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Sarah Spies

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***Choreographies of the Curatorial:***  
**Performative Trajectories**  
**for Choreography and Dance**  
**in the Museum**

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# Introduction

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The origin of this publication arose from a metaphoric change of tongue between my primary choreographic practice and the enfolding development of my curatorial practice over the last decade. My cumulative curatorial activity, particularly within the fields of performance and contemporary choreography, often revealed the cross-currents between the broader contexts of ‘performance’ and ‘exhibitionary art.’ The escalating range of exchange between choreographic and curatorial frames also extricated some of the larger and deeper conceptual, theoretical and practice-based forces moving and unsettling their relational and configurative interplay, which in turn started to reverberate through my own practice. I started to notice the taxonomic and cartographic shifts that were occurring, from the shared languages that I started to employ via my own practice, to the exciting discoveries of innovative projects and virulent approaches that breached the categories and contexts of previous exchanges. Naturally, these increasing transpositions also exposed the complexities and challenges attached to artistic and disciplinary traversals of this kind. The embedded conceptual ethos of this book therefore acknowledges the potential of the current choreographic-curatorial overlap as a generative force within both artistic practice and research. It was equally my intention to remain attentive to the hereditary disposition of both realms within institutional and experimental conventions without making extensive claims about the fate or futurability of either – a precarious assemblage in and of itself.

Chapters 1.1 – 1.4 track the nascent conceptual, theoretical, material and practical overlap between the discursive fields of the choreographic and the curatorial via distinct performative and ideological trajectories that account for some of the more dominant historical forces manifesting at present.

Chapters 2.1. and 2.2 offer a contemporaneous linkage in the performative “cultural (re)production of bodies” via the two selected case studies within distinct curatorial approaches that reflect the theoretical threads of chapters 1.1 – 1.4.

The methodological framing – Performativity as Method, Chapter 3 – foregrounds the curatorial process as an evident means of performative research following the theoretical drivers of the preceding chapters.

The penultimate chapter that depicts the practical component – the performative event *Precarious Assembly*, Chapter 4 – demonstrates the application of the research methodology and forms a deliberate critical encapsulation of the overall approach of the book.

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# CHAPTER 1

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## 1.1 *Choreographies of the Curatorial:* Contexts, Tensions and Performative Trajectories Between the White Cube and the Black Box.

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### 1.1.1 Curating the Choreographic.

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The context of this project examines the arc of curatorial frameworks that since the early 21<sup>st</sup> century have prioritised and mined Western contemporary choreographic practice for its potential to negotiate and critique the systems that govern intimacy, collectivity, transmission, embodiment, mediation, participation, spectatorship and immaterial exchange.<sup>1</sup> The discursive parameters underpinning the new performance turn,<sup>2</sup> which are more markedly and critically activated through choreographic practices, is also recognised for its distinct ability as “social apparatus of capture” via Andrew Hewitt<sup>3</sup> to produce structures of attention and affect that facilitate objects, bodies, collectives and communities. These pre-choreographed cursives that pattern and circulate corporeality permit at times a rupture in “the endless reproduction of an imposed circulation of consensual subjectivity”<sup>4</sup> via situated spatiotemporal and ephemerally constel-

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- 1 ——— Mårten Spångberg, “*Conference: Expanded Choreography. Situations, Movements, Objects...*” Conference 29 -31 March 2012 at Museu d’Art Contemporani (MACBA), Barcelona, accessed 31 March 2015, <https://www.e-flux.com/announcements/34425/expanded-choreography/>.
  - 2 ——— Cosmin Costinas and Ana Janevski “Introduction,” in *Is the Living Body the Last Thing Left Alive? The New Performance Turn, Its Histories and Its Institutions*, eds. Cosmin Costinas and Ana Janevski (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2018), 7.
  - 3 ——— Andrew Hewitt, *Social Choreography: Ideology as Performance in Dance and Everyday Movement* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).
  - 4 ——— André Lepecki, “Choreopolice and Choreopolitics: or, the task of the dancer,” *TDR* 57, no. 4 (The MIT Press, Winter 2013): 20.

lated works as expanded art forms of movement and moving body politic(s). Their inherent potencies allow instances of agential cooperation and collective fugitivity that instil what Stefano Harney and Fred Moten identify as the interpellated refusal of “the call to order.”<sup>5</sup> Bojana Cvejić classifies the new performance turn as a set of critically speculative and embodied choreographic practices that allow the emergence of multiplicitous and contingent subjectivities.<sup>6</sup> A recent example of this is Manuel Pelmuş’ *Movements at an Exhibition and Borderlines*,<sup>7</sup> a performative presentation at Salonul de Proiecte speculating on differentiated collective temporalities and modes of collective presence designed to refuse or escape consummation and disappearance within the experience economy. Similarly, Edi Muka’s curated public art project (Agency Sweden), *Choreographies of the Social* (13-25 August 2019), asks: “What are today’s choreographies of power, solidarity, and care”<sup>8</sup> that influence “the respective forms in which bodies, individual and collective, appear and reassemble?”<sup>9</sup> Another recent manifestation is the performative symposium “Dancing Politics, Moving Performance: Conversations at the Edges of Choreography,” curated by Rizvana Bradley at the Centre National de la Danse (CND, Paris) from 18 – 22 June 2018. Bradley frames the artistic-research context within the “expanding culture of political performance” and between the practice of choreography and the “movement of bodies in various contexts: as acts of social transgression, the movement of bodies through institutional spaces, and across geographic borders.”<sup>10</sup> These exemplars provide valuable indexes of the more recent and pervasive performative transfer within and across choreographic, contemporary art, museological and socially engaged

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- 5 ——— Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study* (New York: Wivenhoe: Minor Compositions, 2013), 8, <http://www.minorcompositions.info/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/undercommons-web.pdf>.
- 6 ——— Bojana Cvejić, “European Contemporary Dance, before its recent arrival in the museum,” in *Is the Living Body the Last Thing Left Alive? The New Performance Turn, Its Histories and Its Institutions*, 29-33.
- 7 ——— Manuel Pelmuş, *Movements at an Exhibition and Borderlines*, double lecture performance 18 April 2018 at Salonul de Proiecte and Ivan Gallery, Bucharest, <http://salonuldeproiecte.ro/news/manuel-pelmuş-movements-at-an-exhibition/>.
- 8 ——— Edi Muka, *Choreographies of the Social*, accessed 15 August 2019, <https://www.e-flux.com/announcements/267041/choreographies-of-the-social/>.
- 9 ——— Muka, *Choreographies of the Social*.
- 10 ——— Rizvana Bradley, *Dancing Politics, Moving Performance: Conversations at the Edges of Choreography*, symposium, 18-22 June 2018 at the Centre National de la Danse, Paris, <https://www.contemporaryand.com/exhibition/dancing-politics-moving-performance-conversations-at-the-edges-of-choreography/>.

practices. They offer critical departure points from which to steer towards more differentiated and intersectional performative possibilities and away from the normative and ubiquitous cultural trends that capture and commodify, “stifling the meaningfulness of difference”<sup>11</sup> and subsequently enculturate subjectivity under neoliberal tendencies.

One of the initial catalysts within the aforementioned arc, Corinne Diserens’ *Peripheral Vision and Collective Body*,<sup>12</sup> served as the first public curatorial frame to explicitly reference choreographic practice. Since then, the dance-visual art interface has accelerated and intensified, with public exhibitions and research programmes accumulating rapidly across diverse and transdisciplinary fields. Within this trajectory, curators and choreographers often seek to reinstate dance and choreographic thinking as generators of the micro- and macro-ecologies that have shaped creative practice in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. These include distinct public programmes that have been developed with prominent choreographers and curators at Hayward Gallery (Stephanie Rosenthal’s *MOVE: Choreographing You – Art and Dance Since the 1960s*, 2011), MoMA PS1 (Mårten Spångberg’s *The Dancing Seminar: A Listening Dance*, 2013 and Xavier Le Roy’s *Retrospective*, 2014), Tate Modern (Tino Seghal’s *The Unilever Series – These Associations*, 2012 and Boris Charmatz’s *If Tate Modern was Musée de la danse?*, 2015) and Centre Pompidou (Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker’s *Work/Travail/Arbeid*, 2016 and reworked at Tate Modern, 2016 and MoMA, 2017) to name but a few. The above-mentioned choreographers, and many others, situate the conceptualisation of choreography and choreographic processes<sup>13</sup> as an expanded practice within both the history of visual art and contemporary art practice by fundamentally rethinking dance works as exhibition pieces, rather than theatre pieces. This contemporary expansion has its roots in the experiments of the transdisciplinary art forms and interdisciplinary crossover genres of the art movements of the 1960s.

Simultaneously, the number of exhibitions and curatorial frames concerned with choreographic articulations that place tension between movement, situation, objects and images propagate a redefinition of choreography itself to include artists who use choreographic strategies without necessarily relating them to dance. These articulations include engineered situations and social choreography as well as cinematic strategies, docu-

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11 ——— Ramsay Burt, “Avoiding Capture,” *Dance Research Journal* 50, no. 3 (2018): 107.

12 ——— Corinne Diserens, Yehuda Safran and Letizia Ragaglia, *Peripheral Vision & Collective Body: 24 May – 21 September 2008* (Bozen: Museion, 2008).

13 ——— Ric Allsopp and André Lepecki, “Editorial: On Choreography,” *Performance Research: A Journal of the Performing Arts* 13, Issue 1: On Choreography (2008): 1-6.

mentation and the rethinking of publication, exhibition, display, production and post-production as extensions of choreographic inquiry.<sup>14</sup> The diverse forms of expansion serve as an extension of choreographer William Forsythe's seminal essay entitled "Choreographic Objects,"<sup>15</sup> which propelled a radical rethinking of choreographic process, practice and output as potential groundwork for "alternative sites for the understanding of potential instigation and organization of action to reside."<sup>16</sup>

Furthermore, the recent "conceptual turn in dance"<sup>17</sup> has unhinged all stable and historical definitions of choreography. Subsequently, choreographic approaches that question the normative relationships between movement, composition and the production of dance expand the notion of choreography as an art form that includes a wider range of conceptual tools, materials, strategies and social and political potencies. This traces the rich lineal relations to the art movements of the 1960s in all its diverse manifestations and collaborations from Alan Kaprow's Happenings to the complexity and divergent utterances<sup>18</sup> of Fluxus and the Situationists.

Efrosini Protopapa summarises these effects in the following paragraph:

A reduction of 'theatrics', of expansiveness, of the spectacular, of the unessential, which brings [the choreographer's] work formally closer to performance art (Lepecki 1999a: 129-30), a critique of representation and an interrogation of choreography's 'political ontology' as Lepecki names it (2006: 45), often through the performance of still acts, rather than continuous movement, so that what is enabled is a rethinking of action and mobility within dance (Lepecki, 2006: 15), as well as the shattering of dance techniques and the privileging of the dancer(s) and public(s) as co-author(s) (Lepecki, 1999b).<sup>19</sup>

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14 ——— Spångberg, "Conference: Expanded Choreography. Situations, Movements, Objects..."

15 ——— William Forsythe, "Choreographic Objects," online essay (2008), accessed 14 February 2016, <https://www.williamforsythe.com/essay.html>.

16 ——— Forsythe, "Choreographic Objects," 3.

17 ——— Bojana Cvejić, *Choreographing Problems: Expressive Concepts in European Contemporary Dance and Performance* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2015), 9.

18 ——— Dorothee Richter, "When Truth Discourse Meets Spectacle," in *OnCurating: Performing the Exhibition*, Issue 15, eds. Barnaby Drabble, Federica Martini and Sibylle Omlin (2012): 45-55.

19 ——— Efrosini Protopapa and Bojana Cvejić, *Choreographing Problems: Expressive Concepts in European Contemporary Dance and Performance* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2015), 6-7.

In this way, choreography, or more accurately, the “choreographic” via Jenn Joy<sup>20</sup> now refers to a concept unhinged from its corporeal home in the mind-body of the subject and transposed to many other phenomena, including other forms of meaning production and transmission which are potentially loaded with political predilection. Edgar Schmitz’s *choreographic* platform is a further example of the “intersection of artistic, curatorial and discursive labour.”<sup>21</sup> Schmitz demonstrates its expanded nature in the following statement:

CHOREOGRAPHIC is concerned with the materiality of composite productions, the (dis-)articulation of movement, and the affordances of infrastructural form. The series stages choreographic modes, language games, and production formats in close and conflictual dialogue with neoliberal forms of governance and subsumption to animate their invariably compromised critical affordances.

These expanded conceptual migrations raise issues around dance-based knowledge, power relations between dance and visual arts, art as commodity and performer agency and subjectivity in time-based works exhibited in galleries, amongst other polemics. Of course, it is also important to note that there has been a much larger and more sophisticated arc of complex relations between dance and art since the start of the previous century. Erin Brannigan’s paper entitled “Dance and the Gallery: Curation as Revision”<sup>22</sup> provides a pivotal revision and analysis of the tensions between performance and exhibition as precise formats of duration and participation since the 1950s. She locates central issues that can be drawn from curatorial and critical activity framing recent exchanges between choreography and the gallery or museum as they highlight the somewhat unrecognised influence of dance on past and recent developments in the visual arts. She also administers the challenges of reviewing the relevant histories and showcasing that revision in the gallery context. Furthermore, she claims that curatorial projects that accentuate choreographic practice in their titles, artistic rationale and content progress debates on dance and its relationship with the visual arts in the following, albeit general, ways:

— The contribution of dance to a critique of the ocular-centric nature of the gallery encounter in favour of a participatory paradigm;

<sup>20</sup> ——— Jenn Joy, *The Choreographic* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2014).

<sup>21</sup> ——— Edgar Schmitz, *Choreographic* website statement, accessed 17 August 2017, <http://art.gold.ac.uk/choreographic/>.

<sup>22</sup> ——— Erin Brannigan, “Dance and the Gallery: Curation as Revision,” *Dance Research Journal* 47, Issue 1 (April 2015): 5-25.

- A choreographic analogy for the act of curation, specifically in its capacity as ‘rehearsal format’;
- A reconsideration of the states of the work as ‘object’;
- New models of the archive that engage with physical presence;
- How this all contributes to a critique of the socio-political givens that shape our major institutions.<sup>23</sup>

Brannigan provides a platform for (re)conceptualising dance, and specifically choreography, through a visual arts lens and addresses how the disciplinary skills of the art form figure among the strategies, techniques and paradigms of the visual arts through what she terms the “undisciplined and expanded”<sup>24</sup> use of choreographic practices. She does not, however, clarify which choreographic models are circulating in this most recent relationship of dance with the visual arts, as the apparatuses of the theatre and museum or exhibition space are, of course, very distinct – from their respective spatial arrangements and institutional significations to the expectations and protocols attached to each. Barbara Büscher’s collective publication “Raumverschiebung: Black Box – White Cube”<sup>25</sup> and Franz Anton Cramer’s “The Stage and the Museum, a Contemporary Dynamic”<sup>26</sup> draws a relational inventory of concepts to highlight particular and more contemporary connections. Furthermore, following a Cartesian and perhaps more explicitly, a Kantian genre collation, theatre practices are inextricably linked and at times reduced to the sensual order, whereas visual arts practices ascribes critical distance and an adherence to the truth discourse in problematising manifestations of the spectacle. Dorothee Richter’s article “When Truth Discourse Meets Spectacle”<sup>27</sup> outlines the historic seat and critical crossover of this relation. The tension inherent in this historical separation also highlights the complex re-inscription and transmission of modern subjectivity’s dissensus between the rational and the sensual.

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**23** ——— Ibid., 12.

**24** ——— Ibid., 7.

**25** ——— Barbara Büscher, *Raumverschiebung: Black Box >< White Cube*, eds. Barbara Büscher, Verena Elisabeth Eitel and Beatrix von Pilgrim (Zurich; New York: Olms Verlag, 2014).

**26** ——— Franz Anton Cramer, “The Stage and the Museum, a Contemporary Dynamic,” *Critique d’art* 43 (Autumn 2014), online since 15 November 2015, accessed 1 May 2017, <http://journals.openedition.org/critiquedart/15324>.

**27** ——— Dorothee Richter, “When Truth Discourse Meets Spectacle,” in *On Curating: Performing the Exhibition*.

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## 1.1.2 Constellating the Curatorial: Expanding the Museum.

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Historically, the museum offers the first public ritual to address the individual qua individual. Tony Bennett, in *The Birth of the Museum*<sup>28</sup> and reviewed in “Thinking (with) Museums: From Exhibitionary Complex to Governmental Assemblage,”<sup>29</sup> argues that there is, of course, nothing new in the suggestion that museums are usefully viewed as machineries that are implicated in the shaping of civic capacities.<sup>30</sup> He suggests, in line with Lewis,<sup>31</sup> that in the late-19th-century via the debates leading to the establishment of the Museums Association, museums were commonly referred to as “civic engines”<sup>32</sup> to be enlisted in the task of managing a newly enfranchised mass male citizenry:

Museums have served as important sites for the historical production of a range of new entities, (like art, community, prehistory, natural pasts or international heritage), which, through contrived and carefully monitored ‘civic experiments’, directed at target populations within the museum space, have been brought to act on the social in varied ways. The role that museums have played in mapping out both social space and orderings of time in ways that have provided the vectors for programmes of social administration conducted outside the museum has been just as important, playing a key role in providing the spatial and temporal co-ordinates within which populations are moved and managed.<sup>33</sup>

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28 ——— Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995).

29 ——— Tony Bennett, “Thinking (with) Museums: From Exhibitionary Complex to Governmental Assemblage,” in *The International Handbooks of Museum Studies*, eds. S. Macdonald and H. Rees Leahy (New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015), 21-41.

30 ——— Tony Bennett, “The Exhibitionary Complex,” *New Formations* 4 (Spring 1988): 73-102.

31 ——— G. Lewis, *For Instruction and Recreation – A Century History of the Museums Association* (London: Quiller Press, 1989).

32 ——— Tony Bennett, “Civic Laboratories: Museums, Cultural Objecthood and the Governance of the Social,” *Cultural Studies* 19, no. 5 (2005): 521-547.

33 ——— *Ibid.*, 525.

The crucial point that Bennett makes, however, stipulates that the museum offers a calculated environment where the occurrence within the space is simultaneously epistemological and civic. It is this particular synchronicity that enables such assemblages and the intersubjective relations between people in the museum space “to constitute an apparatus of intervention in the social.”<sup>34</sup> It is important to highlight once again that the revision of these power relations and behavioural patterns within the museum as a constructed bourgeois matrix and disembodied surveillance apparatus was rigorously questioned by the practices of the Neo-Avant-Garde movements, including Fluxus and Viennese Actionism. The deeper contradictions offered by historical reformulations provides new routes into the interpretation of the representational order of the contemporary situation as a complex multi-layered milieu. These complexities will be extrapolated further in Chapters 1.2 and 1.3.

The more traditional differences between the museum and the theatre, however, and the most central aspect of interdisciplinary interest, points to the experiential dimension. The experience of the artwork in a museum or gallery is designed to be isolated and isolating, in contrast to the theatre, where the individual addressed is almost always part of a collective. This is also because the exhibition makes flexibilised and “individualizable forms of perception possible.”<sup>35</sup> Claire Bishop prompts a critical consideration of the potential for experiential crossover when she states the following: “

Dorothea von Hantelmann (2012)<sup>36</sup> further argues that when exhibitions are designed as dramaturgically shaped experiences, they inscribe the material in space and time to anchor it, not only in a context but in a ritual, in a temporally, socially, and intersubjectively situated event.”<sup>37</sup>

What is at issue, therefore, are intersubjective processes and the creation of connections, linking the work as object, material, process or event, with temporal duration and repeated acts of perception and thought where immaterial and subject-related aspirations, as opposed to object-orientated ambitions, are brought to the fore. A concern with an artwork’s effects on the viewer and with the situation in which it takes place has also been a dominant feature of contemporary art since the 1960s. Dorothea

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**34** ——— Ibid., 526.

**35** ——— Claire Bishop, *Radical Museology, or, What’s Contemporary in Museums of Contemporary Art?* (London: Koenig Books, 2013), 24.

**36** ——— Dorothea von Hantelmann, “Notizen zur Ausstellung,” *DOCUMENTA (13): 100 Notes – 100 Thoughts, 100 Notizen – 100 Gedanken # 088* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2012), <https://www.hatjecantz.de/dorothea-von-hantelmann-5301-1.html>.

**37** ——— Bishop, *Radical Museology*, 7.

von Hantelmann<sup>38</sup> claims that producing experience in the way that the artwork relates to the space and to the viewer's body – in essence, how experiences are created, shaped and reflected in artworks, and how they produce meaning – favours the lived experience of corporeality and the haptic phenomenology of the body as it encounters the physical world. Von Hantelmann argues that the white cube can only respond to this shift up to a certain point as a rethinking of the museum, and the category of art that it enshrines via specified modalities of spectatorship, is urgently needed.

She asserts that:

Every artist's attempt undertaken to date at permanently transferring the object into the sphere of processes and events (from the avant-gardes of the 1950s and 1960s to the relational aesthetics of the 1990s) has failed as a result of what Svetlana Alpers calls the 'museum effect' – the tendency, namely, of this format to make every material object the focus of meaning production.<sup>39</sup>

Furthermore, she suggests that exhibition formats that are more strongly geared towards the subject, and away from the object-centred or vision-centred production of meaning, as an individualised and experiential space could remain the ritual that has the strongest ties to contemporary society, as it is also currently equipped with a "privileged legitimating power."<sup>40</sup> This is precisely where Bennett's proposition of the simultaneity of epistemological and civic engagement in the museum space – as civic laboratory – is productive, as it draws attention to the ways in which the museological deployment of possible new configurations makes new relationships both thinkable and perceptible, thus "playing a key role in providing the spatial and temporal co-ordinates within which populations are moved and managed."<sup>41</sup> It seems what is highlighted between these contexts, or precisely within a potential shift in context, is the possibility of not re-inscribing the canon but facilitating alternative models of exhibition-making and combining the (re)presentational arena with that of performativity to challenge the aesthetic and production circumstances.

38 ——— Dorothea von Hantelmann, "The Experiential Turn," in *On Performativity 1 of Living Collections Catalogue*, ed. Elizabeth Carpenter (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 2014), <http://walkerart.org/collections/publications/performativity/experiential-turn>.

