the movement and the sensorial are the place where this work really happens. Of course, this can be approached by a theoretical investigation, but in my work it is extremely important that these modes of thought are embodied, precisely because these mechanisms are physical, bodily, material and almost pre-linguistic. It is something that happens beneath conscious verbalization.

Does this relate to the recurrent trope of the nude body in your work? It seems that the physical body, stripped down from all external signifiers, is there for constructing a body almost anew.

In a way, my work has always been about understanding the formation of subjectivity. I don't understand my subjectivity as having a center or a core, which can be traced back to some Freudian relationship to my father. I'm completely against this and try to develop subjectivities on stage, which are created in a relationship between the inside and the outside. When I was younger I made a lot of sculptures. That really led me to thinking about the body as material. When you're wearing clothes this 'material' is hidden. The idea of the body being moldable, that can merge and transform, which can become something other than you think it is, is recurrent and persistent throughout my investigations. I work a lot on how to dissolve the shape of the body into pure flesh. In each work the nude body appears as a different catalyst. For example, ten years ago I was very engaged with androgyny, which was quite personal – until the age of thirteen people thought I was a boy. It was very troubling to constantly hear that people thought of me being of the opposite sex than what I really was. There are occasions where this still happens to me. If you are taller than 1.75m you must be a man… when I was younger, I enjoyed playing with it, pretending to be a boy.

Has this experience marked or influenced your work in any form?

It is astonishing how little sensitivity people have to bodies. In my early work the question of gender was very important. Manual Focus (2003) was mainly about this: the undoing of personal identification through the use of opposite signifiers such as the male, the mask, age, which would allow our bodies to be unidentifiable. For the performance *50/50* from 2004, I worked on affect and deformation, treating the body as a material. The question is how to deal with nudity as something problematic and unproblematic at the same time. In *69 positions* you see me perform and speaking as if I was completely dressed, fully ignoring the fact that I'm not. A lot of people tell about how they forget that I am naked. Most people who see a naked body are so aware of this nudity and try to figure out what it does to them. There is a certain moment when people don't think about it anymore. In my view, this moment is very interesting.

Your idea of the body as material to morph and sculpt is recurring in your work not only as a transformation of one's own physics, but also in relation to objects. What a body can do to an

object, and vice versa, and what the object can seemingly do to itself, seem to play an important role. In* The Artificial Nature Project (2012) *there are apocalyptic storms of confetti swirling around the stage. It might be less obvious, but even here I would speak about certain sensual and erotic moments.

For five years, I was completely immersed in research into the non-human and materiality. Both *The Artificial Nature Project* and *evaporated landscapes* are about the non-human. What can an object tell us, what can it do, what does it desire? The confetti we work with is a seductive, reflective material and has certain sensual qualities. In a way, the 'liquid movement' that you see in the confetti is not very far removed from the liquid state that emanates in *7 Pleasures*. There is also a question of how the object is a sensual one and what its sensoriality might be; there's definitely a continuity of thought. Actually it would be very interesting to consider what the sexuality of those pieces would be. My last pieces speak about sexuality in an explicit way. But I don't think they are 'about' sexuality; they are much more about questions of social mechanisms, a collective moment in the theatre and how we participate in an event. How representations of sexual bodies influence us in a public context thus becomes both a social and a political question.

7 Pleasures

Premiere: Steirischer Herbst, Graz 2015
Concept, Choreography: Mette Ingvartsen
Performers: Sirah Foighel Brutmann, Johanna Chemnitz, Katja Dreyer, Elias Girod, Bruno Freire, Dolores Hulan, Ligia Lewis, Danny Neyman, Norbert Pape, Pontus Pettersson, Hagar Tenenbaum, Marie Ursin (permanently replaced by Gemma Higginbotham)
Replacements: Ghyslaine Gau, Calixto Neto, Manon Santkin, Mette Ingvartsen
Light: Minna Tiikkainen
Music & Soundtrack: Peter Lenaerts,
with music by Will Guthrie (Breaking Bones & Snake Eyes)
Set: Mette Ingvartsen & Minna Tiikkainen
Dramaturgy: Bojana Cvejic
Assistant choreography: Manon Santkin
Assistant light: Nadja Räikkä
Technical director: Joachim Hupfer & Nadja Räikkä
Sound technician: Adrien Gentizon
Company Management: Kerstin Schroth
Assistant production: Manon Haase
A production of Mette Ingvartsen / Great Investment
Co-production: steirischer herbst Festival (Graz), Kaaitheater (Brussels), HAU Hebbel am Ufer (Berlin), Théâtre National de Bretagne (Rennes), Festival d'Automne (Paris), Les Spectacles vivants – Centre Pompidou (Paris), PACT Zollverein (Essen), Dansens Hus (Oslo), Tanzquartier Wien (Vienna), Kunstencentrum BUDA (Kortrijk), BIT Teatergarasjen (Bergen), Dansehallerne (Copenhagen).
Funded by: The Flemish Authorities, Hauptstadtkulturfonds (Berlin) & The Danish Arts Council.
Thanks to: Musée de la Danse/Centre Chorégraphique National de Rennes et de Bretagne.
A House on Fire co-production; with the support of the Culture Programme of the European Union
Research and residency supported by APAP; with the support of the Culture Programme of the European Union.
Supported by: Stockholms University of the Arts