39 ——— von Hantelmann, "Notizen zur Ausstellung," 9.

40 ——— *Ibid.*

41 ——— Bennett, "Civic Laboratories," 525.

Gabrielle Brandstetter's paper entitled "Written on Water: Choreographies of the Curatorial"<sup>42</sup> foregrounds the notion that there has been a significant shift from the visual arts to the performing arts in questioning dominant institutional and political conditions within the expanded development of curatorial practice and theory. This in turn has, amongst other effects, brought about multifarious transformations to the status of the curator. Within the strata of disciplinary exchange between curatorial strategies and processes of performance-making that include dramaturgical and choreographic practices, Brandstetter proposes that the structure of the curatorial seen specifically as a choreographic practice could be borrowed from Walter Benjamin's concept of the "constellation." In his text "On the Mimetic Faculty,"<sup>43</sup> Benjamin defines the term "*Konstellation*" in the context of dance as an astronomic configuration of dynamic movement patterns. I would also argue that in developing this position, it is important to expand these notions towards a more multi-layered interpretation of historical meaning production where the specific "constellations" include the nexus and complexes of power relations in both the museum and theatre. Brandstetter goes on to argue that it is useful to frame the curatorial as a form of theory-based praxis, which is essentially what the expanded concept of the choreographic does if you follow the work of Bojana Cvejić, Efrosini Protopapa, Jenn Joy, Andre Lepecki, Rick Allsop and William Forsythe with regard to the conceptual parameters of the "Choreographic Object"<sup>44</sup> or the choreographic per se. This constellated dynamic unseats the centres of more traditional forms of curatorial power through the production of a curatorial subjectivity that makes claim to the dispersion of the body of the curator across other bodies – including bodies of knowledge. Similarly, Pierre Bal-Blanc and Vanessa Desclaux state that these inherently collaborative choreographic processes within the curatorial acknowledge "the dissolution of the fictive unity of the subject through a multiplicity of embodied practices."<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, the special edition of the journal *Frakcija* #55 entitled "Curating Performing Arts" which was edited by Florian Malzacher, Tea Tupajić and

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42 ——— Gabrielle Brandstetter, "Written on Water: Choreographies of the Curatorial," in *Cultures of the Curatorial*, eds. Beatrice von Bismarck, Jörn Schafaff and Thomas Weski (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2012), 119-132.

43 ——— Walter Benjamin, "On the Mimetic Faculty," *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings 2, Part 2*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2005), 720-727.

44 ——— Forsythe, "Choreographic Objects."

45 ——— Pierre Bal-Blanc and Vanessa Desclaux, "Living Currency," in *The New Curator: Researcher, Commissioner, Keeper, Interpreter, Producer, Collaborator*, eds. Caroline Milliard, Rafal Niemojewski, Ben Borthwich and Jonathan Watkins (London: Laurence King Publishing, 2016), 175.

Petra Zanki in 2010, is referenced by Brandstetter as offering broad perspectives on dramaturgical and choreographic discourse within curatorial theory and practice. In line with this, Brandstetter argues for the “politics of small acts” as an important part of what could be considered the choreographic mode of the curatorial. She claims that this mode essentially consists of an embodied criticality as methodology which sets up a very particular alignment of critique according to debates along the post-Kantian tradition, as it arranges which concept of critical theory and critical praxis is selected and brought into question. She arrives at the notion that the curatorial is therefore conceived of essentially as practices in the plural. This historical trajectory and critical tradition is developed very clearly in Richter’s “When Truth Discourse Meets Spectacle.”

Furthermore, Brandstetter suggests that within performing arts curation the question remains as to where we find the overlap and differences between the ‘old’ model of the dramaturge in theatre, the choreographer in dance and the curator within more expansive silos of practice. She notes that what we could be dealing with along this trajectory are rather expedient ways of looking at the choreographic within the curatorial. This is seminal, as the seemingly novel inter-art models that are currently ubiquitous within the transfer of choreographic practices into the museum run the risk of being wholly subsumed by the museum’s institutional ‘inventio’ project of curatorial indexing. This possible slippage denies the more radical experiments and anti-institutional roots which can also be traced through neo-avant-garde theatre practices. The more traditional indexical processes of museal selection are closely related to encyclopaedic inquiries where it also becomes clear, paradoxically, that through searching for material – which is, of course, not only verbal – such encyclopaedic endeavours make visible what cannot be systematised within the system; the gaps and the meanderings of arbitrariness via practices of affective embodiment. Brandstetter points out that this speaks of a crisis in epistemology rather than just the system and order of knowledge. She goes on to suggest that the encyclopaedic model is now replaced by a fracture or gap whereby movement – or rather Benjamin’s *Konstellation* of knowledge – is triggered. Brandstetter also loosely situates Deleuze and Guattari’s concepts of the rhizome within this trajectory where the manifold combinations and linkages of terms, practices and operations of selection are in fact ways of constellation thinking. Although in some ways this provides a useful visual mobilisation of constellation thinking, Deleuze and Guattari’s rhizomatic knowledge proposition remains a somewhat thin conceptual reference throughout Brandstetter’s argument. What we can perhaps see from this is that the playful, and at times seditious use of rhizomatic contingency in the decisions for topoi and their possible displacement within the choreographic mode of the

curatorial, could be a means of intervention. Brandstetter offers the following view:

The image of the curatorial of choreography is to be developed as poetics of attention (a seeing gaze and a postponed knowing – processes that are charged with sensual(sic) content that are then no longer decodable by messages or information). It is about letting something happen, while being aware of one's own role in the transference process – and recognizing it as part of what goes on in the entire production: involvement as a mode of the curatorial.<sup>46</sup>

One can therefore legitimately start to question how certain practices in dance and choreography transform, expand and critically interrogate our understanding of the curatorial. Brandstetter highlights two important principles from this vantage point: namely, collaboration as a form of choreographic praxis of the curatorial and editing strategies as another distinctly choreographic method. Practices of collaboration are inherently part of the choreographic concept that attempts to address the displacement of hierarchical relations by bringing about subversive decision-making structures within curatorial relations. This can be seen as one strategy of the choreographic concept within the remit of curation where the sharing of disciplinary tools and modes of operation becomes part of the collaborative process. Furthermore, infiltrating the politics involved in the allocation of scarce space and the situated-ness and legitimacy of certain bodies in certain spaces and places, often precariously marked and inscribed, draws attention to the dynamics of curatorial power. Brandstetter makes specific reference to Irit Rogoff's curatorial model of "smuggling"<sup>47</sup> as an embodied strategy that is loaded with choreographic potential. She claims that it offers a revision of formats of museal display and that the subsequent choreographing of different platforms undermines the usual curatorial and custodial management of performance. This also includes a changed attitude to editing strategies within the curatorial. Here, the example of choreographer Frédéric Gies' collaborative work entitled *Dance (Practicable)* is perhaps the most appropriate, and one that Brandstetter references as well. In this work, which premiered at Berlin's Sophiesæle in 2006, Gies develops various versions to form an album or practical anthology, based on a score that can be performed by either a soloist or ensemble group. The question that Gies raises with this work is, "How can non-hierarchical relations be created in collaborative working processes?" With *Practicable*, the larger collaborative group, Good Work

46 ——— Brandstetter, "Written on Water," 126.

47 ——— Irit Rogoff, *Smuggling: An Embodied Criticality*, 2006, accessed 12 January 2016, [https://xenopraxis.net/readings/rogoff\\_smuggling.pdf](https://xenopraxis.net/readings/rogoff_smuggling.pdf)

Productions, which includes choreographers, dancers and artists Isabelle Schad, Gies, Alice Chauchat, Odile Seitz and Frédéric de Carlo, have developed a collaborative format that transports their individual structures and practices from choreography to other socio-economic spaces and institutions. Each of these participating artists labels his or her production or working process as “Practicable.” This means that whenever and wherever one of the works is staged, the organiser or programmer must agree to precede it with the production of another piece from the collective. This can take the form of a ‘try-out’ or an excerpt from the work of another choreographer, even if the piece has not been invited to be shown. In this way, Gies’ “Practicable” concept undermines and influences the politics of specific sites, institutional power structures and the economies of curatorial praxis that decides for example, the processes of selection, ordering, editing and rejection. Bringing about this type of subversive decision-making structure reflects the assembly of choreographic collaborative practices that draws attention to the dynamics of curatorial power and shifts them, at least for a while.

Beatrice von Bismarck, in the position paper “Relations in Motion: The curatorial condition in visual art – and its possibilities for the neighbouring disciplines,”<sup>48</sup> offers a comparable perspective on the choreographic mode’s potential subversions:

One of the results of this approach was that the actions, constellations, spaces, and contexts participating in the production of meaning were transformed into a constitutive part of artistic practice. It was in consequence of this that the appropriations of curatorial activities – selecting, combining, editing, arranging, presenting, showing and communicating – have taken place. In that sense, for example, Marcel Broodthaers, Michael Asher, and Daniel Buren, but also Bruce Nauman, Dan Graham, or Robert Morris, extended their activities to selecting, assembling, arranging, contextualizing, presenting, and communicating their own bodies, as well as their own and other people’s artworks, public goods or private as well as public spaces. They set up their own directives or choreographic intrusions as alternatives to the hitherto common criteria of curatorial practice, displaying them as conventions that could likewise be changed.<sup>49</sup>

The conversion of the single author to group production here, alongside the reconfiguration and dematerialisation of the art-object status, not

48 ——— Beatrice von Bismarck, “Relations in Motion: The curatorial condition in visual art – and its possibilities for the neighbouring disciplines,” in *Curating Performing Arts*, eds. Florian Malzacher, Tea Tupajić and Petra Zanki (Frakcija: Performing Arts Journal #55, 2010): 50-57.

49 ——— Ibid., 52.

only brings renewed political meaning and participation into the art-making process, but again aligns these practices with the complexes of Fluxus, Happenings and the Situationists who addressed power relations in the field by taking on multiple pre-curatorial roles that possibilised and mobilised these developments and current confluences. As an inference, what Brandstetter and von Bismarck's alignment of respective positions remind us is that there is, of course, always an interplay between hierarchical structures and that any change to any of its parts sets in motion certain displacements that ultimately shifts these power relations, however subtle or apparent these may be. Ultimately, this affects how certain "*Konstellations*" of knowledge production function and evolve. In essence, these "relations in motion," to use von Bismarck's term, manifest as performative through the negation of different forces where a more composite reading of performance and performance theory – as another multi-layered nexus of societal, historical, institutional and respective genre-based rendering – is also necessary. What is at stake here then is the layer of affective and performative operation within and between these relations-in-motion as gauges of potential future displacements, relations and transformations. More broadly put, the rich exchanges and overlap between choreographic, curatorial, collaborative, retrospective exhibition-making and research-driven and embodied practices that have recently proliferated expose an inherent tension in the way that choreographic thinking and practice is currently in the process of being translated, archived and in a sense culturally and aesthetically indexed by museal and institutional processes. This can perhaps also be traced from the multifarious art-making processes and approaches of the 1960s to the more contemporary practices of artists such as Spartacus/Marvin Gaye Chetwynd. It has, in many instances, led to asymmetrical discursive relations between these fields. It is therefore useful to consider Brandstetter's proposal of the operational relations in "Choreographies of the Curatorial," as it aims to redress the process of care-taking and conservation of more symmetric and dynamically discursive exchanges between choreographic and curatorial practice and theory. Clearer parity between these terms aims to distribute a more equitable diametric of discourse where related research, experimentation and exchange do not necessarily prioritise either of the informing disciplines because the interest in exchanging more horizontally shifts the inherited positions and bodies of knowledge to the conditions of shared working, exchanging, thinking and making akin to more complex and multi-layered art-historical lines of inquiry. Here, choreography does not automatically serve the expansion of the curatorial toolkit, nor does it operate solely as a semiotic agent in a larger institutional project of aesthetic appropriation and currency. It is also not merely taking up real estate in the museum. Rather, it is set in motion amongst other powerful and charged relations that all function performatively and affectively.

Emily Chhangur offers the following anchoring of terminology in the paper “What Can Contemporary Art Perform and then Transgress”<sup>50</sup>:

To ‘choreograph the curatorial’ is to mobilize elements that encircle what has traditionally been considered the work of curators (i.e. the putting together, the presentation of, the ephemeral moment, the spatial situated-ness and the thinking through connections made by accident etc.), making interstices that are means but not curatorial ends. Choreographing the Curatorial also means moving with the demands our projects instantiate, evolving as our practices move in new directions. It means rethinking how the gallery and museum views its own trajectory – it is an evolving entity in which change is not always visible in spatial or representational terms. I imagine choreographic-curatorial methodology as a constellation in movement, how continually shifting clusters and relationships affect transformation, emphasizing and experience of how cultural traditions are enacted and not just staged.<sup>51</sup>

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### 1.1.3 Intersections of Performativity.

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One cannot fully grasp the scope of these potential transfers without underpinning it with the concept of performativity and the major impact its expansion has had on disciplinary contours – especially alongside recent turns within the artistic history of performative encounters. The historic *root* (anchor) and *route* (critical direction) of its conceptual development dates to 1955 when language philosopher, John Langshaw (or J.L.) Austin, delivered the prestigious William James Lectures at Harvard University. In advance of his appearance, he had been offering earlier versions of these thoughts in a course at Oxford that he called “Words and Deeds,” but it was the Harvard version, however, that would be remembered, transcribed and ultimately distributed. The propositions and explorations from these lectures eventually became a book entitled *How to Do Things with Words*<sup>52</sup> published in 1962 and ultimately formed the basis of Speech

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50 ———— Emelie Chhangur, “What Can Contemporary Art Perform? And Then Transgress?” *Canadian Theatre Review* 162 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, Spring 2015): 82-83.

51 ———— Ibid.

52 ———— J L Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962).

Act Theory that became required reading for many students of critical theory from the late 20th century onwards. Austin wrote: “It was for too long the assumption of philosophers that the business of a ‘statement’ can only be to ‘describe’ some state of affairs, or to ‘state facts,’”<sup>53</sup> showing his intention to shift the focus to statements that approached the world with the intent “to do” something to it – to intervene, to engage, to participate and to affect. Considering his linguistic exemplars like “I promise” or, most famously, “I do,” Austin found them most interesting for their implosion of the referential relation and their potential of reality or world-making. He called such phrases “performative utterances,” choosing the root “perform,” he said, because “it indicates that the issuing of the utterance is a performing of an action.”<sup>54</sup> In other words, that something will or has happened through the performativity of the actual utterance. The gamut of reorientation in critical, social and artistic practices that subsequently followed foregrounded the capacity of language not simply to represent an already-given world but to install transformative encounters that brought the world into being by questioning the parameters of traditional aesthetic forms.

The term is, of course, complex and sometimes confusing within contemporary art discourse. The often-contradictory understanding of the term arguably contributes to its pervasive application, as “performative” becomes an all-encompassing remit for almost everything within the expanded fields. Performativity is often used to describe work that seems to partake of performance but does not quite conform to the conventions of the performing arts. For example, cross-media pieces might incorporate a body, be time-based, or perhaps ask their visitors to engage actively on some level without adhering to any of the conventions of performance proper. Shannon Jackson, in her seminal text “Performativity and Its Addressee,”<sup>55</sup> suggests that more currently the term also seems to cluster recent cross-disciplinary works spatiotemporally via embodied and relational encounters without a precise rendering of performative vocabulary. She also suggests, quite crucially, that these types of calibrations and appropriations in turn affect how the receiver “calls” him or herself, and it is exactly because of the imprecision of the term and more generally, “performative work,” that the converted locus of power lies in the encounter with someone who is still in the process of deciding what kind of receiver they want to be. Sabine Gebhardt Fink’s article, “Talking Back and Queer Reading – An Essay on Performance Theory and its Possible Impacts on

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53 ——— Ibid., 1.

54 ——— Ibid., 6.

55 ——— Shannon Jackson, “Performativity and Its Addressee,” in *On Performativity* 1 of Living Collections Catalogue, ed. Elizabeth Carpenter (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 2014), <http://walkerart.org/collections/publications/performativity/performativity-and-its-addressee>.

Dissemination of Art,”<sup>56</sup> offers a further multi-layered interpretation of the term in relation to its mutability within representational contexts, which will be employed to analyse Trajal Harrell’s “Hoochie Koochie: A Performance Exhibition”<sup>57</sup> as one of the case studies.

Shannon Jackson also highlights a second cluster of contradictory uses that acknowledge the more philosophical understanding of the term as linguistic action in the world, relegated specifically from Austin’s original motives for Speech Act Theory. In this cluster, “performative art” seeks to bring a world into being with its action and synchronously produce art as an effect itself. Through this lineage, the term performative comes from a longer tradition of Speech Act Theory that explores the world-making power of language, not simply to describe the world but to constitute it by shaping our perception and altering the conditions in which we live, structuring how we think about ourselves, our relationships and our environment. Within this strain of thinking, the constitution of the term is preoccupied with philosophical and political questions of subjectivity, action and autonomy. André Lepecki offers yet another interpretation of the concept of performativity in his lecture series “Performance as the Paradigm of Art”<sup>58</sup> at the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw throughout 2013, and highlights the intertextual links and effects of the term within the aesthetic paradigms of art practices along performativity’s critical lineage, as developed via the arguments put forward in Chapter 1.4.

The most original work in the field of an expanded understanding of performativity is offered by Dorothea von Hantelmann’s *How to Do Things with Art – The Meaning of Art’s Performativity*.<sup>59</sup> She argues that all artwork is performative and claims that, “It makes little sense to speak of a performative artwork, because every artwork has a reality-producing dimension.”<sup>60</sup> Von Hantelmann develops a well-founded and far-reaching analytical approach to contemporary art by interpreting the performative as a novel instrument of critical artistic practice. She argues that it does not

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56 ——— Sabine Gebhardt Fink, “Talking Back and Queer Reading - An Essay on Performance Theory and its Possible Impacts on Dissemination of Art,” *OnCurating* 6, “1, 2, 3, - Thinking About Exhibitions” (2010): 23-27.

57 ——— Trajal Harrell, “Hoochie Koochie: A Performance Exhibition,” July - Aug 2017 at Barbican Art Gallery, London, supported by Fluxus Art Projects, file:///C:/Users/spies/Downloads/Trajal%20Harrell\_Press%20release%20May%202017.pdf.

58 ——— André Lepecki, “Performance as the Paradigm of Art,” opening keynote at Performance Theory Seminar Series, Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw, accessed 12 January 2017, <https://vimeo.com/60432032>.

59 ——— Dorothea von Hantelmann, *How to Do Things with Art – The Meaning of Art’s Performativity* (Zurich: JRP Ringier & Les presses du réel, 2010).

60 ——— *Ibid.*, 91.

so much seek to break with existing structures or conventions of art and its institutions but operates at its most powerful when used to analyse their effectiveness and, at the same time, restructure the internal rules of presentation and engagement. Von Hantelmann applies the model of the power to act and perform to artworks themselves. The aim is less to place the focus of criticism on aesthetic categories – such as a work’s form, medium or appeal – and instead ask how the artwork acts or behaves within the context of conventions. She states, “The model of performativity places the main emphasis on the conventions of its production, presentation and reception, [it] shows how each individual work of art helps to produce these conventions and how, in so doing, possibilities are created for changing them.”<sup>61</sup> The book illustrates these connections by referencing the examples of James Coleman, Daniel Buren, Tino Sehgal and Jeff Koons to redefine what comprises a performative artwork via the potential to produce itself within an already-existing framework.

This most recent revision of performative theory was part of a broader effort to understand the complexities of modern subject formation. Thinkers as varied as Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida, and most importantly Judith Butler, began to excavate a history of critical philosophy that mounted alternative conceptions of the degree to which social circumstances, or according to Lepecki, “social choreographies of subjectivity,”<sup>62</sup> produce the internal perception of a voluntary will, often with particular ideological effects. The notion of the performative was thus revived to tease out the implications of the constitutive power of language over embodiment and subjectivity within the potent representational frames of theatre and museum spaces that J. L. Austin himself might not have pursued. For many recent theorists therefore, the degree to which the primary doing of the performative inscribed the ideological constitution of subjectivity itself became the prime theoretical project.

Ontological exemplars that dramatised this recursion – between the doing or ‘doing of’ and the doer him or herself, is Louis Althusser’s “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses.”<sup>63</sup> It is a key text in this discussion, particularly for the vocabulary of “hailing” and “interpellation” that he introduced and for his examples that describe how we participate in our own ideological formation. Shannon Jackson’s extensive writing on the pervasive performative uptake across critical theory and contemporary arts practice blends the symptomatic current ‘turn’ with its more robust theoretical roots, particularly its syncretisation with Althusserian

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61 ——— Ibid., 27.

62 ——— André Lepecki, *Singularities: Dance in the Age of Performance* (London: New York: Routledge, 2016), 3.

63 ——— Louis Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses,” in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (London: New Lett Books, 1971).

ideology and interpellation. In “Performative Curating Performs,”<sup>64</sup> she relays Althusser’s famous teachable example of the policeman hailing an addressee, who in the turning towards the officer recognises himself and constitutes his interpellated subjectivity within the weave of ideological formation. Jackson argues that this famous ‘turn’ “was a form of uptake that ensured the felicitousness of ideology’s performative reach.”<sup>65</sup> She also argues that Althusser posited the interpellation of subjects by ideological apparatus as a recursive process, as essentially “one and the same thing.”<sup>66</sup> She draws a significant relation to Judith Butler’s joining of Austinian language via Speech Act Theory and the Althusserian ideological codex in “Subjection, Resistance, Resignification: Between Freud and Foucault”<sup>67</sup> and states that Butler attempts to “tease out a degree of variability in the process of hailing.”<sup>68</sup>

Dorothea von Hantelmann also draws on Butler’s joining of Austinian performative language and Althusserian theoretical theatre and relates the same Butlerian quotation as exemplar:

As Althusser himself insists, this performative effort of naming can only attempt to bring its addressee into being; there is always the risk of a certain misrecognition. If one misrecognizes that effort to produce the subject, the production itself falters. The one who is hailed may fail to hear, misread the call, turn the other way, answer to another name, insist on not being addressed that way.<sup>69</sup>

Von Hantelmann argues that if a misfire or misrecognition is possible, it still occurs within a recursive structure that both constrains and enables the subject it constitutes. Butler’s theoretical contribution is most profound here, as the notion of gender and its performative production was also addressed by performance art and theatre practices from the 1960s onwards. What the politics of sexuality and gender therefore offer under the guise of performativity, accentuated within the performative conventions of both art and performance, is the value of self-naming and the productivity of opacity or fluidity.

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64 ——— Shannon Jackson, “Performative Curating Performs,” in *Empty Stages, Crowded Flats: Performativity as Curatorial Strategy*, eds. Florian Malzacher and Joanna Warza (Berlin: Performing Urgency #4, House on Fire Publications, 2017), 17-26.

65 ——— Ibid., 22.

66 ——— Ibid.

67 ——— Judith Butler, “Subjection, Resistance, Resignification: between Freud and Foucault,” in *The Identity in Question* ed. John Rajchman (London: Routledge, 1995), 229-250.

68 ——— Jackson, “Performative Curating Performs,” 22.

69 ——— von Hantelmann, *How to Do Things with Art*, 19.

André Lepecki offers another layer of complexity vis-à-vis the representational capture of the performative uptake and argues that “no representation” is no longer possible, as the frame of the museum and theatre offers a buffer zone between actuality and possible audience-related interpellated resistance. He claims that within representation, the gamut of performances and performers are able to “pierce through what would be an example of ‘misfired’ performatives, to remain capable of issuing commands that are, after all, obeyed.”<sup>70</sup>

He continues the argument that performative utterances that occur within the parameters of representation, however liminal the illocutionary and perlocutionary forces may be, will always belong to art by claiming that:

...the issuing of commands and imperatives, which J.L. Austin sees as one of the clearest examples of performative speech acts, would supposedly “misfire” in this context - since despite the right agents, the context remains “theatrical” in the sense that everyone knows that in the museum.<sup>71</sup>

These key theoretical exemplars of more multi-layered knowledge constellations, where the critical approach and the aesthetic, representational, political and embodied practices developed in relation to each other, are crucial, as it is only through these constellated approaches that we can understand the current performative persistence of choreographic approaches and the ensuing diversity that it might offer. Dance and choreography behave differently in the museum and are performatively diverse in their iterations across the varied representational platforms that the museum arena offers. There is also a taxonomic difference between the art-historical canon that captures choreographers under the semblance of the archival project and the affective economies of practice and widening audience participation under expanding neoliberal museum agendas which again captures dance’s capacity to instil sensuous intersubjectivities and temporary communities that satisfy the imperatives of pan-capitalist solidarity.

The spectrum of practice via both routes provides of course as much potential for remedial resistance and intentional misfires that subvert the hegemonic order of the neoliberal museum. The incurred performative misfire or interpellated misrecognition is pertinent therefore when dealing more and more with choreographic performatives or choreographies

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70 ——— Lepecki, “Choreopolice and Choreopolitics,” 17.

71 ——— Ibid.

of the curatorial across museum and gallery programmes. An interesting example of this is proposed by American-Algerian choreographer Jonah Bokaer in the article “On Vanishing: New Mythologies for Choreography in Museums.”<sup>72</sup> He states:

From a choreographer’s point of view, each of my works analyses the structural supports available to choreography, when presented site-specifically in museums. The venue is used as a point of departure, to suppose new mythologies for choreography, calling into play a kind of recursive relationship. What I have termed since 2011, “new mythologies” for dance is not in reference to literal, existing myths but to the creation of new critical foundations upon which to analyse the impact of museum spaces on the ephemerality and fugitivity of choreography and vice versa. It is closer to Barthes’ Mythologies that raises questions about the value and function of myth-making today.<sup>73</sup>

The most germane proposition that Bokaer hints at here is Roland Barthes’ *Mythologies* as a mode of discussing the cross-overs of more complex sign systems. Here, Austin’s performative utterances and Butler’s gendered performativity of subjective embodiment and enactment via everyday behaviours and quotidian displays is framed through the second order representational sign system of the theatre or black box. This then functions within the realm of the museum, which again operates within the potent context of representational and cultural institutions that are already deeply multi-layered and inter-related in their prominent historical, aesthetic and political overlap. Bokaer’s suggestion that choreography is activated as another complex and authorial signification system of command that also performs as an aesthetic, representational and political player within the structural constructs of the museum as cultural institution is important, as it offers a rupture between the historical appearance and disappearance of the art form within more complex and multi-layered readings of art-making and production in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The art of choreography taking up real estate in the museum or gallery is not the issue here, since in actuality choreographers are primarily concerned with the same questions as other contemporary artists, namely; space, visibility, temporality, issues of aesthetics, labour, attention economies, (re)presentation and possible distortions of reproduction, which can (re)occur when choreography is curated within a visual arts context. In the recent publication, “When You Mix Something, It’s Good to Know Your Ingredients:

72 ———— Jonah Bokaer, “On Vanishing: New Mythologies for Choreography in the Museum,” *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art* 36, Issue 2 (May 2014): 10-13.

73 ———— *Ibid.*, 11.

Modes of Addressing and Economies of Attention in the Visual and Performing Arts,”<sup>74</sup> Dorothea von Hantelmann states the following:

To connect a liberal frame with moments of bonding means to interweave different traditions, modalities and forms of addressal. This is what I see taking place or being experimented with in various artistic practices at the moment. It’s the search for a contemporary mode of addressing the viewer. This new mode of addressing is on the one hand more orientated towards the creation of ties or connectivities than was able to be generated by the traditional exhibition format. On the other hand, it stays attuned to a contemporary individualised and flexibilised sensitivity.<sup>75</sup>

To conclude, Gabrielle Brandstetter’s initial claim that there is a level of political urgency needed in rethinking the strategies of curating and programming in terms of choreography seems particularly apt when considered against the trajectory of performative theory. It offers opportunities for deeper and more nuanced analysis, specificity and situatedness, as there are multiple discrepancies, misrecognitions and misfires between current choreographic literacy and curatorial practice. *Choreographies of the Curatorial*, to some extent, is therefore demonstrative of curatorial practice that considers and processes performativity and self-reflexivity alongside the conditions and potentials of selecting, exhibiting, editing, performing, writing and archiving within the frequently uncharted terrain of affect and embodiment, or more generally, within the politics of appearance by way of acknowledging the profound significance of performance for the discourse on art.

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74 ——— Dorothea von Hantelmann, “When You Mix Something, It’s Good to Know Your Ingredients: Modes of Addressing and Economies of Attention in the Visual and Performing Arts,” in *How to Frame: On the Threshold of Performing and Visual Arts* eds. Barbara Gronau, Matthias von Hartz and Carolin Hochleichter (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2016), 49-53.

75 ——— Von Hantelmann, “When You Mix Something,” 53.

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## 1.2 Ungoverning Choreography as Apparatus of Capture: Histories, Mythologies and the Social Choreography of Visual Pleasure and Performative Bodies in the Museum.

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### 1.2.1 Ideological Force Fields and Choreographic Capture in Context.

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Maggie Nelson, in her critical cross-genre memoir *The Argonauts*, offers an interesting polemic with regard to the inherent contradictory nature of any project of visibility: “Visibility makes possible, but it also disciplines: disciplines gender, disciplines genre.”<sup>76</sup> The art-historical project of meta-visibility via visualisation, embodiment, inscription, mediation and self-representation is entangled in a complex dance of interrelated power structures in the continuing struggle for more nuanced and autonomous modes of subjectivity. Never is this more visible or visceral within the auditorium of the museum-theatre complex, a clear manifestation of Foucauldian power forms, than when performative bodies enter and potentially rupture or resist the mythologies – or the metaphoric vehicles of collective desire<sup>77</sup> – of visual representation. Foucault’s project of diversifying power forms that emerged during different historical phases of modernity via its implication and circulation by overlapping apparatus is outlined as: (I) sovereign power, (II) disciplinary power and (III) biopower.<sup>78</sup> To Foucault, the individual is “both subjugated and constituted through power and an

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76 ——— Maggie Nelson, *The Argonauts* (London: Melville House, 2016), 107.

77 ——— D.J. Huppertz, “Roland Barthes, Mythologies,” *Design and Culture* 3, Issue 1 (2011): 85.

78 ——— Michel Foucault, “The Subject and Power,” in *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, eds. H. J. Dreyfus, P. Rabinow (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1982): 208-226.

actor who disseminates it”<sup>79</sup> through a “technology of power” which organises human subjects and establishes the subject gradually, progressively and materially.<sup>80</sup> Following this Foucauldian thesis, power is seen to apply itself to everyday life, and the processes through which human subjects are categorised are therefore inextricably attached to identities via “technologies of the self”<sup>81</sup> where a human being “turns him- or herself into a subject.”<sup>82</sup> One of his seminal propositions is therefore that analysing power must embrace an examination of how subjects are “gradually, progressively, really and materially constituted through a multiplicity of organisms, forces, energies, materials, desires, thoughts, etc.”<sup>83</sup> To understand the cartographic weave and importance of current choreographic insertions into art-historical and contemporary institutional practices, the micro- and macro-constellations of entangled power structures need unravelling through further critical-discursive lenses. Within these intricately layered representational-performative sites and spaces, the interplay of scopic regimes and subsequent manifestations of situated, dominant, subaltern and reciprocal gazes that propagated in relation to already written historical tapestries of bodily representations via the ever-present nexus of sexed, gendered, racial and class-related inscriptions need careful conceptual unfurling. Furthermore, the normative regimes and disciplinary distinctions between performance programming and the politics of display formats prescribe the currency of visual culture, representation and self-recognition within these spaces, and they are the same governing bodies that simultaneously legitimate, misunderstand, misinterpret and misrepresent the hallmarks of evolving cross-art practices. This is also propagated by the qualities of proliferating new media and the currency of the pervasive market logic where “canon-formation represents reflexes of power.”<sup>84</sup>

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79 ———— Mona Lilja and Stellan Vinthagen, “Sovereign power, disciplinary power and biopower: resisting what power with what resistance?” *Journal of Political Power* 7, Issue 1 (2014): 109.

80 ———— Foucault, “The Subject and Power,” 208-226.

81 ———— Michel Foucault, “Technologies of the Self, Lectures at the University of Vermont, October 1982,” in *Technologies of the Self* (University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), 16-49.

82 ———— Michel Foucault, “The Order of Discourse,” in *Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader*, ed. Robert Young (London and New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), 208.

83 ———— Michel Foucault, “Two Lectures,” in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings (1972-1977)*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon, 1980), 98.

84 ———— Fabien Maltais-Bayda and Joseph Henry, “Choreographic Archives, Curating Choreographers: Yvonne Rainer, Xavier Le Roy, and the Dance Retrospective,” in *Curating Live Arts: Critical Perspectives, Essays, and Conversations on Theory and Practice*, eds. Dena Davida, Jane

One of the critical lenses through which to analyse the current power-bound status of choreographic practice within contemporary art discourse is through the frame of Roland Barthes' *Mythologies* (1957). As mentioned in the previous chapter, Jonah Bokaer's article, "On Vanishing: New Mythologies for Choreography in Museums," situates the current persistent appearance of choreographic practice in the museum within the tropes of myth-making in contemporary arts culture as another complex and authorial signification system of command. The original *Mythologies*<sup>85</sup> was mostly written between 1954 and 1956 for Maurice Nadeau's "Les Lettres Nouvelles"<sup>86</sup> with a retrospective text, "Le Mythe aujourd'hui" ("Myth Today"), included in the collected and republished volume in 1957<sup>87</sup> with the English translation published in 1972, starting the Anglophone circulation. *Mythologies* introduced a critical reflection on the increasingly mediated nature of the grand narratives in the petit-bourgeois French consumer culture in the postwar era.<sup>88</sup> This was part of a larger critical-discursive movement in the 1950s and '60s that enabled theorists to generate a critical language of discourse through which to critique the structures of representation within the logic of larger systems of meaning, and it included the following prominent thinkers, mostly within the French (post)structuralist traditions: Julia Kristeva, Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan, Tzvetan Todorov, Jacques Derrida, Louis Althusser, Gilles Deleuze, Jean-François Lyotard, René Girard, Jean Baudrillard and Roland Barthes.<sup>89</sup> *Mythologies* recognised the increasing dematerialisation and mediation of material objects, phenomena and aesthetic experiences and proposed a critical practice that reveals the underscoring of organised collective cultural values in sophisticated technological societies. Barthes saw myth as operating within the same confines as language or semiotics: "as a means to structure collective reactions to objects, representations, or rituals, in order to limit their potentially excessive meaning."<sup>90</sup> Barthes also deconstructed the centrality of the human agent as a representational intermediary by highlighting that the individual experience is always mediated by "symbolic languages, ideologies or conventions, which are assimilated

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Gabriels, Véronique Hudon and Marc Pronovost (New York: Berghahn Books, 2019), 245.

85 ——— Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1957).

86 ——— D.J. Huppertz, "Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*", *Design and Culture* 3, Issue 1 (2011): 86.

87 ——— Huppertz, "Roland Barthes," 86.

88 ——— Peter Trifonas, *Postmodern Encounters: Barthes and the Empire of Signs* (Cambridge: Icon, 2001), 9.

89 ——— *Ibid.*, 4.

90 ——— D.J. Huppertz, "Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*," *Design and Culture* 3, Issue 1 (2011): 90.

consciously or unconsciously.”<sup>91</sup> Barthes acknowledged the complementary model of Freudian psychoanalysis as a means of searching for latent meaning in everyday phenomena, and his critique is also indebted to Lacanian psychoanalytic theories<sup>92</sup> in its common attempt at dissent, demystification and the subsequent disruption or the profound division of the self via, for Barthes, mediated visual spectacles.<sup>93</sup>

Another referential layer at work within the notion of Mythologies is the Marxian concept of ideology as a dormant projection of human consciousness and subjectivity within hidden societal codes. Barthes’ position is that this dormant projection is shaped by latent intentionality that is advantageous to the function of the myth, as myth neutralises any reactionary viewpoints on both historical and contemporary events. Barthes argues that Mythologies function as “ideological critique”<sup>94</sup> and suggests that the inherent dangers of myth is that it supports unreflective practice within the accumulative layering of cultural representation. In other words, it maintains the reactionary attitudes that figure within ideological networks and characterises “what-goes-without-saying”<sup>95</sup> The iterative and performative significance of myth was famously described by Barthes as “une parole dépolitisée” (“depoliticized speech”), as a means of recognising the suppressed political ideologies embodied within everyday phenomena.<sup>96</sup>

Furthermore, according to Trifonas, the ideological significance of myth is to “generalise experience to bring about a consensus on how we perceive reality, encounter the human condition, and act in respect to the difference of others as a community. The ethical, social and political boundaries of society and culture are framed by mythology.”<sup>97</sup> He argues that what Barthes’ *Mythologies* ultimately contributes to critical discourse is the ideological metric through which myth operates within cultural representation by affording “interpretative archetypes for deciphering the meaning of the life-world we inhabit with a view to the present through the past.”<sup>98</sup> This offers a productive matrix for further critical analysis of choreography and performance within the plethoric paradigm of contemporary art.

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91 ——— Ibid., 88.

92 ——— Margaret Iversen, *Beyond Pleasure: Freud, Lacan, Barthes* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007), 5-6.

93 ——— Eve Tavor Bannet, *Structuralism and the Logic of Dissent: Barthes, Derrida, Foucault, Lacan* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1989), 2.

94 ——— Trifonas, *Postmodern Encounters*, 11.

95 ——— Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (London: Paladin Books, 1973), 11.

96 ——— Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1957), 252.

97 ——— Trifonas, *Postmodern Encounters*, 11.

98 ——— Ibid.

A crucial critical relation that Trifonas draws is that, similar to Barthes, Louis Althusser identified ideology – most notably in “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses” – as an essential structure of cultural and historical life.<sup>99</sup> Trifonas argues that what Barthes and Althusser amalgamate is that fundamentally ideology administers the “distribution, consumption and legitimation of meanings within social contexts” and that “ideology as a historical force constructs subjectivity.”<sup>100</sup> One of Althusser’s key contributions to ideological discourse is of course the notion of “interpellation” and the way that ideology acts on subjectivity to yield the inscription of attitudes, values and beliefs in the individual by the political apparatus of State power specifically.<sup>101</sup> This conception offers a relational construct of ideology, as its limitations are recognised relative to human agency and the permutations of history. Trifonas offers a valid view that Barthes does not assume that ideology impacts subjectivity to produce an overbearing sameness, as it is articulated differently and accounts for the diversity of interpretations between individuals. He states that, “Ideology cannot occur without a web of resistance to its homogenising effects. Otherwise, we would all think and speak alike,”<sup>102</sup> which incurs an interpellated performative potential within dominant apparatuses of ideological capture.

Contingently, Andrew Hewitt (2005) coined the term “social choreography” as a trope that employs Althusser’s theory of ideology in order to interrogate the inscription on and enactment of bodies through State power.<sup>103</sup> Hewitt underlined the function of dance and quotidian movement as immanently political in the spatial undercurrents of ideological formation, particularly in terms of how the interplay of power, micro-politics and embodiment underpin “choreographic inscription,” via Derrida,<sup>104</sup> as an ideological apparatus of capture. Bojana Cvejić and Ana Vujanović, in the editorial for their co-edited *TkH Walking Theory Journal* edition entitled “Social Choreography,” outline Hewitt’s project as follows:

Hewitt argues that the bourgeoisie established a performative mode of aesthetic ideology, producing, instilling, rehearsing, and reflecting the social order directly on the level of the body, at the economic

99 ——— Ibid., 30.

100 ——— Ibid.

101 ——— Louis Althusser, *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses, Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*.

102 ——— Trifonas, *Postmodern Encounters*, 32.

103 ——— Andrew Hewitt, *Social Choreography: Ideology as Performance in Dance and Everyday Movement* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005).

104 ——— Christie V. McDonald and Jacques Derrida, “Interview: Choreography,” *Cherchez la Femme/Feminist Critique* 12, no. 2 (1982): 76.

base of the relations and forces of production, which are simultaneously material, social, and aesthetic.<sup>105</sup>

They argue that this notion of social choreography marks a shift in ideology's mode of functioning in relation to concepts aligning with the experience economy and affective immaterial production. In this mode, social choreography "offers embodiment as the mechanism of ideology, replacing interpellation; it claims that ideology operates as the performance of an embodied ritual, without any belief involved."<sup>106</sup>

Hewitt denotes that choreography, as ideological reproduction, has an intrinsically performative aesthetic which highlights the importance of the performative, as "it functions as a space in which social possibilities are both rehearsed and performed."<sup>107</sup> The importance of making visible the ideological underpinnings of these inscriptions via an embodied forecast is drawn from his proposal that: "Choreography is not just another of the things we 'do' to bodies, but a reflection on – and enactment of – how bodies 'do' things, and on the work that the work of art performs. Social choreography exists not parallel to the operation of social norms and strictures, nor is it entirely subject to those strictures. It serves – 'catacritically,' we might say – to bring them into being."<sup>108</sup> What Hewitt is essentially interested in is dance as a model that produces social relations and choreography as a form that enacts the fantasies that underpin social relations in what Srividya Natarajan points out as modernity's "battle between the body as instrument of referentiality and the body as performative."<sup>109</sup>

Natarajan rightly critiques Hewitt in that he examines the fundamental gendering of social choreography merely in passing in the final chapter of the book *Social Choreography*, where he proposes loose links between gender, performance and capitalism.<sup>110</sup> She argues, however, that it offers fertile terrain for further and more grounded feminist analysis of choreographic performance and performativity. What Natarajan points to in particular here, via Hewitt, is the historical necessity of a dance that "does not organically relate to its context, that is an abstraction, which, in fact,

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**105** ——— Bojana Cvejić and Ana Vujanović, "Editorial" in *Social Choreography: TkH Journal for Performing Arts Theory, Walking Theory* 21 (2013): 3.

**106** ——— Ibid.

**107** ——— Andrew Hewitt, "Choreography is a way of thinking about the relationship of aesthetics to politics," interview July 2, 2008 by Goran Sergej Pristas, [https://thefuturecrash.files.wordpress.com/2008/07/andrew\\_hewitt.pdf](https://thefuturecrash.files.wordpress.com/2008/07/andrew_hewitt.pdf).

**108** ——— Ibid.

**109** ——— Srividya Natarajan, "Review: Social Choreography: Ideology as Performance in Dance and Everyday Movement," *Feminist Review* 84, Issue 1 (2006): 153.

**110** ——— Ibid.

performs a break with the idea of representation as the key term in a critique of ideology.”<sup>111</sup> This intimates how ideological reproduction, no longer tied to a particular mode of production or mediation, can become anti-referential by creating a rupture in the constructed-ness of the ideologically marked body and its ensuing gestures and iterations that constitute collective ‘normality’ within the mythological sense.

A further ideological referent of choreography as an “apparatus of capture” is proposed by André Lepecki (2007). He states that choreography is:

“not only a discipline or technology of the body, not only a mode of composition, not only a register, or archive - but an apparatus. To conceive choreography as an apparatus is to see it as a mechanism that simultaneously distributes and organizes dance’s relationship to perception and signification. For it is precisely this kind of organization of the perceptive-linguistic field that apparatuses perform. As Gilles Deleuze explains Michel Foucault’s major contribution to a political theory of signification, the concept of apparatus is one that foregrounds perception as always tied to modes of power that distribute and assign to things visibility or invisibility, significance or insignificance.”<sup>112</sup>

Correlatively, in the aptly titled article “Avoiding Capture,” Ramsay Burt seeks “new structures of knowledge and ways of thinking in order to evade capture by the apparatuses that reinforce normative ideologies and maintain hegemony.”<sup>113</sup> He summarises the trajectory of the concept of choreography as an apparatus of capture (*appareil de capture*) as proposed by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1988) who theorise “the political uses of apparatuses by the state.”<sup>114</sup> Burt foregrounds the recent aggregation of the concept in the dance scholarly field by theorist Bojana Cvejić’s use of Deleuze and Guattari’s concept to examine the ways in which the body and movement are captured “in a composition of variable relations that transform them without mutually identifying them.”<sup>115</sup> Furthermore, Burt draws from Rudi Laermans’ argument and what he calls “choreography in general” as “the art of capturing and mod-

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111 ——— Ibid.

112 ——— André Lepecki, “Choreography as Apparatus of Capture,” *The Drama Review* 51, no. 2 (Summer 2007): 120.