69 positions

Premiere: PACT Zollverein, Essen 2014
Concept, Choreography & Performance: Mette Ingvartsen
Light: Nadja Räikkä
Set: Virginie Mira
Sound Design: Peter Lenaerts,
with music by Will Guthrie (Breaking Bones)
Dramaturgy: Bojana Cvejic
Technical director: Nadja Räikkä & Joachim Hupfer
Sound technician: Adrien Gentizon
Company Management: Kerstin Schroth
A production of Mette Ingvartsen / Great Investment
Co-production: apap / szene (Salzburg), Musée de la Danse/ Centre Chorégraphique National de Rennes et de Bretagne, Kaaitheater (Brussels), PACT Zollverein (Essen), Les Spectacles vivants – Centre Pompidou (Paris), Kunstencentrum BUDA (Kortrijk), BIT Teatergarasjen (Bergen)
With the support of Théatre National de Bretagne (Rennes), Festival d'Automne à Paris, DOCH – University of dance and circus (Stockholm).
Funded by: The Flemish Authorities & The Danish Arts Council. This work has been funded with support from the European Commission
Supported by: Stockholms University of the Arts

The Artificial Nature Series

Premiere: PACT Zollverein, Essen 2012
Concept and Choreography: Mette Ingvartsen
Dance: Franziska Aigner, Sidney Leoni, Martin Lervik, Maud Le Pladec, Guillem Mont De Palol, Manon Santkin, Christine De Smedt
Replacements: Ilse Ghekiere, Jaime Llopis Segarra & Sirah Foighel Brutmann
Lighting Design: Minna Tiikkainen
Sound Design: Peter Lenaerts
Dramaturgy: Bojana Cvejic
Technical Director: Hans Meijer & Joachim Hupfer
Assistant choreography / production: Elise Simonet
Assistant light: Milka Timosaari
Light technician: Susana Alonso
Sound technician: Adrien Gentizon
Company Management: Kerstin Schroth
A production of Mette Ingvartsen / Great Investment
Co-production: PACT Zollverein (Essen) - With the support of the Départs / European Commission (Culture program), Festival d'Automne (Paris), Les Spectacles vivants – Centre Pompidou (Paris), Théâtre National de Bretagne (Rennes), Kaaitheater with funds from the Imagine 2020 – Art & Climate Change (Brussels), Kunstencentrum BUDA (Kortrijk), apap / szene (Salzburg), Musée de la Danse/Centre Chorégraphique National de Rennes et de Bretagne
Funded by: The Danish Arts Council, Hauptstadtkulturfonds (Berlin) and The Flemish Authorities
This project has been funded with support from the European Comission
With the support of Mokum and the School of Dance and Circus (Stockholm)

Speculations

Premiere: MDT, Stockholm 2011
Concept & Performance: Mette Ingvartsen
Production Management: Kerstin Schroth
Production: Mette Ingvartsen/ Great Investment
Supported by: The School of Dance and Circus (Stockholm).
Summer Intensive 2011 organized by Christine De Smedt/Les ballets C de la B.

All the way out there…

Premiere: Kaaitheater, Brussels 2011
Concept and Choreography: Mette Ingvartsen and Guillem Mont de Palol
Light Design: Jorge Dutor

Sound Design: Gerald Kurdian and Peter Lenaerts
Voice trainer: Dalila Khatir
Production Management: Kerstin Schroth
Advise: Jeroen Fabius
A production of Mette Ingvartsen / Great Investment
Co-production: Kaaitheater (Brussels), HAU Hebbel am Ufer (Berlin) - With the support of the Départs / European Commission (Culture program), Musée de la Danse/Centre Chorégraphique National de Rennes et de Bretagne, MDT (Stockholm)
Funded by: Haupstadtkulturfonds (Berlin)
With the support of: Kunstencentrum BUDA (Kortrijk), Antic Teatre (Barcelona), sommer.bar 2010 a project of Tanz im August & Kerstin Schroth (Berlin) and School of Dance and Circus (Stockholm)