113 ——— Ramsay Burt, “Avoiding Capture,” *Dance Research Journal*, 50, no. 3 (2018): 99.

114 ——— Ibid.

115 ——— Bojana Cvejić, *Choreographing Problems: Expressive Concepts in European Contemporary Dance and Performance* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 86.

ulating the audience's sensory attention."<sup>116</sup> Gerald Siegmund's theorisation is also relevant, as it depicts choreographic apparatus as a structure that produces attention by holding bodies in place as "it stages our bodies to bring them into existence."<sup>117</sup> Burt's preliminary dissemination of these theoretical foundations is explored in an earlier and equally suitable titled book, *Ungoverning Dance*, where he seeks to "reveal how institutions govern dance through physical and ideological structures."<sup>118</sup> The main thrust of Burt's argument regarding "ungoverning" and one that is taken up in this chapter as a critical operative, is the notion that "governmentality," following Foucault's 1988 seminar "Technologies of the Self," describes the overarching system where the flexes of prevalent power structures work in concert between the macro (institutional, governmental) and micro (individual, personal) levels. Burt is therefore making a case for dance, and by extension choreography, firstly to gain independence from "institutional constraints through aesthetic deconstruction"<sup>119</sup> and secondly, to resist the processes of control that are applied from within, again following Foucault's notion of disciplinary regime, "at the level of individuals' artistic and aesthetic practices."<sup>120</sup> Burt also speculates that ungoverning or resistance is conditionally and intermittently made possible since the power relations in question are continually made unstable as they seek to dominate subjects that are mobile rather than static.<sup>121</sup> Although Burt's arguments do not come to full fruition to bridge the philosophical, ideological and affective ramifications of his critical conception of the notion of ungoverning, his most valuable contribution is his insinuation that through aesthetic deconstruction, dance and choreographic approaches can offer performative critiques of the "economic and political system of neoliberal capitalism whose rules the market for dance must obey."<sup>122</sup> He claims that for this notion of ungoverning to become effective, the continuous maintenance and protection of dance and choreography as the commons is necessary by "opening up spaces that are relatively free from the effects of control, regulation or normalization."<sup>123</sup> He is particularly interested in

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116 ——— Rudi Laermans, *Moving Together: Theorizing and Making Contemporary Dance* (Amsterdam: Valiz, 2015), 236.

117 ——— Gerald Siegmund, "Apparatus, Attention and the Body: The Theatre Machines of Boris Charmatz," in *Planes of Composition: Dance, Theory, and the Global*, eds. Jenn Joy and André Lepecki (New York: Seagull Books, 2009), 334.

118 ——— Ramsay Burt, *Ungoverning Dance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 11.

119 ——— Ibid., 16.

120 ——— Ibid., 23.

121 ——— Ibid., 21.

122 ——— Ibid., 5.

123 ——— Ibid., 23.

spaces that allow spectators, as witnesses, to engage in interaction, negotiation, contestation and sharing, in that it manifests new types of relations to emerge that cannot necessarily be captured by the prevalent neoliberal market ecology.<sup>124</sup> This again offers fertile terrain for overlapping critical encounters, as dance and choreography are firmly situated within the larger ideological orders that govern the reflexes of meaning production, signification and value.

It is Lepecki's<sup>125</sup> critical interrogation, however, that offers a robust foothold for deeper analysis, as he criticises the sedimented dominance of poststructuralist models to circumscribe the value of choreography as an apparatus. For Lepecki, choreography detaches bodies from their function, value and indefinite potential without determining the activity of the same bodies in advance by trapping it in the circuit of self-referential poetics. Stefan Apostolou-Hölscher's review of the foundations of Lepecki's critique uncovers productive possibilities for future critical gain, especially his assertion that the affective turn – initiated by Brian Massumi, Erin Manning and furthered by Marie-Luise Angerer, which marked a departure from text-centred performative theories – is able to problematise and relate “bodies as much as institutional environments and other processual assemblages in different ways.”<sup>126</sup> Marie-Luise Angerer's “Desire After Affect”<sup>127</sup> offers the most comprehensive overview of the historical development of affect theory in relation to the distribution of vital energies and the entanglement of psycho-somatic sediments via the hegemony of language and psychoanalysis to its future performative tones. In line with this, the notion of the “affective assemblage,” furthered by feminist theorist Jasbir K. Puar,<sup>128</sup> is applied to the exemplar of Trajal Harrell's *Hoochie Koochie*<sup>129</sup> in the latter part of the book to underpin the unhinging of a purely discursive interpretation via an affective trajectory. Angerer clarifies the affective overhaul in the following section in the introduction:

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124 ——— Ibid.

125 ——— André Lepecki, “Choreography as Apparatus of Capture,” 119–123.

126 ——— Stefan Apostolou-Hölscher, “Choreography as Form as Dance as an Activity,” FKW: *Zeitschrift für geschlechterforschung und visuelle kultur* 55 (2014): 79.

127 ——— Marie-Luise Angerer, *Desire After Affect*, trans. Nicholas Grindell (London and New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015).

128 ——— Jasbir K. Puar, “Queer Times, Queer Assemblages” *Social Text* 23, no. 3–4 (2007): 121–139.

129 ——— *Trajal Harrell: Hoochie Koochie*, 20 July – 13 August 2017 at Barbican Art Gallery, London, <https://www.barbican.org.uk/our-story/press-room/trajal-harrell-hoochie-koochie>.

In historical terms, it traces a development from the late eighteenth century (Foucault's 'The Order of Things' with its "discovery of man") via nineteenth-century physics and physiology, Freud's "invention" of the unconscious, cybernetic regulation, Lacan's hegemony of the signifier, and the declaration of a posthuman age. It traces the shift from a "truth of the sexual" to a "reflex of the affective"; from the modern "fear of castration" to the postmodern "becoming animal and other"; from Lacan's "fear as affect" to Deleuze's "affect image" from sexuality as "little death" to sexuality as biodigital cell division; from a desire that draws on lack, via a desire based on the superabundance of Being, to my proposal at the end of the book that desire be understood as pure movement in time.<sup>130</sup>

Angerer deepens the thrust of this argument in "Moving Forces"<sup>131</sup> and claims that the body cannot be understood exclusively in terms of social-cultural codes as it was construed under the previous discursive augmentation via structuralism. She highlights that at the height of the hegemony of language, the body was solely interpreted as a field of signs, the meaning of which pointed to an unconscious dimension which via Lacan was "structured like a language."<sup>132</sup> She claims that the insurgency of the material turn at the onset of the early 1990s advocated and incorporated a performative, pictorial and affective approach with a stalwart proclamation, via Karen Barad,<sup>133</sup> that history and truth cannot be assigned to language only but rather, within the subsequent performative turn, "materiality, technicity and affectivity have emerged as new parameters in the humanities."<sup>134</sup> Furthermore, Angerer indicates that the decisive departure from discursivity via signification occurred during the critical interplay between Judith Butler's *Bodies that Matter*<sup>135</sup> and Elizabeth Grosz's *Volatile Bodies*,<sup>136</sup> published within a year of each other. Angerer argues that Grosz's and Butler's respective return to the body offered a "profound critique of the West's omission of the body and that they exposed an ideal-

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**130** ——— Marie-Luise Angerer, *Desire After Affect*, trans. Nicholas Grindell (London and New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), xv.

**131** ——— Marie-Luise Angerer, "Moving Forces," *The Minnesota Review* 88 (2017): 83-95.

**132** ——— Ibid., 83.

**133** ——— Karen Barad, "Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter," *Signs* 28, no. 3 (2003): 801-832.

**134** ——— Angerer, "Moving Forces," 86.

**135** ——— Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

**136** ——— Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism*, (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1994).

istic understanding of a logos-oriented subject,"<sup>137</sup> thus requiring a new ontological inscription that destabilised causal relationships through a 'natural' order. Butler's concept of a "psychoanalytically defined body schema" and her performative translation of Austin's Speech Act Theory are commended as resolute critical markers in the theoretical performative insurrection. Angerer posits that these departures instilled an urgency with which to understand the currency and timeliness of critical concepts and their genealogies and "to reflect the different modes of thinking from signification to affinity and relationality."<sup>138</sup> As a further inference of how the prevalence of movement, and by extension dance, can be seen as symptomatic of the current inter-relativity of all knowledge systems, Angerer transmits philosopher Boyan Manchev's statement that, "We are witnessing a gigantic transformation in which the fate of the world is at stake, and dance is at the epicentre of this transformation: it is a symptom, an exemplary consequence."<sup>139</sup> Angerer interrogates the ways in which the affective turn currently requires philosophy to discover – or rediscover – the dancing body, "after a long period in which it was often cited by philosophers and historians as the epitome of transgression and symbolic withdrawal."<sup>140</sup> She claims that Manchev's main philosophical contribution in relation to this rests in his postulation that no profound critique is possible as long as "it makes use of language or understands itself as discursive."<sup>141</sup> She also claims that his inference is rather that mind-body relations and embodiment are vital to enable necessary resistance understood as a mode of existence, especially within the current erosion of the political horizon, where according to Brian Kuan Wood, "Expressions of the fullness of being have moved from the structural to the symbolic and emotional registers."<sup>142</sup>

Apostolou-Hölscher underpins a theoretical parting from what he calls the "discursivation of the body and its activity that took place in the field of dance in analogy to speech acts"<sup>143</sup> in an attempt to steer the aca-

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137 ——— Angerer, "Moving Forces," 85.

138 ——— Ibid.

139 ——— Boyan Manchev, "Der Widerstand des Tanzes. Gegen die Verwandlung des Körpers, der Wahrnehmung und der Gefühle zu Waren in einem perversen Kapitalismus," in *Corpus, Internetmagazin für Tanz Choreografie Performance*, first published on August 11, 2010, accessed 1 May 2018, <http://www.corpusweb.net/der-widerstand-des-danzes.html>.

140 ——— Angerer, "Moving Forces," 86.

141 ——— Manchev, "Der Widerstand des Tanzes."

142 ——— Brian Kuan Wood, "Is it Love?," *E-Flux Journal* 53 (March 2014), accessed 1 March 2017, <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/53/59897/is-it-love/>.

143 ——— Apostolou-Hölscher, "Choreography as Form and Dance as an Activity," 79.

demic tendencies in dance scholarship away from the discursive post-structuralist roots of performance theory towards the immanent materialist and post-humanist orientations that gained prominence under the affective turn. He offers a valid critique of the difficulty of thinking about bodies outside the cultural and ideological grids<sup>144</sup> capturing them, since any performative or choreographic iteration is always already derivative of pre-existing critical, artistic or behavioural touchstones. The Spinozian maxim “What can a body do?” is revived by Apostolou-Hölscher in an attempt to understand the body in terms of language {inscription} so that it can “parody the grid, subvert the discourses, and write singularly.”<sup>145</sup> Consequently, it seems crucial for any critical endeavour that seeks to address the hyper-complexity of aesthetic institutions and the replay of ideological overlap between the institutional (macro) and personal (micro) to acknowledge the web of visualisation – which includes hereditary mythologies – that surrounds the performative encounter between the singular body of the performer and the singular body of the witness or spectator.

Lepecki calls for a more responsive and entangled relationship between language and movement (dance) to invent what he terms a “theoretical-perceptive”<sup>146</sup> body in order to reinstate singular dancing subjects that have otherwise been obscured from the art- and dance-historical paradigm. He denotes the potential of dance, and dancing subjects, as social mechanisms through which to rehearse and perform modes of “appearing-to belong to ‘our’ time”<sup>147</sup> which is not far removed from Hewitt’s social reproductive function. He also exposes the inherent dangers of the ideological project of state capture through choreography by disclosing the modernist inheritance that “at a certain point in the history of Western subjectivity, a certain social (and socializing) activity called dance fell prey to a Stately (and theological) apparatus of capture called choreography”<sup>148</sup> which diminishes the political affordances of dance, and the dancing subject’s potential for ‘becoming’ as it is subordinated to signification. Most importantly, however, he purports that choreographic power is genealogically majoritarian in that choreography names specific “masculinist, fatherly, Stately, judicial, theological and disciplinary”<sup>149</sup> projects which defers power to a subjugated subject. The project of resistance is therefore to evade or avoid capture by the hegemonic forces at work at particular instances. Lepecki calls to attention the inevitability of the history of fem-

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144 ——— Ibid., 80.

145 ——— Ibid., 79.

146 ——— André Lepecki, “Choreography as Apparatus of Capture,” 122.

147 ——— Lepecki, “Choreography,” 121.

148 ——— Ibid., 122.

149 ——— Ibid.

inist liberation of dance from choreography, specifically by women who advocated for “choreographing a becoming-minoritarian – becoming woman, becoming black, becoming Indian, becoming child, becoming animal, molecular, imperceptible”<sup>150</sup> to extract dance from the choreographic apparatus of capture. The notion of “becoming-minoritarian” is positioned as a vital critical concept within the affective assemblages of the choreographic and curatorial inscription in the practical component for this book and will function as an analytical construct throughout – especially in relation to Funmi Adewole’s performative work *Restfulness*, which is also the cover image for this publication. The subsidiary notions of “becoming-woman” and “becoming-black” within the minoritarian spectrum are specifically applied as discursive and mythological markers that transfer meaning to confuse the ideological arena of the museum as exhibitionary apparatus. Here, the operation of “false consciousness” as relations of production via the Marxist sense of ideology within the art museum as a space of interpellated subjectivity, ritualised citizenship and cultural reception via Althusser is perplexed by the intentional construction of the second-level sign system of minoritarian mythology – via “becoming-woman” and “becoming-black” – to obscure the normative ideological reflexes.

Ramsay Burt’s *Avoiding Capture* (2018) therefore becomes an effective dictum through which to interrogate how hegemonic structures are already embedded within the representational institutions of dance and choreography – which includes the museum – as it is transferred from the larger ideological forces at work in the neoliberal capitalist economies of attention. He notes that subjects find themselves increasingly and unavoidably captured by the megalithic networked consumer societies of the 21<sup>st</sup> century,<sup>151</sup> which is not dissimilar to the pervasive logic formulated by Barthes in *Mythologies* to describe the increasingly mediated nature of the postwar era. Burt’s intention is to depict examples that disrupt the subsequent homogenised construction of bodies and spaces, and he employs Henri Lefebvre’s conception of the “logic of visualisation”<sup>152</sup> as assuming a vantage point that is pervasive and removed from the embodied world, vis-à-vis Antonio Gramsci’s underlying hegemonic logic, which naturalises the interest of a dominant group.<sup>153</sup> Burt locates a meaningful integration of related conceptual drivers as he denotes that avoiding capture implies a measure of invisibility within the system. He relates this notion to Peggy Phelan’s assertion that, “There is real power in remaining

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150 ——— Ibid., 123.

151 ——— Ramsay Burt, “Avoiding Capture,” *Dance Research Journal*, Cambridge University Press 50, no. 3 (2018): 100.

152 ——— Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991).

153 ——— Burt, “Avoiding Capture,” 101.

unmarked.”<sup>154</sup> This is self-contradictory to an extent, since for both Freud and Lacan the subject is eternally and incessantly marked via semantic fields and discursive domains as a linguistic entity subordinated to and produced by the symbolic realm via a phenomenological description of the psychoanalytic experience.<sup>155</sup> Being or remaining “unmarked” is not only impossible but also forecloses important identarian politics and corporeal body politic via the inscription of hegemonic forces. This is foregrounded in the discourse on invisibility within hegemonic structures regarding people of colour and relays Fred Moten’s claim that, “The mark of invisibility is a visible, racial mark; invisibility has visibility at its heart. To be invisible is to be seen, instantly and fascinatingly recognised as unrecognizable, as the abject, as the absence of meanings wholly independent of any influence of the vessel itself.”<sup>156</sup> Moten’s statement points towards implications that pertain not only to affective trajectories, but more importantly to a critical revision of the persistent ideological import of archetypal myth today. Burt also points out that the type of invisibility referenced by Moten can be the source of a dehumanising lack of recognition in the politically and culturally constructed condition of image production within the hegemonic logic of visualisation, essentially placing subjects within racial classifications that reduces differences in social experiences.<sup>157</sup> The most prolific alignment that Burt engages in order to unsettle the hegemonic infrastructure of representation is the conjunction between race and sexuality, in his assertion that performative interventions within the transaction between race and sexuality under the logic of visualisation are imperative. The claim here is that these intersectional interventions activate a physical and ideological space that is “incompatible with a logic of visualization that naturalizes the right to see without being affected by others or affecting them, affording instead the potential for non-discriminatory recognition of difference.”<sup>158</sup> He alludes to the need for creating the conditions that produce new bodies outside the circumscribed ideological grids where these bodies become counter-sites that disturb the social relations normally occurring.<sup>159</sup> He corroborates this claim through his critical appreciation of the work of contemporary British choreographer and dancer, Jamila Johnson-Small, who creates under

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154 ——— Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), 6.

155 ——— David Macey, “On the Subject of Lacan” in *Psychoanalysis in Context: Paths between Theory and Modern Culture*, eds. Anthony Elliott and Stephen Frosh (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 72

156 ——— Fred Moten, *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition* (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 2003), 68.

157 ——— Burt, “Avoiding Capture,” 109.

158 ——— *Ibid.*, 111.

159 ——— *Ibid.*, 116.

the moniker “Last Yearz Interesting Negro” and acknowledges her intention to avoid being assimilated into the normative aesthetic values that uphold racist and sexist logic,<sup>160</sup> thereby escaping the full grasp of the overlapping discursive and ideological apparatuses of capture inscribed through the choreographic as ubiquitous representational values. One of the ways that this transpires in the circulation of her work as producible – and by extension herself as both Jamila Johnson-Small and Last Yearz Interesting Negro – is her insistence on the inclusion of her own poetic language to describe the performances, both as process and product.<sup>161</sup> This is serviced by the sub headed statement – [needing fewer words around me]<sup>162</sup> – on her website which functions tautologically, as her own poetic descriptions transfer a discursive-performative inscription onto the embodied work. The removal or dismissal of externally projected semantics onto her construction of self via a process of performative mythology is a strategy of resistance, which does not leave her unmarked but certainly makes visible the reflexive double-manoeuvre that she continuously performs as both Jamila Johnson-Small and the more mythologically opaque Last Yearz Interesting Negro. In this way, Johnson-Small’s work invokes a practice of continuous interruption that calls for more nuanced ways of engaging intersectional discursive practices, identities and subjectivities.

The groundwork for the argument presented in this chapter is therefore that bodies – certain bodies, often marked, choreographed or performed as gendered and raced – have a longitudinal pre-performative history in the museum across aesthetic disciplines. This history is irked by ongoing radical feminist and intersectional interventions into the art-historical archival canon that resist the hierarchical onset of power relations which ascribe normative performative subjectivities, especially when choreographic strategies operate as aesthetic apparatuses of capture within the museum. The ideological-mythological bind inherited through semiotically secured bodies, a congenital modernist project, continues to re-inscribe choreography as a system of command that operates comfortably in the exploitative and reductive neoliberal market forces that underscore the hyper-complex museum industry. Affective orientation alone cannot bypass the incessant comportment of ideological inscription at the level of the subject. Rather, the necessary redress in the integration of these different ideological structures via the figure of a mythological or archetypal rupture offers renewed scope for reparative and representative

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160 ——— Jamila Johnson-Small, *Voodoo*, performance with Alexandrina Hemsley, May 2017, accessed 1 November 2018, <https://www.acontemporarystruggle.com/voodoo>.

161 ——— Ibid.

162 ——— Ibid.

negotiations for the future. In effect, making necessary intersectional incursions into the lineage of performativity and its persistent projection into the museum complex is paramount.

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## 1.2.2 Feminist Discursive Inheritance: The Subtle Dance of the “Double Movement.”

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The inheritance of feminist discourse and intervention since the 1970s is of paramount importance in understanding the unceasing and prevalent project of the art-historical canon. Griselda Pollock's contribution to a specific feminist theory of the visual stems from the position that feminism itself provides a critique “of the kinds of ideologies that imagine there is a pure realm of vision that exists before gender, race, class and all other social influences have their effects,”<sup>163</sup> which interpolates clearly the sentiment put forward in the previous section for the futurity of intersectional performative practices. John Berger's *Ways of Seeing* (1972), Laura Mulvey's *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* (1975), Luce Irigaray's *This Sex Which Is Not One* (1985), Jacqueline Rose's *Sexuality in the Field of Vision* (1986, 2005) and Griselda Pollock's *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the Histories of Art* (1988, 1990) and *Trouble in the Archives* (1993) weave a robust yet syncretic theoretical tapestry of the art-historical interstices of visual culture, feminist positions and representation. Berger's 1972 criticisms of Western cultural aesthetics' hidden ideologies in visual images as a type of mythological circumscription embeds sexuality and visibility within Marxism and, concurrently, construes a Marxist critique of exploitation and inequality within the realms of art history. Berger, perhaps anticipating Mulvey, posits the psychological split that is given to women via sexist visual culture:

“A woman was always accompanied – except when quite alone – by her own image of herself. [...] From earliest childhood she had been taught and persuaded to survey herself continually. And so she came to consider the surveyor and the surveyed within her as the two con-

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**163** ——— Griselda Pollock, “Trouble in the Archives: from the 1970s to the 1990s the canon of art history has been challenged on all fronts by new feminist analysis,” *Women's Art Magazine* 54 (1993): 10.

stituent yet always distinct elements of her identity as a woman... One might simplify this by saying: men act and women appear. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at. This determines not only most relations between men and women but also the relation of women to themselves. The surveyor of woman in herself is male: the surveyed female. Thus she turns herself into an object -- and most particularly an object of vision: a sight."<sup>164</sup>

Laura Mulvey, in *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* (1975), credits the auspices of psychoanalysis and sexual difference to the gaining analytical momentum around the representation of the female form within the symbolic order. She claims that the paradox of phallogentrism in the political use of psychoanalysis is "an idea of woman that stands as a lynch pin to the system: it is her lack that produces the phallus as a symbolic presence, it is her desire to make good the lack that the phallus signifies."<sup>165</sup> Within this framework, psychoanalytic theory offers a valuable analysis of the status quo within the patriarchal order of advanced representation systems, specifically the cinematic apparatus with its particularly complex mechanism of looking and its ideology of representation that revolves around the perception of the subject. Mulvey claims that the ultimate challenge lies in the paradoxical encounter with the unconscious structures of language and visual systems where the arrival into language is systemic and inadvertently encumbers the female subject with the language of the dominant patriarchal order. This generates the female subject's relationship to the symbolic order within a gender hierarchy that results in proliferated sexual difference within scopic regimes and spectatorship, as there is always an imbalance between 'looking' and 'being looked at'. Essentially, it shows how the field of vision is shaped by the emphatic structure of sexual difference and the subsequent order instilled in structured ways of seeing as the "erotic basis for pleasure in looking at another person as object."<sup>166</sup> Mulvey claims that sexual instincts and identification processes, via Freud, have a meaning within the symbolic order which "articulates desire"<sup>167</sup> and that, in psychoanalytical terms, the meaning of woman is always akin to sexual difference. Therefore, the governing ideology and the psychological structures that form its stronghold relegate "the image of woman as (passive) raw material for the (active) gaze of man and takes the argument a step further into the structure of representation, adding a further layer demanded by the ideology of the

<sup>164</sup> ——— John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: Penguin Press, 1972), 74.

<sup>165</sup> ——— Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," *Screen* 16, Issue 3 (Autumn 1975): 6.

<sup>166</sup> ——— *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>167</sup> ——— *Ibid.*, 11.

patriarchal order.”<sup>168</sup> Her most driving contribution is perhaps the quotation below, as it encapsulates the seemingly recursive inscription and mediation of the patriarchal order as hegemony:

Woman then stands in patriarchal culture as signifier for the male other, bound by a symbolic order in which man can live out his phantasies and obsessions through linguistic command by imposing on the silent image of woman still tied to her place as bearer of meaning, not maker of meaning.<sup>169</sup>

To reinforce this, Elizabeth Mangini, in *Pipilotti's Pickle: Making Meaning from the Feminine Position*,<sup>170</sup> highlights that female artists continue to confront a “central contradiction in their practice since the traditional place assigned to women in representation is as the bearer of symbolic meaning,”<sup>171</sup> and, as always-already secured objects of representation, women are denied the definite agency required to create meaning as an artist. She continues by claiming that the “woman artist” must therefore see both as subject and object, a crucial performative splitting that allows her to perceive the larger system of patriarchy critically and simultaneously envision and construct a new concept of woman as the subject of representation.<sup>172</sup> Mangini pursues an innovative reading of Swiss video artist Pipilotti Rist’s *Sip My Ocean* (1995) as the self-reflexive visually mediated embodiment of female desire that transcends the binary opposition of gender difference and centralises Rist’s authorial role. She continues by arguing that comparable to Cindy Sherman’s self-portraits, Rist has found slippage in “transgressing her gender role in order to establish herself as an agent of meaning,”<sup>173</sup> expanding the feminist discourse by creating new forms of ‘woman’ outside of the patriarchal system.

It is Jacqueline Rose’s seminal theoretical contribution, however, that offers the most comprehensive feminist waypoint through which to navigate the complex entanglement of power, sexuality, subjectivity and agency within perpetuated visual regimes. Rose elucidates the essential and returning relation between identity, subjectivity and sexual difference within the conjoined institutionalised parameters of ideology, psychoanalysis and feminist critique and verifies its consequent entry into the political field. An important facet of her analysis on sexual difference is that

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168 ——— Ibid., 17.

169 ——— Ibid., 7.

170 ——— Elizabeth Mangini, “Pipilotti’s Pickle: Making Meaning from the Feminine Position,” in *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art* 23, No. 2 (May 2001): 1-9.

171 ——— Ibid., 1.

172 ——— Ibid., 1.

173 ——— Ibid., 1.

she recognises that the question of identity, and how it is constituted and maintained, is one of the reasons why Lacanian psychoanalysis migrated into Anglophone intellectual circles firstly via Althusser's concept of ideology and then via the conduits of feminism and film as a powerful ideological apparatus. She claims that, "If ideology is effective, it is because it works at the most rudimentary levels of psychic identity and the drives."<sup>174</sup> The feminist intervention was therefore to insert sexuality, or sexual difference, into the historically manifested relations between psychoanalysis and the understanding of how ideology works. Rose draws from two important theoretical strata to establish this conjunction. Firstly, Otto Fenichel's procurement that the production and dissemination of the ideology of a society must be understood from the actual economic superstructure by means of the actions of the human beings and the reactive return to the foundation or the economic conditions modifying them.<sup>175</sup> Fenichel's assertion was that although these Althusserian statements are correct, they remain too general and that only psychoanalysis offers a detailed enough science to grasp the specifics of these mechanisms of transformation that impede subjects in nuanced ways. Rose highlights that Fenichel was clearly caught "between the theorisation of the unconscious and sexuality in all their complex difficulty on the one hand, and the need to give an account of the repressiveness of social norms on the other."<sup>176</sup> Rose also notes that Fenichel's objective was to use psychoanalysis to understand "the internalisation, effectivity and persistence of some of the most oppressive social norms"<sup>177</sup> as a preceding case for psychoanalysis and feminism as the only way to understand ideology and sexuality.

The second critical course was via Juliet Mitchell's *Psychoanalysis and Feminism: A Radical Reassessment of Freudian Psychoanalysis*,<sup>178</sup> which argues specifically for the importance of psychoanalysis for feminism to explain the exact devices whereby ideological processes are transformed via individual subjects, as both determinant and productive of excess. Rose concedes that Mitchell's inference is that psychoanalysis can give an account of how women experience the path to femininity as neither simply achieved nor ever complete and that this is its political hinge as radical social critique,<sup>179</sup> as it interprets how ideologies are imposed upon

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174 ——— Jacqueline Rose, *Sexuality and the Field of Vision* (London and New York: Verso, 2005), 5.

175 ——— Otto Fenichel, "The Drive to Amass Wealth 1934," *Collected Papers*, Second Series (London: 1955): 107.

176 ——— Rose, *Sexuality*, 6.

177 ——— Ibid.

178 ——— Juliet Mitchell, *Psychoanalysis and Feminism: A Radical Reassessment of Freudian Psychoanalysis* (New York: Basic Books, 1974).

179 ——— Rose, *Sexuality*, 7.

subjects and how female identity is acquired.<sup>180</sup> Rose implies that the pre-dominant and imminent issue is to reconcile the problem of subjectivity, specifically in the case of women, with “a form of analysis which can also recognise the force of structures in urgent need of social change.”<sup>181</sup> Rose also delineates the importance of the play of language and all its dislocating effects to the constrictions of ideology and subsequently to the politics of self-expression, identity and power.<sup>182</sup> Fundamentally, she highlights that the recursive relation between internal and external is not a simple dichotomy and that the question still remains of how to locate the violence of both institutions and subjects embedded within the recourse between psychoanalysis and social ideology. She draws on Derrida’s critique of Western logocentrism via the concept of “*différance*” to unhinge and dissolve the coherence of the subject and mobilise its infinite dispersal across language and discourse. She claims that, in relation to feminism, the dispatching of the subject and its dissolution into a writing strategy or mode of authorship leads to more particular political demands and the specificity of its ideological rebate.<sup>183</sup> This precise inference provides a generative platform for subversive performative uptake and the inversion of power relations, as it pertains to renewed discursive possibilities via the realms of inscription, embodiment and self-expression through a subject whom is neither pure assertion nor genuine play. To understand the intersection of subjectivity and sexual difference in this sense allows an alleviation of the encumbered psychic prognosis for women through entrenched social-ideological inheritance via an archetypal or symbolic rupture that, to recall Natarajan, “performs a break with the idea of representation as the key term in a critique of ideology.”<sup>184</sup>

A particularly significant example of the aforementioned representational rupture, albeit staged precariously within the art-historical canon, are the illuminated photographs of the Countess de Castiglione as a productive means for the figuring of the feminine subject in nineteenth-century France. Abigail Solomon-Godeau’s critical feminist analysis in *The Legs of the Countess*<sup>185</sup> foregrounds the Countess’s attempt to represent herself via a choreography of the self that is both typical and anomalous,<sup>186</sup> essentially a reproductive performative rupture. Solomon-Godeau claims that what the singularity of the Countess’s photographs make explicitly

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180 ——— Ibid., 15-16.

181 ——— Ibid., 14.

182 ——— Ibid., 18.

183 ——— Ibid., 22.

184 ——— Srividya Natarajan, “Review: Social Choreography: ideology as performance in dance and everyday movement,” *Feminist Review* 84, Issue 1 (2006): 153.

185 ——— Abigail Solomon-Godeau, “The Legs of the Countess,” *October* 39 (1986): 65-108.

186 ——— Ibid., 65.

noticeable is the issue of authorship and its intersection with the problem of feminine self-representation, “as always ‘already-written’ in systems of representation.”<sup>187</sup> The notion that the Countess, in an instance of self-expression via authoring her own image and simultaneously reproducing herself as a work of coded and performed femininity, supplements the view that a women’s body is always relegated to the veiled mythology and problematics surrounding female subjectivity. Here, the Countess’s desire to see herself as she is seen, supposedly outside the confines of subjectivity, is complicated by the concept of sexual difference,<sup>188</sup> which Christy Rae McGrew portrays as the enactment of the “struggle between selfhood, identity, and performativity,”<sup>189</sup> entangled in a complex web of “performance, gaze, and commodity.”<sup>190</sup> McGrew claims that what the Countess’s illuminated photographs, as liminal self-portraits, demonstrate is their creator’s complex understanding of visuality and the intricate interplay between viewer and mediated access to the artist as subject.<sup>191</sup> Amelia Jones’s progressive body of theoretical work is particularly valuable as radical feminist retrospective analysis, as she platforms queer feminist durationality as a continuous and central theoretical methodology to redress “the continuing systematic violence perpetrated against a vast range of subjects across the world based on their presumed identities – largely based on visual cues – and the stereotypes attached to them”<sup>192</sup> and to offer a more nuanced understanding of the complex performative function of artists’ bodies in relation to the social matrix in which visual artworks are produced and experienced. She claims that when the artist’s body becomes a gesturing, expressive body, it underscores a more fundamental tendency as the “obsessive performative surfacing of the artist’s body in the visual arts is an attempt to deal with something repressed that subsequently returns to the surface of experience.”<sup>193</sup>

Jones’s rendering of the self-portrait as a form of “technology of embodiment” that paradoxically points to our precariousness and incoherence as living, embodied subjects<sup>194</sup> is particularly interesting as she argues for

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187 ——— Ibid., 70.

188 ——— Ibid., 76.

189 ——— Christy Rae McGrew, “Performativity and Identity in the Illuminated Photographs of the Countess de Castiglione” (MA Thesis, University of Utah, 2013), 1.

190 ——— Ibid., 2.

191 ——— Ibid., 4.

192 ——— Amelia Jones, *Seeing Differently: A History and Theory of Identification and the Visual Arts* (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2012), xix.

193 ——— Amelia Jones and Tracey Warr, *The Artist’s Body* (London; New York: Phaidon, 2000), 19.

194 ——— Amelia Jones, “The ‘Eternal Return’: Self-Portrait Photography as a Technology of Embodiment,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 27, no. 4 (2002): 950.

its exaggerated theatricality and immanent performativity where the subject performs herself “within the purview of an apparatus of perspectival looking that freezes the body as representation.”<sup>195</sup> What is particularly pertinent in Jones’s cross-analysis of the emergence of the artist’s body as self-determining in relation to the critical trajectory of this chapter, is that she ascribes the partial inheritance of the modernist project of ‘veiling the body’ within its performative history as essentially linked to the pan-capitalist structures of patriarchy with its buttressing of colonialist, classist and heterosexist rates of exchange – which is ideologically identical to what Lepecki assigns to choreography as apparatus of capture. For Jones, the artist’s body plays a politically fated and performative role in that it provides a necessary stronghold for identity politics to negotiate hegemony and the pan-capitalist social system entrenched in the realm of culture and representation.<sup>196</sup> Her reproductive rupture arrives therefore via the artist’s body as marked, minoritarian and mediated – on display, in performance and often referenced fragmentally – as “resistance to power” in relation to its “performance as socially determined and determining.”<sup>197</sup> Here, the artist’s body as a conduit for identity politics can be seen within the endemic eternal return – via Derridean “différance” by means of the movement of affirmation and selection<sup>198</sup> – as the intersubjective mediated redux of the embodied subject, the subject-of-becoming, fully imbricated in the social.

To return to the illuminated photographs of the Countess in light of this invites an interesting and closer reading of the forces operating at the level of her body, as embodied subject per se. Solomon-Godeau grants the Countess a measure of being the “architect of her own representations”<sup>199</sup> but heeds that she essentially performs the role of scribe, as there is an almost “total embrace and identification with the look of the other [man/patriarchy]”<sup>200</sup> as a closed image of desire, which ultimately concedes Luce Irigaray’s theory of the female subject through the notion of mimesis as “subjectivity denied to woman.”<sup>201</sup> Hilary Robinson expands this notion in relation to the Countess as fashioning rather a “productive mimesis”<sup>202</sup>

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195 ——— Ibid., 949.

196 ——— Amelia Jones, *Body Art: Performing the Subject* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007).

197 ——— Jones and Warr, *The Artist’s Body*, 22.

198 ——— Jacques Derrida, “Signature Event Context,” in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 309-30.

199 ——— Solomon-Godeau, “The Legs of the Countess,” 67.

200 ——— Ibid., 108.

201 ——— Luce Irigaray, “Any Theory of the ‘Subject’ Has Always Been Appropriated by the ‘Masculine,’” *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. Gillian C. Gill, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 133.

202 ——— Hilary Robinson, *Reading Art, Reading Irigaray: The Politics of Art by Women* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co, 2006).

which “involves a subtle double movement.”<sup>203</sup> For both Irigaray and Robinson, this is essentially bound to “the possibility of a woman’s writing”<sup>204</sup> and implies a playful performative disposition. Irigaray describes this embodied authorship as follows: “To play with mimesis is thus, for a woman, to try to recover the place of her exploitation by discourse, without allowing herself to be simply reduced to it.”<sup>205</sup> Monique Johnson’s detailed exegesis, *An Insistent Subject: The Countess de Castiglione Facing the Lens*, concludes that although the Countess can mostly be seen as a mimetic reproduction of the problematic mythologies surrounding feminine subjectivity, she also asserts a subtly strategic and subversive ‘manoeuvre’ as part of “a maddening game negotiated through the prohibitive nexus of patriarchy and proscribed femininity in the Second Empire,”<sup>206</sup> riven therefore as an already mediated, embodied and fragmented reproductive rupture. This particular critical point is pursued in the analysis of choreographer Funmi Adewole’s performative work *Restfulness* as a composite part of the curated performance programme *Precarious Assembly* at the Whitworth Museum in 2016, which will be discussed in the latter part of the book. Adewole describes the embodiment of “multiple women” in her performance and the transgressive capacity of each of them to negotiate and undo the terrain of projected gazes. She states the following: “From my mother’s every day performances (she would never call them that), I learnt a lot about the world – the importance society places on the dress and bodily comportment of women.”<sup>207</sup> The notion of a self-reflexive subversive “double manoeuvre” within the double-bind that this particular work, and by extension Adewole herself, performs in the museum is made explicit, as she is critically aware of the problematic mythological constructs surrounding her as a woman of Nigerian extraction, performing different transformative identities, thereby extending a discreet inscription into the psychic space that also becomes part of historical memory by essentially constructing her subjectivity as “narrative being.” The level of consciously transgressive performativity in each of her embodied identarian performances and the interplay of intentionally interpellated misfires within the museum complex form an intricate and at times contradictory assemblage of minoritarian manoeuvres within representational space.

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203 ——— Ibid., 26.

204 ——— Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, trans. Catherine Porter (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 131.

205 ——— Ibid., 76.

206 ——— Monique L. Johnson, “An Insistent Subject: The Countess de Castiglione Facing the Lens” (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2014), 55.

207 ——— Funmi Adewole, *Restfulness* description accessed 15 November 2017, <https://www.accumulationsproject.com/funmi-adewole/>.

Elizabeth Lyon's *Unspeakable Images, Unspeakable Bodies*<sup>208</sup> privileges this double manoeuvre as an attempted discursive exit from hegemony and aligns the Countess's performativity as akin to that of Cindy Sherman in their mutual effort to challenge "what is at stake in the act of picturing one's body: for 'oneself,'"<sup>209</sup> as "they picture a relation between the body and representation that is at once caught in and resistant to the ideology of the visible."<sup>210</sup> Lyon also identifies that the divergent and obscure histories embodied in these particular photographs of the female body intersect categories of visibility, mythology and language, "since neither the body nor the photograph, as Roland Barthes reminds us, can say what it shows."<sup>211</sup> Lyon acknowledges that the Countess composes herself as an image of feminine masquerade via the mythic, symptomatic and social category of woman,<sup>212</sup> and that the staging of her infamous naked legs, as photographic exhibitionism of bodily femininity via profound theatricality, becomes symptomatic or totemic of the wider currency of hegemonic cultural and social values. Synchronously, Solomon-Godeau emphasises the performative constitution and commodifying effect of these particular photographs, a "bazaar of legs"<sup>213</sup> as such, as a form of theatre in that they show "a profound sense in which the feminine itself is constituted as an elaborate construction of pose, gesture, dress, or undress."<sup>214</sup> Solomon-Godeau quotes from Luce Irigaray's chapter *Women on the Market*<sup>215</sup> to further illustrate the operational forces at work on the surface of these images as they relate to the hegemonic matrix of patriarchal ideology in the following extract:

Participation in society requires that the body submit itself to a specularization, a speculation, that transforms it into a value-bearing object, a standardized sign, an exchangeable signifier, a "likeness" with reference to an authoritative model. A commodity – a woman – is divided into two irreconcilable "bodies": her "natural" body and her socially valued, exchangeable body, which is a particularly mimetic expression of masculine values.<sup>216</sup>

**208** ——— Elisabeth Lyon, "Unspeakable Images, Unspeakable Bodies," *Camera Obscura* 8, no. 3: 24 (1990): 168-194

**209** ——— Ibid., 170.

**210** ——— Ibid., 169.

**211** ——— Ibid., 169.

**212** ——— Ibid., 180.

**213** ——— Solomon-Godeau, "The Legs of the Countess," 83.

**214** ——— Ibid., 79.

**215** ——— Luce Irigaray "Women on the Market," in *This Sex Which Is Not One*, 170-191.

**216** ——— Solomon-Godeau, "The Legs of the Countess," 83.

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### 1.2.3 Historical Figurines: Spectres of the Countess de Castiglione's "Bazaar of Legs."

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Solomon-Godeau's most germane critique within the confluences of this chapter is articulated via the Countess's "bazaar of legs," as a symptom of assimilating the generalised fetishism of legs alongside the more "dispersed mythology of the feminine"<sup>217</sup> as a means of encoding the pervasive construction of femininity within the social history of ballet from the Romantic period through to the Second Empire.<sup>218</sup> She claims that the development of ballet reveals sexual ideology in the making, since it provides a "particularly clear case of the imbrication of fetishism and commodification on the bodies of women"<sup>219</sup> to demonstrate the tangible ramifications of sexual ideology at work within the incipient realm of cultural production and the imperatives of the market which underpin these developments.<sup>220</sup> Solomon-Godeau specifies that ballet's sexual politics is enacted not only on the level of ideology but also on the material circumstances of the dancers who literally embody that ideology, drawing clear recursive relations between the economic superstructure and the contextual and cultural foundations. She draws on feminist dance historian Lynn Garafola's research, revised in 1995,<sup>221</sup> to illustrate the unacknowledged factors of sexual ideology that operated reciprocally both inside and outside the institutional parameters of dance<sup>222</sup> and claims it as one of the first instances of the cultural paradox of feminine subjectivity inscribed in dance.<sup>223</sup> This is of paramount importance in understanding how dance history has dovetailed with the art-historical canon and conflated the polemic of sexual difference, possibly with more exploitative material conditioning in practice and aesthetics. Ana Sanchez-Colberg claims that "more often than not dance perpetuates – in its training, practices and critical approaches – patriarchal ideology, value judgements and its accom-

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217 ——— Ibid., 85.

218 ——— Ibid., 84.

219 ——— Ibid., 84.

220 ——— Ibid., 84.

221 ——— Lynn Garafola, "Where Are Ballet's Women Choreographers?" University Lecture, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 10 November 1995.

222 ——— Solomon-Godeau, "The Legs of the Countess," 84.

223 ——— Ibid., 88.

panying ready-made worldview.”<sup>224</sup> Conversely, Eluned Summers-Bremner’s research captured in *Reading Irigaray, Dancing*<sup>225</sup> bids a means of articulating a language of the body as active agent that has much to offer the feminist analysis of dance practice.<sup>226</sup> Garafola’s divergent revisionist history of ballet is therefore extended by dance scholars as the expanded project of women’s alterity within the ideology of the visible in a persistent attempt to locate the instances of “the possibility of a woman’s writing” inscribed via embodied subjectivity. Susan Leigh Foster’s iconic *The Ballerina’s Phallic Pointe*<sup>227</sup> is a case in point, as she describes the problematic double historical bind of the ballerina as contrary to the popular belief of her ultimate embodiment of the hyper-feminine myth. Rather, she is eternally inscribed as a vehicle for performing masculine desire and always captured by the parameters of hegemonic sexual ideology. Dance history remains entangled in another well documented myth that the “matriarchs of modern dance”<sup>228</sup> which denotes the modernist pioneering of dance being almost exclusively led by women,<sup>229</sup> superseded the full encumbrance of patriarchal ideology.<sup>230</sup> Elizabeth Dempster privileges early modern dance’s radical repudiation of the tenets of nineteenth-century ballet in that it was “an avowedly female-centred movement, both in respect to the manner in which the body was deployed and represented and in the imagery and subject matter employed.”<sup>231</sup> She claims that they inherited no practice and that the techniques and choreographic forms they developed were reflections of their own “originating bodies” which produced “a writing of the female body which strongly contrasted with classical inscriptions.”<sup>232</sup> She furthers the argument by claiming that

224 ——— Ana Sanchez-Colberg, “You put your left foot in, then you shake it all about ...’ Excursions and Incursions into Feminism and Bausch’s Tanztheater,” in *Dance, Gender and Culture*, ed. Helen Thomas (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 1993), 156.