The Extra Sensorial Garden

Premiere: Outdoor - Mellemrum Festival, Copenhagen 2010. Indoor: Kaaitheater, Brussels 2012
Concept: Mette Ingvartsen
Realization: Mette Ingvartsen and Manon Santkin
Sound Assistance: Gérald Kurdian
Technical director: Joachim Hupfer
Production Management: Kerstin Schroth
Co-production: Mellemrum festival, Denmark and Kaaitheater, Brussels
Supported by: sommer.bar 2010 a project of Tanz im August & Kerstin Schroth (Berlin) and the School of Dance and Circus (Stockholm)

The Light Forest

Premiere: Szene Salzburg 2010 and 2012
Concept: Mette Ingvartsen
Production: Szene Salzburg
Production Management Salzburg: Andrea Kahlhammer
Technical Director: Wolfgang Weissgerber
Rigging: Flo Ilsanker and Udo Kirchmayer
Supported by: School of Dance and Circus (Stockholm)
Thanks to: www.mk-illumination.com and www.schurrer.at

evaporated landscapes

Premiere: steirischer herbst festival, Graz 2009
Concept: Mette Ingvartsen
Lighting Design: Minna Tiikkainen
Sound Design: Gérald Kurdian
Technical director: Joachim Hupfer
Sound technician: Adrien Gentizon
Production Management: Kerstin Schroth
Co-production: steirischer herbst festival (Graz), Festival Baltoscandal (Rakvere), PACT Zollverein (Essen), HAU Hebbel am Ufer (Berlin) (With the support of the Départs / European Commission (Culture program), Kaaitheater (Brussels).
Funded by: Haupstadtkulturfonds (Berlin) and Kunstrådet (Denmark)
Research supported by: Tanzquartier (Wien), Siemens Arts Program and LE CENTQUARTRE (Paris)
Coproduced by NXTSTP, with the support of the Culture Programme of the European Union
A production of Mette Ingvartsen / Great Investment

GIANT CITY

Premiere: steirischer herbst festival, Graz 2009
Concept and Choreography: Mette Ingvartsen
Dance: Sirah Foighel Brutmann, Dolores Hulan, Mette Ingvartsen, Sidney Leoni, Guillem Mont De Palol, Chrysa Parkinson, Manon Santkin, Andros Zins-Browne
Lighting Design: Minna Tiikkainen
Sound Design and Dramaturgy: Gérald Kurdian
Technical director: Oded Huberman
Production Management: Kerstin Schroth
Co-production: steirischer herbst festival (Graz), Festival Baltoscandal (Rakvere), PACT Zollverein (Essen), HAU Hebbel am Ufer (Berlin) - With the support of the Départs / European Commission (Culture program), Kaaitheater (Brussels).
Funded by: Haupstadtkulturfonds (Berlin) and Kunstrådet (Denmark)
Research supported by: LE CENTQUARTRE (Paris) and Musée de la Danse/Centre Chorégraphique National de Rennes et de Bretagne
Coproduced by NXTSTP, with the support of the Culture Programme of the European Union
A production of Mette Ingvartsen / Great Investment

It's in the Air

Premiere: PACT Zollverein, Essen 2008
Choreography and Performance: Jefta van Dinther and Mette Ingvartsen
Light Design and Set: Minna Tiikkainen
Sound Design: Peter Lenaerts
Dramaturgy: Bojana Cvejic
Production Management: Kerstin Schroth
Technic: Oded Huberman
Co-production: PACT Zollverein (Essen), Hebbel am Ufer (Berlin), Kaaitheater (Brussels).
Funded by: Haupstadtkulturfonds (Berlin) and Kunstradet, Danish Arts Council (Denmark)
Supported by: Eurotramp (Germany), Les Brigittines (Brussels), Charleroi/Danses, Centre Chorégraphique de la Communauté Francaise de Belgique (Brussels), Ballhaus Naunynstraße (Berlin) and sommer.bar 2007 a project of Tanz im August & Kerstin Schroth (Berlin).
A production of Mette Ingvartsen/Great Investment and Jefta van Dinther/Sure Basic