225 ——— Eluned Summers-Bremner, “Reading Irigaray, ‘Dancing,’” *Hypatia* 15, no. 1 (Winter, 2000): 90-124.

226 ——— Ibid., 90.

227 ——— Susan Leigh Foster, “The Ballerina’s Phallic Pointe” in *Corporealities: Dancing Knowledge, Culture and Power*, ed. Susan Leigh Foster (London: Taylor & Francis, 1995), 1-26.

228 ——— Sally Banes, “Review: Talking Women: Dance Herstories, reviewed Work(s): Dancing Women: Female Bodies OnStage,” *Dance Research Journal* 31, no. 2 (Autumn, 1999): 117-122.

229 ——— Sally Banes, *Dancing Women: Female Bodies Onstage* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013).

230 ——— Ann Daly, *Critical Gestures: Writings on Dance and Culture* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2002).

231 ——— Elizabeth Dempster, “Women writing the body: let’s watch a little how she dances,” in *Routledge Dance Studies Reader*, ed. Alexandra Carter (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 223.

232 ——— Ibid., 223.

although modern dance was not a uniform system by any measure, akin rather to a corpus related through differentiated vocabularies, its governing logic was affective rather than the prevailing pictorial sensibilities that administered ballet,<sup>233</sup> making it more resilient to the hegemony of the visible. Dempster argues that in this sense, the "modern body" and the dance or performative gestures that shaped it describe it as a site of struggle between social and psychological conflicts. She states that: "This body – and it is specifically female body – is not passive but dynamic,"<sup>234</sup> but questions how the sacrosanct body of 'the feminine' was inscribed by the distinctly female-devised languages of modern dance with their tendency to mythologise the female body between the purely libidinal or the decidedly hysteric.<sup>235</sup> She maintains that the play of oppositions and gender stereotyping that is inculcated by classical ballet is therefore preserved by modern dance.<sup>236</sup> Ann Daly's critique *Feminist Theory Across the Millennial Divide*<sup>237</sup> offers an erudite overview of this predominant perspective. Susan Leigh Foster, as both feminist academic and dancer, revisits this seeming quandary in a revised version of her iconic paper as a performed lecture with a distinct satirical nod to the "bazaar of legs" imbued by the Countess. The performative lecture still emphatically entitled *The Ballerina's Phallic Pointe*,<sup>238</sup> redresses the ongoing sexist legacy of ballet by examining the current ideological traffic in and around the dancer's body. She assigns the ballerina's legs as the new markers of desire and subverts the value she allocates theoretically through the performative gesture of shaving her own legs in practice whilst capitulating on the continuing marketability of the ballerina's legs as the image of desire. She offers a reading of the visual to substantiate her claim that the ballerina's legs perform a synecdochal transfer into the realm of abstraction. She concludes that different movement lexicons and varied choreographic possibilities could overturn this sensual potency and conceivably secure "a narrative space for feminine desire," the eternal return of "the possibility of a woman's writing" via a multiplicity of responses, in theory and in aesthetic and artistic practice.

Fellow feminist scholar and dancer Leslie Satin offers an equally sardonic recapitulation of the impact of the Countess's self-portraiture and illuminated legs on the bequest of the dancer's legs within the scholarly

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233 ——— Ibid., 223-224.

234 ——— Ibid., 224.

235 ——— Ibid., 225.

236 ——— Ibid., 228.

237 ——— Ann Daly, "Feminist Theory Across the Millennial Divide," *Dance Research Journal* 32, no. 1 (2000): 39-42.

238 ——— Susan Leigh Foster, *The Ballerina's Phallic Pointe* (Philadelphia: The Pew Centre for Arts and Heritage, 2011), <https://vimeo.com/54397790>.

field in her text entitled *The Legs of the Theorist*. She claims that the binding inheritance of the project of visibility has troubled the dancer's political potential and prerogative to autonomy within the discursive domain as the representational value of the Countess' legs still circles the dancer as a spectral charge. She states the following about the illuminated photographs of the Countess' legs:

“From long-ago laboratories of image-making and spectatorship, they presage many of our contemporary critical, theoretical and aesthetic preoccupations; and they remind us that looking, and in particular looking at women, is matrixed into our ever-changing circumstances of perceiving and theorizing.”<sup>239</sup>

She addresses the analogous relationship between theorising and looking as a form of responsible scholarly spectatorship and argues for an ethics of theorising that includes the sensual, puzzle-like play that incorporates her fully embodied subjectivity as both feminist scholar and dancer, in essence occupying “multiple worlds”<sup>240</sup> comparable to that of the Countess. She also argues that the inclusivity that this position requires is necessitated by the current process of expansion that overrides previously demarcated disciplines and calls for an acknowledgement of the “complex web of cultural and personal experiences and signifiers”<sup>241</sup> that we inhabit and embody. This has led to an increased tendency to acknowledge dance as a significant site of cultural expression<sup>242</sup> and choreography as a means of cultural production beyond the strictures of discourse and the ideology of the visible in that its theorising is generative in its return to practice. A working example of this is renowned dance scholar Carol Brown's thesis *Inscribing the Body: Feminist Choreographic Practices*,<sup>243</sup> as it gained significant traction in expanding the parameters of dance theory and practice within feminist discourse. Her most recent co-edited publication, *Undisciplining Dance in Nine Movements and Eight Stumbles*,<sup>244</sup> furthers this by corrupting the ideologically tenable disciplinary regime that continues to capture dance and choreographic practice within the set grids of semiotically secured discourse in the academy.

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**239** ——— Leslie Satin, “The Legs of the Theorist,” *Dance Research Journal* 32, no. 2 (Winter, 2001): 120.

**240** ——— Ibid., 122.

**241** ——— Ibid., 121.

**242** ——— Ibid., 122.

**243** ——— Carol Brown, “Inscribing the Body: Feminist Choreographic Practices” (PhD diss., University of Surrey, 1994).

**244** ——— Carol Brown and Alys Longley, *Undisciplining Dance in Nine Movements and Eight Stumbles* (Cambridge: Scholars Publishing, 2018).

In conclusion, the parameters of this chapter mete out the pre-dispositioned visual conditioning of the performative body in the museum, specifically in relation to the intersectioned nexus of gender and race within the historical and disseminated ideological hegemony of visibility. An extension of the argument offered in Chapter 1.1 on the museum as calculated scopic environment, or "technology of power" as ideological "civic engine" via Tony Bennett, is contested as a contradictory apparatus within the context of the arguments outlined in this chapter. Its ideological inconsistencies are disturbed by the inherited preconditions of performance when it transfers into the museum. The proportionate of 'lifeless' bodies as art-historical product bound to the museum and the subsequent austere and disembodied gaze that is attached to this arena as 'truth discourse,' is ruptured by the importation of the diametrically opposed lively and excessive bodies of performance, with their own codex of historically inscribed markings and spectatorship drivers. Contemporary performance, and curatorial interventions via the choreographic, is particularly invested in countering this hegemonic discourse. Furthermore, the chapter examines the complex and intertwined legacies of dance as social apparatus and choreography as apparatus of capture within predetermined ideological discursive and disciplinary grids. It also engages mythologies, via Barthes, as a critical device to uncover the spectral charges that are operational within current hyper-complex representational systems, drawing attention to the radical feminist prerogative for minoritarian practice via the artist's body to resist or escape capture by patriarchal ideology. It draws on feminist discourse and traces the art-historical conjunction with dance scholarship – especially the historiography surrounding classical ballet and modern dance – by examining concurrent readings of the Countess de Castiglione's legs and their mythological circulation across differentiated historical canons to arrive at the radical feminist proposition of the "double movement" as an anti-referential rupture in the constructedness of the ideologically marked body and its ensuing gestures. The subsequent archetypal rupture, remediated via the Countess, offers restitutive interpretative possibilities for the future across aesthetic and artistic practice alongside embodied subjectivity and self-determined expression within intricate social systems and cultural complexes. This is particularly pertinent to the evolutionary future of dance as embodied aesthetic practice within the contemporary museum-complex, as it allows more radical choreographic lexicons to emerge that are repellent of exploitative neoliberal capitalist representational values that continue to reinforce sexist and racist legacies. As Barthes reminds us, "There is no fixity in mythical concepts: they can come into being, alter, disinteg-

rate, disappear completely.”<sup>245</sup> This strengthens the notion that the congenital mythologies that dance and choreography simultaneously respond to and resist within the museum-complex offer renewed opportunities for examining the retreat of the “signs of history as the writing of culture”<sup>246</sup> to gain insight into the complexity of representing the reality of experience at a time of hyper-paradox where sign value and use value converge.

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**245** ——— Barthes, *Mythologies*, 130.

**246** ——— Trifonas, *Postmodern Encounters*, 58.

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## 1.3 Democracy's Body?: Pre-curatorial Conditions of Judson Dance Theater.

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### 1.3.1 (Her)stories in Context: The Everyday Discursive Body Politic of Judson Dance Theater.

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The promise of “democracy’s body”<sup>247</sup> heralded by Judson Dance Theater during the 1960s ushered in an era of radical experimentation under the moniker of postmodern dance as first articulated by Yvonne Rainer,<sup>248</sup> akin to other fields of artistic practice where the narrative of progressive modernism exhausted itself. A manifest interest in an immutable body available to the interplay of multiple discourses in an effort to discard the inherited classically shaped or modern canonically codified body was an attempt to divert attention “away from any specific image of the body and towards the process of constructing all bodies”<sup>249</sup> and redraft earlier forms of bodily inscription by quoting, destabilising and manipulating classical and modernist lexicons. Elizabeth Dempster states the following in relation to Judson Dance Theater’s ideological challenge to the history of hegemonic bodily inscription:

If postmodern dance is a ‘writing’ of the body, it is a writing which is conditional, circumstantial and above all transitory; it is a writing which erases itself in the act of being written. The body, and by

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247 ——— Sally Banes, *Democracy’s Body: Judson Dance Theater, 1962-1964* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, Third Edition, 2003).

248 ——— Sally Banes, *Terpsichore in Sneakers: Post-Modern Dance* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2011), xiii.

249 ——— Dempster, “Women writing the body,” 229.

extension ‘the feminine’ in postmodern dance is unstable, fleeting, flickering, transient – a subject of multiple representations.<sup>250</sup>

Strategies directed towards the disbanding of the innate binaries, specifically between art and life as engineered by advanced modernist aesthetic ideology, were actively explored and subverted. This period of radical dance practice incited deep political provocations that have still not been exhausted and gleans some of its most progressive implications for dance and choreographic practice in the current museum-theatre complex. The post-Judson pedagogic temperament which ensued, of which most current dance scholars are a product, brought to the fore more politically responsive apparatuses of creation and observation of context through mode and operation alongside a practical critique of the spectatorial status quo. The most prominent sedition, however, developed in relation to negating the historic construction and re-inscription of the body, hence the inevitable potential for and emergence of “democracy’s body” – an organism in flux, evolving in dialogue with the complexities of the physical and social world. One could claim that this introduces one of the first overt instances of the inscription of the abject into bodily discourse through radical dance practice, rather than bodily excess which is usually already secured within the reproductive strictures of hegemonic ideologies to continue the tracing of seminal ruptures within the cross-currents of historical and contemporary arts practice, as the experimental dance practice of the 1960s involved a strategic embrace of the residuum.<sup>251</sup> Noël Carroll’s “The Philosophy of Art History, Dance and the 1960s”<sup>252</sup> situates Judson Dance Theater’s project within the broad spectrum of the historical avant-garde and aligns their commitment to instil ‘the ordinary’ in their dances to Andy Warhol’s use of the everyday in visual art, insinuating that these radical acts fused the historical developments of the artistic disciplines at this point. Sally Banes’ detailed books, *Greenwich Village: Avant-garde Performance and the Effervescent Body*,<sup>253</sup> *Democracy’s Body: Judson Dance Theater, 1962-1964, Reinventing Dance in the 1960s: Everything Was Possible*,<sup>254</sup> *Terpsichore in Sneakers: Post-Modern Dance*,<sup>255</sup> *Writing Dancing in*

250 ——— Ibid.

251 ——— Elisabeth Dempster, “The Choreography of the Pedestrian,” *Performance Research* 13, no. 11 (2008): 24.

252 ——— Noël Carroll, “The Philosophy of Art History, Dance and the 1960s,” in *Reinventing Dance in the 1960s: Everything Was Possible*, ed. Sally Banes (Binsted, Hampshire: Dance Books, 2003), 81-97.

253 ——— Sally Banes, *Greenwich Village: Avant-garde Performance and the Effervescent Body* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993).

254 ——— Sally Banes, ed., *Reinventing Dance in the 1960s: Everything Was Possible*.

255 ——— Sally Banes, *Terpsichore in Sneakers: Post-Modern Dance* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2011).

*the Age of Postmodernism*,<sup>256</sup> alongside Susan Leigh Foster's *Reading Dancing: Bodies and Subjects in Contemporary American Dance*,<sup>257</sup> Deborah Jowitt's *Time and the Dancing Image*,<sup>258</sup> and Ramsay Burt's *Judson Dance Theater: Performative Traces*,<sup>259</sup> still form the bedrock of scholarly research in relation to what is now considered an epoch of radical experimentalism in dance. Burt's publication boldly challenges what he sees as an essentially American-centric body of scholarship and aims to redress the Atlantic divide on Judson Dance Theater by arguing for a similarly radical and experimental performative echo in Western Europe with a specific reference to choreographer Pina Bausch. He highlights the thrust of political intent in the work of the Judson choreographers in relation to their approaches to social relationships involving authority or power via both radical and more discreet representational forms and aesthetics. These scholars agree that a period of critical mass emerged between 1962 and 1964 amongst an affiliation of primarily autonomous dancers, choreographers, composers and visual artists who had rhizomatic relations with a cross-section of proliferating inter-arts practice centred around the process- and research-orientated framework at the Judson Memorial Church in Greenwich Village, New York. Banes's body of research across several publications establishes that what is now considered under the sobriquet "Judson Dance Theater" or the "Judson Church Collective," at times interchangeably, developed out of experimental musician – and student of John Cage – Robert Dunn's composition classes held at Merce Cunningham's studio from 1960 to 1962, interspersed with the experimental ensemble methods that James Waring taught at the *Living Theatre*. The first Judsonian public performance, *A Concert of Dance*, which took place on the 6<sup>th</sup> of July 1962 and included the work of fourteen choreographers performed by seventeen dancers and "non-dancers,"<sup>260</sup> is hailed as the inception of the era of postmodern dance and of the process of radical experimentation that it generated. The affiliated artists usually included in the collective were Yvonne Rainer, Steve Paxton, David Gordon, Alex and Deborah Hay, Lucinda Childs and Trisha Brown, with frequent interloping by visual artist and scenographer Robert Rauschenberg, and conceptual artists Robert Morris and Andy Warhol. The creative careers of each of the afore-

**256** ——— Sally Banes, *Writing Dancing in the Age of Postmodernism* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2011).

**257** ——— Susan Leigh Foster, *Reading Dancing: Bodies and Subjects in Contemporary American Dance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

**258** ——— Deborah Jowitt, *Time and the Dancing Image* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

**259** ——— Ramsay Burt, *Judson Dance Theater: Performative Traces* (London, New York: Routledge, 2006).

**260** ——— Sally Banes, "The birth of the Judson Dance Theater: A concert of dance at Judson church, July 6, 1962," *Dance Chronicle* 5, Issue 2 (1981): 168.

mentioned choreographers, dancers and visual artists have been widely documented and are still reviewed extensively with subsequent restorative overviews, retrospectives and discursive revivals of the period spurning a renewed interest in what is still considered to be the vanguard of an explicitly radical artistic and cross-disciplinary practice. The most influential extant overviews are perhaps Carrie Lambert-Beatty's incisive study of Yvonne Rainer in *Being Watched: Yvonne Rainer and the 1960s*<sup>261</sup> and Susan Rosenberg's *Trisha Brown: Choreography as Visual Art*,<sup>262</sup> amalgamating this historic pinnacle of overlap between performance and visual art. Most profoundly, Lambert-Beatty locates Rainer's radicalism via her choreographic interventions not on the body of the performer, but rather on the eye of the viewer and argues that it was a continued sweeping resistance to the mediated nature of spectacle embedded within an array of representational forms and hyper-mediatised environments. Historically, the program for *A Concert of Dance* emerged from the expansive backdrop of cultural trends articulated in Susan Sontag's *Against Interpretation*, a series of essays written between 1962 and 1965 in which she calls for the dawning of transparent art and criticism that illuminates the way for experience.<sup>263</sup> Yvonne Rainer's own prophetic and manifestorial axiom, *No Manifesto* from 1965, captured a similar cultural-artistic zeitgeist via the proliferating performative body politic accrued during this period as a formative declaration of departure from and noncompliance with the preceding dominant aesthetics by all accounts. In it, she restates elements of Brecht's anti-illusionist aesthetic, the political intent of which was to bring to the foreground the realm of everyday life:<sup>264</sup>

NO to spectacle.

No to virtuosity.

No to transformations and magic and make-believe.

No to the glamour and transcendency of the star image.

No to the heroic.

No to the anti-heroic.

No to trash imagery.

No to involvement of performer or spectator.

No to style.

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**261** ——— Carrie Lambert-Beatty, *Being Watched: Yvonne Rainer and the 1960s* (Cambridge, MA: London: MIT Press, 2011).

**262** ——— Susan Rosenberg, *Trisha Brown: Choreography as Visual Art* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2017).

**263** ——— Susan Sontag, *Against Interpretation and Other Essays* (London: Penguin, 2013).

**264** ——— Elisabeth Dempster, "The Choreography of the Pedestrian," *Performance Research* 13, no. 11 (2008): 24.

No to camp.

No to seduction of spectator by the wiles of the performer.

No to eccentricity.

No to moving or being moved.<sup>265</sup>

Susan Foster, in *The Signifying Body: Reaction and Resistance in Postmodern Dance*,<sup>266</sup> claims that Rainer adopted a shifting of stances, an ironic doubling of meaning in which the aesthetic collapsed into the political and undermined the determinate organisation of meaning by providing techniques for assessing the ideological functioning of meaning-making in general<sup>267</sup> via a bricolage of expressive forms and the purposeful repudiation of skill. Foster isolates what she terms as “several choreographic statements growing out of the Judson experimentation”<sup>268</sup> that underpin the radical promise of postmodernist art envisioned by Rainer. She claims that part of Judson’s definitive Rubicon was to challenge the traditional conception of an intending subject who uses the body as an expressive conduit by engaging in a double performative manoeuvre where the identities of performers are dependent upon the social context, thereby “showing the distribution of power inherent in the project of using the body to communicate,”<sup>269</sup> situating dance as one discourse among many within the larger representational hegemonic order. Foster also argues that another of their prominent legacies is their committed approach to alternative models of communication based on a participatory collaboration between choreographers, performers and viewers, employing a heterogeneous array of styles and compositional methods as part of a more sustained project in which they assumed a systematic examination of their own production – an inherent self-reflexivity akin to Rainer’s “doubling of meaning.”<sup>270</sup> Susan Foster draws on Hal Foster’s *The Anti-Aesthetic*<sup>271</sup> to argue that Judson’s approach can be disseminated in relation to his conception of “resistive postmodernism” in that they offered an ongoing inquiry into the implications of any choice of form which includes its viewer in the formu-

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**265** ——— Yvonne Rainer, “No Manifesto,” in *Terms of Performance* (Berkeley, CA: Arts Research Center at University of California and Philadelphia, PA: The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage, 2016), accessed 5 May 2019, <http://intermsofperformance.site/interviews/yvonne-rainer>.

**266** ——— Susan Foster, “The Signifying Body: Reaction and Resistance in Postmodern Dance,” *Theatre Journal* 37, no. 1 (March 1985): 44-64.

**267** ——— *Ibid.*, 45.

**268** ——— *Ibid.*, 47.

**269** ——— *Ibid.*, 47.

**270** ——— Susan Foster, “The Signifying Body: Reaction and Resistance in Postmodern Dance,” *Theatre Journal* 37, no. 1 (March 1985): 47.

**271** ——— Hal Foster, ed., *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture* (Port Townsend, WA: Bay Press, 1983).

lation and critique of its own meaning.<sup>272</sup> She references the following definition from *The Anti-Aesthetic* as justification:

“A postmodernism of resistance, then, arises as a counter-practice not only to the official culture of modernism but also to the “false normativity” of a reactionary postmodernism. In opposition (but not only in opposition), a resistant postmodernism is concerned with a critical deconstruction of tradition, not an instrumental pastiche of pop- or pseudo historical forms, with a critique of origins, not a return to them. In short, it seeks to question rather than exploit cultural codes, to explore rather than conceal social and political affiliations.”<sup>273</sup>

One of the Judson artists’ most prominent performative bequests was that they permitted an investigation of the ethics of shifting identities and unveiled subjectivity in the body-subject interaction as extrapolated from the social landscape, promoting a more democratic disposition of power amongst all subjects and bodies.<sup>274</sup> They prioritised choreographic codes that referred to situated contexts and “cultivated the liminal ground between art and life.”<sup>275</sup> Their performances were presented in gymnasiums, galleries and churches, and often viewers would find the dancers warming up or talking to each other before the activity gradually evolved into a discreet performance frame. The dancers would also often move into the make-shift seating area and frequently address the audience directly, an unprecedented manoeuvre at the time, imbuing their work with a spontaneity unknown in any prior tradition. The ‘meta-commentary’ instilled in their production processes was employed to create a self-reflexive and collaborative atmosphere that promoted a constantly shifting self-definition.<sup>276</sup> They were particularly interested in presenting models that resolved the tension between individual and group by delineating the context-specificity of cultural artefacts and of human identity itself.<sup>277</sup> Their performances have often been presented as examples of communal interaction via an emphasis on cooperation in group activities that determine the meaning and value of those same activities.

Another of the lineages of Judson Dance Theater’s choreographic statements that Foster distils is that their dances “obstructed consumer interests in the body, while subverting the desire to command or use the body for an expressive purpose”<sup>278</sup> via the projection of radical alternative models for subjects and bodies. The entirety of the Judsonian project was

272 ——— Foster, “The Signifying Body,” 47.

273 ——— Foster, ed., *The Anti-Aesthetic*, xii.

274 ——— Foster, “The Signifying Body,” 48.

275 ——— Ibid., 52.