Why We Love Action
Premiere: PACT Zollverein, Essen 2007
Concept and Choreography: Mette Ingvartsen
Performer: Eleanor Bauer, Jefta van Dinther, Lucia Glass, Mette Ingvartsen, Peter Lenaerts, Kajsa Sandstrom, Manon Santkin
Sound Design, Photography: Peter Lenaerts
Stunt and stage fight workshops: Peppe Ostensson, Maria Winton, Kristoffer Jørgensen
Light Design: Marek Lamprecht
Technic: Oded Huberman
Production Management: Kerstin Schroth
Co-production: Hebbel am Ufer (Berlin), Kulturhus (Aarhus), PACT Zollverein (Essen), Uzès Danse, Centre de développement chorégraphique de l'Uzège, du Gard et du Languedoc-Roussillon and Great Investment
Funded by Hauptstadtkulturfonds (Berlin)
Research supported by Kaaitheater (Brussels), Nadine (Brussels) and Theater In Motion (Beijing)
Thanks to: All of Nadine, Mårten Spångberg, Elke Van Campenhout, Bojana Cvejic, Heike Langsdorf, Camilla Marienhof, Tawny Andersen, Inneke van Waeyenberghe

to come
Premiere: PACT Zollverein, Essen 2005
Concept and Choreography: Mette Ingvartsen
Developed and Performed by: Mette Ingvartsen, Naiara Mendioroz Azkarate, Manon Santkin, Jefta van Dinther, Gabor Varga
Sound Design and Photography: Peter Lenaerts
Costumes: Jennifer Defays
Production Management: Hanne Van Waeyenberge
Co-produced: WERKHUIS produkties (Brussels), PACT Zollverein (Essen), DWA-danswerkplaats
Supported by: The Danish Arts Council

50/50
Premiere: Mousonturm, Frankfurt 2004
Choreography and Performance: Mette Ingvartsen
Music: Deep Purple, Leoncavallo, Cornelius
Sound Design: Peter Lenaerts
Thanks to: Podewil (Berlin), P.A.R.T.S (Brussels), Hannah Sophie Hohlfeld, Mårten Spångberg & Bojana Cvejic

Out of Order
Premiere: Beursschouwburg, Brussels 2004
Concept: Mette Ingvartsen
Created and Performed by: Kaya Kolodziejczyk, Manon Santkin and Mette Ingvartsen
Produced at P.A.R.T.S (Brussels), 2004
Thanks to: Jan Ritsema, Bojana Cvejic, Peter Lenaerts, Ula Sickle & Mårten Spångberg

Manual Focus
Premiere: Mousonturm, Frankfurt 2003
Concept: Mette Ingvartsen
Created and Performed by: Manon Santkin, Kajsa Sandström and Mette Ingvartsen
Produced at P.A.R.T.S. (Brussels), 2003
Thanks to: Bojana Cvejic and Peter Lenaerts

Solo Negatives
Premiere: 2002 (presented at TANZ IM AUGUST 2003)
Created and Performed by: Mette Ingvartsen
Music: Chopin, [‘aisikl]
Sound Design: Peter Lenaerts
Produced at P.A.R.T.S

For information about where these piece have been performed please consult the calender on: metteingvartsen.net

Other Selected Activities 2010-2016

Seminars
Final PhD Seminar
Stockholm University of the Arts
Opponnents: Goran Sergej Pristas and Vanessa Ohlraum
13th of June 2016

NoTHx (Séminaire Nouvelles théâtralités)
Theatre Nanterre Amandiers, France
2nd February 2016

Séminaire Actualités Culturelles
ERG, Brussels
3-hour long interview with Christophe Wavelet about work
23rd February 2016

The Permeable Stage: 75% PhD Seminar
MDT, Stockholm
Opponent: Clementine Deliss
Presentations by Mette Edvardsen and Sarah Vanhee
30th of April 2015

Extended Choreography or how to make nonhumans dance: 50 % PhD Seminar
The School for Dance and Circus, Stockholm
Opponent: Lena Hammergren
Fall 2013

PhD Introduction Seminar
School for Dance and Circus, Stockholm
Fall 2010

Lectures

Lecture on *7 Pleasures*
Dansens Hus in Oslo, Norway
9th of March 2016
Lecture on *Early Works*
Scenekunstskolen in Copenhagen
4th of March 2016

Running commentary on *7 Pleasures*
The University of the Art in Helsinki
26th of January 2016

Running commentary on *7 Pleasures*
Conference: POSTDANCE at MDT, Stockholm
14-16th of October 2015.