276 ——— Ibid., 55.

277 ——— Ibid., 56.

278 ——— Ibid., 63.

premised in egalitarianism and the consolidation of aesthetic form to political praxis which still has mythological credence in the contemporary cultural imagination.

Randy Martin, in *A Precarious Dance, a Derivative Sociality*,<sup>279</sup> extends the spectre of Judson's reach into the contemporary moment by claiming that the futurity of their utopian project still fuels the imagination with generative and fluid, albeit precarious, socialities. He argues that for dance to move the political beyond arrested development, which describes Judson's ubiquitous intentionalities, its knowledge of how bodies are assembled, of how space and time are configured, of how interconnections and networks are valued must be made legible beyond the ends of choreographic endeavour,<sup>280</sup> functioning as a derivative sociality or tautological performativity as such.

He also argues that their initial experimentation with identity and the performativity of personhood via corporeal animation set in motion a circulation of previously hierarchically ordered classifiers of value such as race, gender and sexuality, which has now "become a domain of increasing volatility, negotiation, flow, and dispersal."<sup>281</sup> A profound claim that Martin introduces into the wider impact of the Judsonian legacy is namely that the decentred kinesthetics embedded within their cultural anatomy performed a socio-political prophetic rupture by not imposing a genealogy of influence but rather "relating to a series of lateral connections in which disparate practices are joined through some (but not all) of what organizes them."<sup>282</sup> He argues that the predeceasing classical and modern choreographic doxa combine representations of the Age of Discovery with that of Empire, and the subsequent all-encompassing liberation movements, including Judson's seminal negation of Western concert dance's entire genealogical disposition, signalled an opening for the future of decolonised bodies asserting other modalities of creative risk.<sup>283</sup> In essence, the Judson offer of alternative artistic practices of collectives and laboratories, ushered in methodologies of "self-production, self-representation, and self-dissemination."<sup>284</sup> Martin claims that if we treat Judson Dance Theater's onslaught of postmodern dance heterotopically, it points toward "a trivium of abandoned space turned to ground for distributed sovereignty"<sup>285</sup> via derivative forms of pedestrian movement that lay claim to the urban landscape by inverting its conventional coordinates as radical

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279 ——— Randy Martin, "A Precarious Dance, a Derivative Sociality," *TDR: Precarity and Performance: Special Consortium*, Issue 56, no. 4 (Winter 2012): 62-77.

280 ——— Ibid., 63.

281 ——— Ibid., 68.

282 ——— Ibid., 68.

283 ——— Ibid., 70.

284 ——— Ibid., 75.

285 ——— Ibid., 71.

spatial practice extracted from and reinserted back into the networks of social fabric. His closing statement garners the lasting impact of Judson's legacy on speculative practice in contemporary dance:

Performances are, after all, derived from many other times—of rehearsal, of training, of touring; they gather together movements from myriad locales, experiences, and sources to recalibrate and recompose them for a given intervention. Seen from this expanded field, dance is already everywhere. Rather than appearing merely fleeting and ephemeral in performance, dance is the concatenation of varying durations, of reaches near and far that nestle among the moving bodies.<sup>286</sup>

Elizabeth Dempster, in *The Choreography of the Pedestrian*<sup>287</sup> affirms that the insertion of the “non-aesthetic” in the form of ordinary movement and untrained performers by Judson Dance Theater during the inception of postmodern dance has implications beyond the circumscribed domains of dance theory and aesthetics, precipitating the incongruities and displacements of a postmodern, global culture. She claims that, “Including the pedestrian within dance subverts its conventional function as the outside or other of dance and so precipitates an arena of thought that is beyond dance aesthetics.”<sup>288</sup> Dempster refers in detail to Yvonne Rainer's choreographic approaches as a politically engaged practice via her affordance of different methods of generating movement such as “aleatory procedures, scores, game structures and task-based activities facilitated a choreographic exploration that could be effected by trained and untrained performers alike.”<sup>289</sup>

Her most profound claim is that the reclamation of the pedestrian is the first instance of taxonomic disorder within the descent of western theatre dance as it inserts the notion of the ‘formless’ into embodied discourse. She relays the deeper theoretical grounding via Henri Lefebvre:

If the pedestrian is the realm of repetition and habit, the realm of unreflective cultural reproduction, it is also the domain and subject of utopian social praxis. The modes of attention to the everyday body and pedestrian movement briefly outlined above exemplify two contrasting forms of utopian social praxis - one concerned with articulating and eliminating domination, the other seeking within the everyday the ‘last remaining vestige of lost plenitude.’<sup>290</sup>

286 ——— Ibid., 76.

287 ——— Dempster, “The Choreography of the Pedestrian,” 23-28.

288 ——— Ibid., 24.

289 ——— Ibid.

290 ——— Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life* (London and New York: Verso, 1991), xxiv.

Dempster suggests that the pedestrian is an “undoer,” a “de-classifier,” where a movement’s identity or intelligibility as dance movement is determined rather by its role in a system of relationships, allowing a productive tension between the artwork and the social domain.<sup>291</sup> She claims that this approach regards the admission of the pedestrian or “the everyday” as a moment of rupture, in which “the terms that have organized and regulated the discipline of dance are rendered null and void.”<sup>292</sup> She argues therefore that the pedestrian cannot be assimilated into a coherent functioning of dance values under the pretext of representational hegemony, as pedestrian actions are incommensurate with traditional dance values and produce a reproductive rupture that reiterates Andrew Hewitt’s critique of reproductive ideology via the notion of non-referential dance and choreography. Dempster excavates this claim by asserting that the conception of the everyday fosters great complexity, contradiction and ambiguity when assumed as an aesthetic ideology. It unravels all previous meta-narratives of purity, distillation and clarity and “destabilizes the identity of the dancer, the autonomy of the choreographer and the self-enclosure of the spectator,”<sup>293</sup> as the pedestrian is profoundly social in its inter-connectedness to the everyday. The choreography of the pedestrian, as engendered by Yvonne Rainer and other Judson Dance Theater choreographers, produces for the first time a sense of profound intimacy and acknowledged intersubjective interiority within the transmissible systemic taxonomy of choreographic discourse, as the figure of the pedestrian is a point of resistance to the process of representational objectification.<sup>294</sup> The radial reach of the democratisation of the body is therefore activated and produced within the intersubjective exchange between spectator and performer, acknowledging all participants in their embodied, complex subjectivities as both products and producers of meaning. This radical revaluation of spectator consciousness projected by Judson Dance Theater portended an expansive social project through which the aesthetic is enfolded and discovered in the realm of the everyday. Dempster notes that what this entailed “was a profound perceptual and cognitive shift, as the stance of Kantian disinterestedness acceded to an ethos of participation and connectedness.”<sup>295</sup>

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291 ——— Dempster, “The Choreography of the Pedestrian,” 26.

292 ——— Ibid.

293 ——— Ibid..

294 ——— Ibid., 27.

295 ——— Ibid.

## 1.3.2 Contemporary Curatorial Contexts: Judsonian Revivals.

The Museum of Modern Art's (MoMA, NY) recent curatorial exhibition entitled *Judson Dance Theater: The Work Is Never Done*<sup>296</sup> fortifies the contemporary passage of the Judsonian impulse. Co-curator Thomas J. Lax, in an editorial introduction entitled *Allow Me to Begin Again*,<sup>297</sup> states that the exhibition situates Judson within the "workshop model"<sup>298</sup> of the travelling culture that migrated from Europe to the United States after World War II and within the context of the re-emerging cross-medium collaborations of the early 1960s. He also upholds that the figures associated with the Judson Collective associated themselves with personal, artistic and collective identification politics including second-wave feminism, queer social activism and black power movements – gestures that "claimed the intimacy of everyday life as a contestable political space,"<sup>299</sup> which also continues to fuel the current and more explicit social, artistic and activist movements. Lax states that:

Judson thus contributed to making a language for ongoing experiments with dismantling male-dominated capitalist institutions, as well as for experiments supporting the black radical aesthetic tradition and human interactions with the natural world.<sup>300</sup>

Co-curator Anna Janevski, in her editorial introduction titled *Judson Dance Theater: The Work Is Never Done – Sanctuary Needed*<sup>301</sup> imparts Carolee Schneeman's observation from an oral history interview she conducted with Schneeman in the build-up to the exhibition, that Judson was efficaciously a group of women working together, subverting the dominant authority of their male colleagues.<sup>302</sup> Janevski continues by remarking

**296** ——— *Judson Dance Theater: The Work Is Never Done*, exhibition at The Museum of Modern Art [MoMA], New York, 16 September 2018 – 3 February 2019, <https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/3927>.

**297** ——— Thomas J. Lax, "Allow Me to Begin Again," in *Judson Dance Theater: The Work Is Never Done*, 14-25.

**298** ——— Ibid., 17.

**299** ——— Ibid., 17.

**300** ——— Ibid., 25.

**301** ——— Anna Janevski, "Judson Dance Theater: The Work Is Never Done – Sanctuary Needed," in *Judson Dance Theater: The Work Is Never Done*, 26-35.

**302** ——— Ibid., 29.

that the female protagonists of Judson were “practicing a form of collective antipatriarchal politics within their personal daily lives”<sup>303</sup> by eradicating sole authorship. This intimate blurring of the personal, political and artistic, mediated and translated via films, photographs, scores and oral histories transmitted by the group revealed the challenging nature of recognising the intimate connections between artists and the manifestation of their work, especially as the work resides, fleetingly but fundamentally, in the complex relation to immediate presence via the body of the artist. Janevski brings a crucial and correlated curatorial question to the fore: “How might exhibiting Judson Dance Theater in a museum context in 2018 risk reifying or fixing in place and in time a constellation of works that bore no such risk at the moment of their making?”<sup>304</sup> She suggests that this exact line of inquiry, and any subsequent questions raised by the presentation of Judson as a historical dance group at a contemporary art museum, supplants the “ephemerality-versus-permanence dichotomy”<sup>305</sup> that haunts so much of dance’s consecration into the archive proper of art history, as it offers a performative variation via repetition to extend the original creative impulse and Judson’s initial artistic cadence by interrogating the way that their performances “transpired at the threshold of image and action.”<sup>306</sup> In this way, dispersal within the expressive sphere is circumvented as the processes of cataloguing and archiving within the museum acts as a conduit for historical memory and surveillance alike. Janevski raises pertinent but ancillary questions around the politics of “transmission, mediation, and variation” to interrogate how museum spaces in the 21<sup>st</sup> century can better manifest the spatial politics of “openness and process that foster research and experimentation,”<sup>307</sup> ideas fundamental to the spirit of the Judson collective. The question was therefore never whether dance belongs in the museum or gallery, but rather how it is allowed to perform, given its manifest yet varied history. Janevski also acknowledges that the history of Judson Dance Theater has been “mythologised as a story about artistic experimentation, community and participatory-democracy”<sup>308</sup> through their resolve of privileging self-organisation and collectivity – a radical departure within the confines of dance, which again may continue to offer fertile ground for future interpretative and alternative models analogous to the figure of the Countess de Castiglione as a mythologically retrospective rupture of the past, viewed through the present. Janevski’s closing remarks brings to the fore further

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303 ——— Ibid.

304 ——— Ibid.

305 ——— Ibid., 31.

306 ——— Ibid., 32.

307 ——— Ibid.

308 ——— Ibid.

details that allow self-reflection and reconsideration of the futurity and politics of the current moment by imparting the words of Yvonne Rainer from an interview conducted in 1992:

In principle I still cling to the somewhat romantic ideas of avant-garde...ideas about marginality, intervention and adversative sub-culture, a confrontation with the complacent past, the art of resistance, etc. Of course, these ideas must be constantly reassessed in terms of class, gender and race. On a personal level I could describe my development as a gradual discovery of the subtleties of my own privilege, which I took for granted when I began as a dancer.<sup>309</sup>

Abigail Levine, in *How We Remember: Judson Dance Theater at MoMA*,<sup>310</sup> conveys the exhibition's implicit curatorial inquiry as follows; how do we look back from where we are; what does that time tell us about our times; what might the creative action of that fertile and contentious era ask us of being and acting in our own?<sup>311</sup> She situates her reflections on the MoMA exhibition amongst the spate of programmes revisiting Judson's history and its effects on contemporary dance and art since 2010 where the implicit perspective of the curatorial approaches accommodates Judson's living history<sup>312</sup> in relation to the forms of their collective political commitments and consequent extension into the expressive sphere. The curatorial intersections encasing the Judson revival all either frame or speculate on their methods of negotiating the commons in relation to their politics of identification and modes of establishing solidarity in reproductive and affective relations nuanced by the narrative of the 1960s downtown New York scene. Levine isolates one programme in particular for its "female dancer's, curatorial eye"<sup>313</sup> titled *Radical Bodies: Anna Halprin, Simone Forti, Yvonne Rainer in California and New York, 1955–1972* - an exhibition from 2017 at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts with a "series of associated events [lectures and performances] around the city."<sup>314</sup> The curatorial framing of the relational events included

**309** ——— Yvonne Rainer with Jayamanne Laleen and Geeta Kapur, "Discussing Modernity, Third World and The Man Who Envied Women [1987]," in *Modernism/Postmodernism*, ed. Peter Brooker (London: Longman, 1992), 46-47.

**310** ——— Abigail Levine, "How We Remember: Judson Dance Theater at MoMA," *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art* 41, no. 2 (May 2019): 58-68.

**311** ——— *Ibid.*, 58.

**312** ——— *Ibid.*, 59.

**313** ——— *Ibid.*, 63.

**314** ——— "Radical Bodies: Anna Halprin, Simone Forti, and Yvonne Rainer in California and New York, 1955–1972," exhibition at the New York

in this programme emphasise that the radical invention of these Judson figures and their successive cultural impact can be traced to the corporeal work – both choreographic and somatic – of these women in the following statement:

Placing the body and performance at the centre of debate, each developed corporeal languages and methodologies that continue to influence choreographers and visual artists around the world to the present day, enabling a critical practice that reinserts social and political issues into postmodern dance and art.<sup>315</sup>

Levine draws a connection to the MoMA exhibition but states that attention to the prominence of somatic work as another layer of Judson's political instinct is not as explicit and claims that although the curation of the MoMA exhibition is deeply caring and well-researched, "The fact that none of the exhibition's curators has a background in dance remains palpable throughout the show."<sup>316</sup> A further cultural-artistic tension that the curation of the MoMA exhibition straddles via their selection of artists and curatorial questions responds to "what was likely the largest blind spot in Judson's collective politics, the sparse inclusion of artists of colour and lack of acknowledgment of the contributions of these artists' work to the development of experimental practices in dance, music, and art."<sup>317</sup> An offer of curatorial redress was implemented by providing important documentation of the "contemporaneous experimentation among Black artists in the creative territories for which Judson is recognized"<sup>318</sup> alongside a revolving live programme of performances, events and workshops entitled *Judson Dance Theater Reassembled* by artists such as Mayfield Brooks' *Improvising While Black* performative project *these hauntings happen everywhere* as a gesture towards diffusing historical omissions.

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Public Library for the Performing Arts, 24 May 2017–16 September 2017. Exhibition text accessed 1 February 2019, <https://www.nypl.org/events/exhibitions/radical-bodies-anna-halprin-simone-forti-and-yvonne-rainer-california-and-new>.

315 ——— Ibid.

316 ——— Levine, "How We Remember," 63.

317 ——— Ibid.

318 ——— Ibid.

### 1.3.3 “Activating Whiteness”: Galvanising Intersectional Pre-Curatorial Conditions.

Rebecca Chaleff, in her recent article *Activating Whiteness: Racializing the Ordinary in US American Postmodern Dance*,<sup>319</sup> offers a vital critique that pierces the wider curatorial representation of postmodern dance and unsettles the deeper political projects of the Judson revival programmes. She relays Susan Leigh Foster’s argument from 2002 that even though most postmodern artists explored their artistic work “as an opportunity to contest and overthrow prevailing expectations about dance’s meaning,” their aesthetic orientations “remained inflected with the power dynamics that had privileged white artists for centuries.”<sup>320</sup> Chaleff also transmits Ramsay Burt’s input that the Judson choreographers were not drawing out the implicit connections “between avant-gardism and the politics of race, nor recognizing the need to oppose mechanisms that maintained boundaries in terms of race.”<sup>321</sup> Chaleff essentially argues that American postmodern dance upheld the “supremacy of whiteness by reiterating its presumptive ontological facticity; whiteness was unseen, unremarkable, and, above all, ordinary.”<sup>322</sup> She continues this line of argument by suggesting that whiteness is not inevitably ontological but rather phenomenologically bound to its surrounding space and shaped by embedded histories of Western subject formation immersed in the racialised representational politics of the artistic spaces that are activated by the bodies that inhabit them. Any claim to the ordinary, the everyday, or the pedestrian – and by extension democracy’s body via Judson Dance Theater, which essentially shifted the focus from trained bodies to an emphasis on ordinary bodies – is therefore steeped in the history of a racialised body politic where:

319 ———— Rebecca Chaleff, “Activating Whiteness: Racializing the Ordinary in US American Postmodern Dance,” *Dance Research Journal* 50, no. 3 (2018): 71-84.

320 ———— Susan Leigh Foster, *Dances that Describe Themselves: The Improvised Choreography of Richard Bull* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2002), 43.

321 ———— Ramsay Burt, *Judson Dance Theater: Performative Traces* (London, New York: Routledge, 2006), 130.

322 ———— Chaleff, “Activating Whiteness,” 75.

the exclusion of people of colour from the mainstream of postmodernism was likely not the intention of the white artists that populated this arena, the notable whiteness of this artistic movement nevertheless indicates the unconscious cultural and choreographic absorption of state racism normalized by the biopolitical regulation of bodies.<sup>323</sup>

Chaleff claims that Rainer and other Judson Dance Theater artists' preoccupation with ordinary bodies, movements and spaces, "in conjunction with their interest in deconstructing the ideologies and practices of performance through the medium itself, demonstrate their feminist slant on the post-structuralist inclinations of their era."<sup>324</sup> She relays Tara Aisha Willis's observation that the "neutral doer" and "liberated, democratized body" within the discourses and performances galvanised within Judson Memorial Church, as both the foundational and mythologically sanctioned space of experimental dance, "holds a history largely populated by white bodies"<sup>325</sup> determining by extension which bodies appear ordinary within it. Chaleff's critical delivery that the "ideological, corporeal, and affective formations of ordinariness afforded by the unmarked whiteness of postmodern artists in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s fundamentally excluded implicitly racialized "extraordinary" and "spectacular" bodies from their movement(s),"<sup>326</sup> indicating a deeply sedimented reinforcement of the regulation of racialised bodies and spaces. Choreographer Miguel Gutierrez corroborates this line of argument in his recently written polemic *Does Abstraction Belong to White People: Thinking the politics of race in contemporary dance* by questioning whether the bodies of the postmodern dancers and choreographers can be signifiers for a universal experience via the aphorism of the neutral doer as whiteness was never an active choice but rather the default mechanism of a non-existent critique where their subjectivities and activations of spatial politics were naturalised and uncontested,<sup>327</sup> relegating his own artistic self-reflexivity to the vectors of inescapable slippage between being "a subject, a vessel, an agent or a

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**323** ——— Ibid., 72.

**324** ——— Ibid., 75.

**325** ——— Tara Aisha Willis, "Stumbling into Place: Seeing Blackness in David Thomson's Choreographies of Ambiguity," *The Black Scholar* 46, no. 1 (2016): 4.

**326** ——— Chaleff, "Activating Whiteness," 72.

**327** ——— Miguel Gutierrez, "Does Abstraction Belong to White People: Thinking the politics of race in contemporary dance," *Bomb Magazine*, November 7, 2018, <https://praxispace.com/does-abstraction-belong-to-white-people-by-miguel-gutierrez/>: 6.

channel.<sup>328</sup> He argues that this often enables the “mythology of unity” within the cultural and artistic domains as race-blind realms, which again reinforces the pervasive normalisation of whiteness.<sup>329</sup> This follows Ramsay Burt’s invocation of Henri Lefebvre’s conception of the “logic of visualisation,” from the previous chapter, as assuming a vantage point that is pervasive towards a majoritarian position and removed from phenomenological differentiation within the racist and sexist undercurrents of neoliberal apparatuses of capture. Chaleff advances the argument by summoning Sara Ahmed’s *A Phenomenology of Whiteness*,<sup>330</sup> and argues that the spaces in which postmodern dance was shaped, both symbolically and actually, were inhabited by white bodies and thus “oriented ‘around’ whiteness, insofar as whiteness [was] not seen within its habitus”<sup>331</sup> and therefore undisputed by the subsuming choreographic explorations.

Ahmed also draws on the work of Frantz Fanon<sup>332</sup> to assert that a “world made by white bodies” as an inherited history carried and mediated by the bodies of its performers also reproduces the naturalisation of whiteness if it continues unimpeded. The conceptual category of “whiteness as ordinary” that privileges certain bodies, histories and ideologies by enabling claims to universality have, of course, been interrogated by postcolonial scholars, most notably in the foundational essay *Can the Subaltern Speak?*<sup>333</sup> by Gayatri Spivak, who argues that universalist claims to epistemologies have occluded the exploitation of peoples and bodies not marked by its discursive inscription. This echo’s Fred Moten’s critique of the inherently racist discursive function of invisibility cited in the previous chapter as “The mark of invisibility is a visible, racial mark; invisibility has visibility at its heart. To be invisible is to be seen, instantly and fascinatingly recognized as unrecognizable, as the abject, as the absence of meanings wholly independent of any influence of the vessel itself.”<sup>334</sup> One of the most important critical points that Chaleff denotes, and one that is especially sensitive to the persistent reappearance of contemporary dance within current curatorial revisions via its validated origin in postmodern dance, is that these contemporary theories help us recognise how postmodern dance operates performatively and durationally within larger

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**328** ——— Ibid., 15.