Speculations / Lecture about artistic research
Conference: Operations on the open heart
University of Applied Arts Vienna in collaboration with Society for Artistic Research
30th of October 2014

Running Commentary on *The Artificial Nature Project* and *Speculations*
Conference: Topologies of the Ephemeral
Uferstudios/ Freie Universität, Berlin
24th and 25th of January 2014

Running commentary on *The Artificial Nature Project* Dansens Hus, Stockholm
16th of March 2013

Speculations
Conference: Are you alive or not?
Invited by David Weber-Krebs and the Rietveld Acadamy to play at Brakke Grond, Amsterdam
20th March 2015

Discursive / Performative events

The Permeable Stage – Performative conference
Curator of a 10-hour long performative conference
Kaaistudios in Brussels, Belgium
8th October 2016

The Red Archive:
A 3-hour long performative presentation and discussion at Kunstencentrum BUDA, Kortrijk
22nd of March 2014

The Double Lecture Series
Curated in collaboration with Mårten Spångberg
MDT, Stockholm
28 September – 2nd October 2011

everybodys
Contribution to Special Edition #0
Les Laboratoires d' Aubervillier
1st of May 2011

Movement lecture on GIANT CITY.
Contribution to the **"Walk + Talk"** series by Philipp Gehmacher
Kaaistudios, Brussels
18th of March, 2011

Contributions to **"Expo Zero"**
Collaborative live exhibition project by Boris Charmatz.

Singapour in 2009, Berlin in 2014, and London in 2015.

Workshops / Teaching

CND, Paris
Teaching at CAMPING (Dance Schools from all over Europe)
20-24 of June 2016

P.A.R.T.S, Brussels
2. year students (X-week)
23-27 of February 2015

CCN / E.X.E.R.C.E, Montpellier
Creation of a performance in 1 week with 19 students and professional dancers
9-15 January 2015

RISK Workshop #2, Copenhagen
Dansehallerne
20-22 December 2014

DOCH (School for Dance and Circus), Stockholm
Creation of a piece with the BA students in dance
3-week long workshop
Performance shown at MDT 1-4th of June 2013

Performance Studies, Hamburg University
BA students
6- 9 of January 2013

SPOR FESTIVAL
Workshop at Entréscenen, Århus
2-4 May 2011

Performance Studies, Giessen University
Choreographic Writing Practices for MA students
1 week in 2010

Notes

1 Schechner, R. (1970). *Dionysus in 69.* New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux

2 Schneeman, C. (1997). *More Than Meat Joy: Performance Works and Selected Writings.* New York: Mcpherson & Co
Halprin, A. (1995). *Moving Towards Life: Five Decades of Transformational Dance*. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press

3 My original text on *Soft Choreography* was published in *Social Choreography*, Number 21 of The TkH Journal for Performing Arts, Belgrade, December 2013. The version in this book is a rewriting.

4 While writing this text I discovered the details of the concept of *Environmental Theatre* by Ricard Schechner, a book I had only read extracts from while making *69 positions*. It provides interesting accounts, theories and working strategies employed in several of his performances. Anna Halprin's book: *Moving Towards Life: Five Decades of Transformational Dance* describing her engagements with dance's capacity to transform social and political realities, was as well an influential source of inspiration and reflection.

5 Schneeman, C. (1964). Film available on YouTube: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fw_wW2v45eI]

6 From Carolee Schneeman's *More Than Meat Joy*, p. 81

7 From William Finley in Richard Schechner's book *Dionysus in 69*

8 Kusama, Y. 2005. Manhattan Suicide Addict. Paris: Les presses du réel

9 Smith, J. 1962-63. *Flaming Creatures,* available on: http://www.ubu.com/film/smith-jack_flaming.html
extract: 14min50sec – 18min40sec

10 The *Yes Manifesto* was first published with an accompanying text in Frakcija, Performing Arts Journal in Zagreb, 2004.

11 Preciado, B. 2013. *Testo Junkie*, The Feminist Press

12 *Testo Junkie*, p. 66

13 A book by Dr. R. V. Krafft- Ebing

14 *Testo Junkie,* p. 273

15 Benjamin, W. (1936). *The Storyteller*- Section V

16 Foucault, M. (1984). *The ethics of care for the self as a practice of freedom*. Interview published online:
[http://groups.northwestern.edu/critical/Fall%202012%20Session%203%20-%20Foucault%20-%20The%20Ethic%20of%2]

17 Berlants, L and Edelman, L. (2014). *Sex, or the Unbearable*. Durham: Duke University Press, (p. 89).

18 This interview was made on the 23rd of October 2014 in Bergen, the third city in which *69 positions* was performed.

19 A rather terrible movie by Luc Besson from 2014 called *Lucy*.

20 Preciado, B. (2000). *Manifeste contra-sexuel*. Paris: Ballard

21 From the great song by Peaches entitled: *Shake your tits* on the album Fatherfucker

22 De Sade, M. (1785). *120 Days of Sodom*. Digital version by Supervert 32C Inc

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** All performance marked I have attended live*

ISBN: 978-91-7623-994-0
978-91-7623-995-7

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