**329** ——— Ibid., 8.

**330** ——— Sara Ahmed, “A Phenomenology of Whiteness,” *Feminist Theory* 8, no. 2 (2007): 149-168.

**331** ——— Ibid., 157.

**332** ——— Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1977).

**333** ——— Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988).

**334** ——— Fred Moten, *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition* (Minneapolis, MN: Minnesota University Press, 2003). 68.

socio-political and art-historical terrains, as “they compel attention to choreographies of ordinariness within the context of biopolitical regimes of power that employ the normalization of racialized and gendered differences as a mechanism of state regulation.”<sup>335</sup>

Chaleff claims that the consequent perpetual naturalisation of whiteness inherited by contemporary dance and its curatorial framing can be interpreted as “a racializing technology of biopower”<sup>336</sup> and that any (re) performance as a project with the same political potential re-performs the perpetuated “divisions between bodies, spaces, histories, and futures.”<sup>337</sup> Critical curatorial questions must therefore be aimed at questioning and destabilising the bodies that these (re)performances remember and the histories that they hail to divulge their political potential and “socio-cultural performativity.”<sup>338</sup> She continues by claiming that choreography that seeks to critique certain constructions of the normative, in this case the choreographies produced and performed by Judson Dance Theater within the inner sanctum of postmodern dance, also often fails to undo the “biopolitical structure of ordinariness that governs everyday life,”<sup>339</sup> thereby actively reifying the socio-cultural regulations of larger state apparatuses governing how “ordinary bodies shape racially exclusive spaces and, in so doing, activate the biopolitical mechanisms of normalization that their choreography allegedly contests.”<sup>340</sup> Yvonne Rainer appears to refer to this as the process of gradual expunging of her own privileges in the quotation offered by Janevski as part of her introductory essay for the MoMA exhibition and acknowledges the difficulty in moving beyond her own subjectivity and personal phenomenology to represent multiple perspectives and experiences.<sup>341</sup>

Finally, Chaleff articulates that these histories cannot be undone by future curatorial projects, of course and as the aesthetic choices of the Judson artists continue to construct the curatorial orientations of the performances of these now historic works within larger art-historical fields as hallmarks and embodiments of the historic radical avant-garde, as well as activate the spaces in which they are revived performatively within wider platforms of discourse on the body politic, globalisation and the ethics of canon-formation under the pervasive logic of neoliberal museum complexes and state performances, the interrogation of their inheritance, extended equally into their symbolic and mythological representation, is

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335 ——— Chaleff, “Activating Whiteness,” 74.

336 ——— Ibid., 80.

337 ——— Ibid.

338 ——— Ibid., 75.

339 ——— Ibid., 79.

340 ——— Ibid., 72.

341 ——— Ibid., 76.

more urgent. The complexity and contradictory nature of an inherited discourse and practice is intricate, especially if its claim to radicality is the innate toppling of preceding discursive bodily inscriptions through tapping the power reflexes permeating the everyday. Catherine Damman, in *Presence at the Creation: On Judson Dance Theater*,<sup>342</sup> claims that if art wants bodies and all their political connotations in its galleries, it will have to answer to their call. The subsequent histories that these bodies hail and mediate and the spaces that they recall and activate in all their retrospective performative reverence is equally complex, as the necessary inclusion of their radical embodied legacies exposes painful historic exclusions, even within the most radical departures from more pervasive normative apparatuses. Damman also claims that alongside the participatory event scores of Fluxus and the anti-professionalisation of theatre in Allan Kaprow's "Happenings," Judson's "non-hierarchical and collaborative methods of artmaking are often cast as attempts to realize a kind of utopian alternative community [...]."<sup>343</sup> Randy Martin intimates this as Judson Dance Theater's inherent collective capacity to disperse across "the fluid, distributed, horizontal, decentralized figure of the network, central to affirmative claims of precarious politics" and "the structured, enclosed, vertical, and centering institution known as 'organization,'"<sup>344</sup> making it viable across both dominant narratives and more subversive feminist and queer curatorial models. The revival of the Judsonian impulse as a symbolic archetype of a symbiotic relationship of aesthetic-cultural and social-political change therefore necessitates a comprehensive curatorial framework in the current moment: one that respects the performative and divergent radicality of its origin as well as acknowledging its inherent and often inconsistent omissions within larger systems of oppression and segregation. The critical points extrapolated in this chapter via Judson Dance Theater's legacies and ensuing cultural effects alongside its current curatorial resurgence can all therefore be interpreted as both pre-curatorial conditioning and future curatorial compulsion that performs a double-manoeuvre in recognising itself within the overlapping systems of representation whilst moving towards more inclusive, responsive, reparative ethics and ultimately growing the intersectional frames of cultural and experiential interpretation. Chaleff reminds us that the feminist theorists of intersectionality have taught us that "normativity is scripted by complex assemblages of power structures that shape the subject's orient-

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342 ——— Catherine Damman, "Presence at the Creation: On Judson Dance Theater," *Artforum* 57, Issue 1 (September 2018), accessed 1 February 2019, <https://www.artforum.com/print/201807/catherine-damman-on-judson-dance-theater-76332>.

343 ——— Ibid.

344 ——— Martin, "A Precarious Dance," 64.

ation to the idea of an ordinary life.”<sup>345</sup> She relays that the term “intersectionality” was “originally coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw ([1989] 1995) but stems from the concept of ‘simultaneity’ as proposed by the ‘Combahee River Collective’ in their 1977 Statement.”<sup>346</sup> She also imparts that feminist theorist Jasbir K. Puar’s *Queer Times, Queer Assemblages*<sup>347</sup> offers more comprehensive critical tools to acknowledge and sensitively respond to the accumulation of differentiated bodies seeping into representational discursive terrain from the domain of the everyday and ordinary as propagated via Judson Dance Theater. Addressing questions of identity and corporeality, inevitably hailed by the increasing range of performative bodies in the museum and the simultaneity of their mediated historical embodiments alongside their own symbolic representations and spatio-temporal affects, the understanding of both performative and curatorial frames as intersectional assemblages is crucial in attempting to interpret and understand the complexities of social realities and cultural experiences via artistic representations. Puar states that this critical manoeuvre will “allow us to attune to intensities, emotions, energies, affectivities, textures as they inhabit events, spatiality, and corporealities. Intersectionality privileges naming, visuality, epistemology, representation, and meaning, while assemblage underscores feeling, tactility, ontology, affect, and information.”<sup>348</sup>

Abigail Levine thus argues for the proliferation of the multiplicity of perspectives offered in the way that dance practitioners stage their relationships to these histories to acknowledge “the profound work that can only be done through the body.”<sup>349</sup> Conversely, Catherine Damman metes out the current curatorial efforts against the “circadian shuttling from desire to ethical obligation and back again. Defending at all costs the ungovernability of the former, while discouraging apathy toward the latter: These are our impossible, necessary—indeed, only—projects,”<sup>350</sup> which demand the clear insertion of intersectional assemblages into the matrix of representational understanding so that the conventions of resistance defined by Judson Dance Theater “not only belong to a historical moment whose time may be past”<sup>351</sup> but distributes its more radically inclusive and reparative practices across the futurity of its curatorial iterations.

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**345** ——— Chaleff, “Activating Whiteness,” 73–74.

**346** ——— Ibid., 81.

**347** ——— Puar, “Queer Times, Queer Assemblages,” 121–139.

**348** ——— Ibid., 128.

**349** ——— Levine, “How We Remember,” 66.

**350** ——— Damman, “Presence at the Creation.”

**351** ——— Susan Leigh Foster, *Dances that Describe Themselves: The Improvised Choreography of Richard Bull* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2002), 64.

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## 1.4 The New Performance Turn.

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### 1.4.1 Performance as the Paradigm of Art.

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The scope of this chapter departs from André Lepecki's lecture series entitled *Performance as the Paradigm of Art*<sup>352</sup> at the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw in 2013 and his recent publication in Cosmin Costinas and Ana Janevski's edited compilation, *Is the Living Body the Last Thing Left Alive? The New Performance Turn, Its Histories and Its Institutions*,<sup>353</sup> entitled *Dance, Choreography, and the Visual: Elements for a Contemporary Imagination*.<sup>354</sup> The abridgement of these positions tenders only a composite part of the more comprehensive art-historical timeline, of course, but it does however offer a useful purview of the complicated inconsistencies inherent in any expedient attempt at paradigmatic discursive overlay – as suggested by Lepecki's title *Performance as the Paradigm of Art*. In the lecture series, Lepecki introduces the general premise of the origin and evolution of Performance Studies from the 1980s as a critical-discursive field situated between the work of theatre scholar Richard Schechner<sup>355</sup> and anthropologist Victor Turner<sup>356</sup> in their mutual inclination to conceive of performance as a pervasive signal-system within an expanded field that captures rituals and social processes through the lens of cultural and

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**352** ——— André Lepecki, "Performance as the Paradigm of Art," opening key-note, *Performance Theory Seminar Series*, Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw, accessed 12 January 2017, <https://vimeo.com/60432032>.

**353** ——— Cosmin Costinas and Ana Janevski, *Is the Living Body the Last Thing Left Alive? The New Performance Turn, Its Histories and Its Institutions* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2018).

**354** ——— André Lepecki, "Dance, Choreography, and the Visual: Elements for a Contemporary Imagination," in *Is the Living Body the Last Thing Left Alive? The New Performance Turn, Its Histories and Its Institutions*, 12-19.

**355** ——— Richard Schechner, *Between Theatre and Anthropology* (Philadelphia, PA: Pennsylvania University Press, 1985).

**356** ——— Victor Turner, *The Anthropology of Performance* (New York: PAJ Publications, 1988).

societal performance. Lepecki argues that a further paradigmatic shift arrived with the publication of *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance*<sup>357</sup> by Peggy Phelan in 1993. The chapter *The ontology of performance: representation without reproduction*<sup>358</sup> provided a discursive eruption and signalled a transformative moment in the development of performance studies overall, orientating the nomenclature and critical drivers towards the notions of performance art, photography, memory, exhibition display and disappearance. A distinct departure from theatre and anthropology ensued, followed by a redirection of performance theory towards critical theory, psychoanalysis, feminist theory and philosophy in deep dialogue with performance art, in line with Phelan's critical domain. In the chapter, Phelan also delivered a statement of affirmation that evoked the spirit of Fluxus by claiming that "performance's only life is in the present,"<sup>359</sup> a well-known fulcrum that engendered performance's fugitive status within the domain of critical theory. Lepecki argues that this also triggered performance's prevalent and synchronic escape from "the economy of the commodity"<sup>360</sup> and its subsequent entry into the "economy of the unconscious"<sup>361</sup> as it is perpetually recaptured via memory. Furthermore, it also administered the political ontology of performance as a force bound to its own ephemerality, as performance is permanently fugitive to its own presence and consequently escapes capture by the hegemonic apparatus, including the critical apparatus. This insinuation is serpentine within the chronology of performance, performance art and performativity's concurrent theoretical development, as it is contrary to Judith Butler's position that the material conditions of bodies as sexed, gendered and raced, alongside their social emplacement and the political context of the subject's performative potential, are all scripted within adherent conventions of performativity – there is no actual escape or fugitivity from these circuits of performative repetition(s) and therefore performance cannot effectually suspend the body of the performer nor the category of performance from these citational grids. The history of the feminist movement and related arts practices – as practices of embodied and material re-iteration(s) which mostly developed in conjunction with performance art – is a testament to the fierce exploration of (re)-iterative performative potential. For example, Jane Blocker's publication on the performative dimensions of Cuban artist Ana Mendieta's body of work and performative construction of her body within the

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357 ——— Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (London & New York: Routledge, 1993).

358 ——— Peggy Phelan, "The Ontology of Performance: Representation Without Reproduction," in *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance*, 146-166.

359 ——— Phelan, *Unmarked*, 146.

360 ——— Lepecki, "Performance as the Paradigm of Art," 03:35-03:40.

361 ——— Lepecki, "Performance as the Paradigm of Art," 03:40-03:48.

work in *Where is Ana Mendieta?: Identity, Performativity, and Exile*,<sup>362</sup> discusses Mendieta's "earth-and-body art" works as material practices that unsettle and broaden notions of embodied and performative identity as both context-bound and materially grounded re-iterative acts of creation.

Lepecki ultimately argues that the very notion of criticality and critical theory is challenged by performance's assumed fugitivity by indicating that the construction of critical notions resides in the singularity of each performance event rather than performance as a larger discursive domain. To fortify this notion, Lepecki alludes to Deleuze's assertion that every concept is the result of an encounter via repetition and difference. Although there is clear charge in the insinuation of the singularity of specific practices or works, deferring a critical conflation within the entire domain of performance as somehow exempt from discursivity or criticality is perhaps inexpedient – especially as the uptake of performance within the formal category of contemporary art becomes more pervasive and accepted, and steadily circumscribed within the larger conventions of art's performativity. In the introductory text, *Performance as Critical-Aesthetic Force*,<sup>363</sup> the resultant publication following the lecture series at the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw – an anthology entitled *Points of Convergence: Alternative Views on Performance* edited with curator Marta Dziewańska – Lepecki claims that performance interrogates art's political effectiveness, as it is a medium "that directly questions the very subject of art; not only its materials and languages, but the very economy linking and separating artists and spectators."<sup>364</sup> He argues that the domain of performance, shaped via one of its lineages in Performance Studies, enters into dialogue with "the theory of art, new media, politics and the social sphere; and extorts the question of contemporaneity and being contemporary in a way as dynamic as performance itself."<sup>365</sup> It is important to acknowledge, however, that the historical overlap of discursive disruptions and developments within the domain of criticality and wider arts practices of course do not provide wholly contingent perspectives or vantage points, and it can therefore be problematic to relay the historical lineages of certain critical or artistic tendencies as autonomous or conclusive. A closer reading of performativity is necessary here, as it offers a wider panorama that acknowledges the desire and will of artists to disrupt and break behavioural patterns which lead to the deeper questioning and critiquing of

**362** ——— Jane Blocker, *Where is Ana Mendieta?: Identity, Performativity, and Exile* (Duke University Press, 1999).

**363** ——— Marta Dziewańska and André Lepecki, "Introduction: Performance as Critical-Aesthetic Force," in *Points of Convergence: Alternative Views on Performance*, eds. Marta Dziewańska and André Lepecki (Warsaw: Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, 2017), 7-10.

**364** ——— Ibid., 7.

**365** ——— Ibid.

institutional behaviours and the subsequent re-reading or re-scripting of the conventions of the art sphere via notational devices – as exemplified through the work of Fluxus – rather than relegating these complex relational entanglements to a meta-performance realm. It is also important to acknowledge that performance’s movement, and therefore any subsequent or current shift of performance, dance or choreography into the museum or gallery, does not uphold the same heritage of institutional critique rendered by the wider discourses on art and its privileged institutions, as the theatre or black box is always somewhat displaced. Both Dziwiałńska and Lepecki argue that the “theoretical-historiographic-performative” events attached to the abovementioned curated series, and the consequent reconstitution and appropriation of the discursive apparatus of the museum in Warsaw via the theoretical pathways of the international transdisciplinary exchanges included in the anthology, calibrate the current political efficacy of performance as the paradigm of contemporary art. They claim that performance’s political potency, and its revenue for underscoring contemporary art, is located in its fugitive disposition: “With its precariousness, multiple temporalities, and unpredictabilities, performance addresses the inherent uncertainties of the here and now by enacting alternatives to the pre-given.”<sup>366</sup> Its equivocal nature, continually in flux, demands an epistemic critique of the circumstances of its own presence on the level of its institutional existence and the conditions surrounding its prevalence in contemporary capitalism. Lepecki argues that this motivates performance’s encompassing of contemporary art practice and conscripts the development of “critical-theoretical-perceptive-affective tools on how to grasp the discursive dynamics of the present.”<sup>367</sup> This also denotes its ubiquitous propensity to generate “conceptual-theoretical potential for action”<sup>368</sup> and unveils each instance of actualisation as singularly bound to an intricate “nexus of lines of pastness and lines of futurities.”<sup>369</sup> The conceptual contours that Lepecki offers are convincing, and yet the critical reach of performance, especially via the origins that Lepecki suggests, as a fully developed and necessary critical domain that captures and circumscribes art’s wider discourses and practices is not replete. It is important to acknowledge that what his proposal sets in motion is the need for a closer and more refined integration of the historical divergence of the discourses on art and performance as perceived through its current relationality – only then can the “nexus of lines of pastness and lines of futurities” truly be acknowledged and addressed. The dominant conceptual filter for the required manoeuvre that acknowledges the spe-

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**366** ——— Ibid., 10.

**367** ——— Ibid., 7.

**368** ——— Ibid., 8.

**369** ——— Ibid., 10.

cificity of the behaviours of both the domains of art and performance, and which is central to the theoretical underpinning, methodology and practical experimentation in this book is, yet again, performativity.

In the *Performance as the Paradigm of Art* series, Lepecki argues that performativity, as another hereditary conceptual contour of contemporary performance modes, has operated as a recalibrated and transformative force within contemporary art with origins in J.L Austin's Speech Act Theory as the deconstruction of semiotic truth value in the philosophy of language, as discussed in Chapter 1.1. Catherine Wood suggests that the extensive impact of performativity on both the discourse and practice of contemporary art is propagated by artists as a general state of self-awareness that is deeply woven into taking practical action, alongside an acknowledgement of Dorothea von Hantelmann's essential point, that objects and structures – as the inherent relations of all artistic practice and production – perform as actively as its human agents. Performativity in this sense refers to citation or performed repetition of “socially instituted scripts”<sup>370</sup> via utterances, iterations, actions or gestures in artistic practice. Similar to the argument put forward in Chapter 1.1, Lepecki highlights an annotated rapport with the work of Judith Butler, especially through the publication of *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of “Sex,”*<sup>371</sup> as the continuation of a theoretical viaduct via Lacan and Althusser. Lepecki proposes two fundamental planes of transformation that occurred with the ‘discovery’ of performativity in the 1950s and its impact on the discourse of art, as the system of language moved into the domain of reality-producing effects. Firstly, Austin's notion of “performative imperatives” allowed the genesis of critical engagement with systems of command as the hegemonic operative forces at large ascribing coded meaning onto the subject via various apparatuses. Secondly, Lepecki refrains Deleuze and Guattari's notion that expression brings about incorporeal transformations from the chapter *Postulates of Linguistics* in the joint publication *A Thousand Plateaus,*<sup>372</sup> as not only effects produced by language before the law, but more importantly, that these effects transform, however imperceptibly, the physical schema of the one who receives the impact. Here, Lepecki relays a crucial and often neglected exemplar of incorporeal transformation via the systemic command of language and its exploitation of the physical schema before the Austinian insurgency, through Franz Fanon's

**370** ——— Catherine Wood, *Performance in Contemporary Art* (London: Tate Publishing & Enterprises, 2019), 20.

**371** ——— Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter*.

**372** ——— Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).

chapter *The Fact of Blackness in Black Skin, White Masks*<sup>373</sup> from 1952 and republished in English in 1967. In the chapter, Fanon relays a performative speech act by a French boy naming Fanon's blackness in the streets of Lyon as frightening, essentially articulating the historico-racial corporeal schema via the racialising of the body, and by extension subjectivity, inherent in the hegemony of language. Fanon articulates his schematic shattering and desire to reconstitute his own verticality in the arguments put forward in the rest of the chapter, essentially underscoring the profound relationship between speech acts and corporeal effects as inherently performative and pronouncing the simultaneous psychic and political rebellion against structures of representation and power. This also seems to be a precursor to Butler's reform of the interpellation of language via Althusser and Lacan and the performative hailing of the subject within larger ideological apparatuses. Fred Moten continues the extensive implications of Fanon's positionality via the notion of (non)performance to critique the uneasy confluence of sovereignty and self-determination within the development of the subject and the incessant construction of blackness as a conceptual prolongation of Saidiya V. Hartman's notion of the emphatic identification of blackness as the position of the "unthought."<sup>374</sup> The analytical radius also extends to Manthia Diawara's criticism of the inherent problematics of identification and resistance built into the notion of "black spectatorship"<sup>375</sup> and stretches Laura Mulvey's feminist rupture of the construction of desire in subjectivity via "Visual Pleasure" as discussed in Chapter 1.2, as an essential intersectional issue. Moten argues that the "philosophical disavowal of blackness"<sup>376</sup> alongside its politico-economic accumulation via slavery and "the epidermal racialization of settler-colonialism, braided in and by patriarchal order"<sup>377</sup> are all para-ontologically linked. Moten stakes an important performative operative in the notion of (non)performance as a means of thwarting the historico-racial schematics in the following:

What remains now as a chance only insofar as the people who are called black operate, studiously, in the interplay between the refusal of what has been refused them and the consent to what has been

**373** ——— Frantz Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1952).

**374** ——— Saidiya V. Hartman and Frank B. Wilderson, "The Position of the Unthought," *Qui Parle* 13, no. 2 (Spring/Summer 2003): 183-201.

**375** ——— Manthia Diawara, "Black Spectatorship: Problems of Identification and Resistance," *Screen* 29, Issue 4 (Autumn 1988): 66-79.

**376** ——— Fred Moten, "Some Positions on Blackness, Phenomenology and (Non) Performance," in *Points of Convergence*, 103.

**377** ——— Ibid.

imposed upon them. To refuse what is normatively desired and to claim what is normatively disavowed is the lot, the performative repertoire, of the people who are called black.<sup>378</sup>

To enact or inhabit the aforementioned performative repertoire or behavioural rubric within the dynamic of blackness, is therefore simultaneously a deconstruction of subjectivity and an entanglement in its multiplicity. A particular and interesting example of this is discussed via the practical exploration of the book in Chapter 4, where Funmi Adewole's performance *Restfulness* – within the wider curatorial framework of *Precarious Assembly* – serves as a complex manifestation of the continuous multiplicity of blackness via its simultaneous reach into the social, mythological and representational domains. Adewole's performances can just as easily be read as non-performances, as each new performative and tactical embodiment of a different feminised blackness – as varied as a seeming Diana Ross discotheque impersonation and a homeless woman – has a corresponding symbolic echo that reduced the performance to a myth embedded in the everyday, neither of which Adewole could potentially escape. Moten states that “to refuse the development of the subject is at the same time, to have been drafted into its operations as an apparatus.”<sup>379</sup> The gestural withdrawal inherent in (non)performance is thus a tactic of performative non-consent that offers an instance of “restored behaviour”<sup>380</sup> and foils the preserved desire for subjectivity. Charles Gaines, in the 1993 curatorial publication *The Theater of Refusal: Black Art and Mainstream Criticism*,<sup>381</sup> laid the conceptual groundwork for Moten's construction of (non)performance as complicit within his assertion of refusal. Gaines claimed that race coetaneously problematises and is problematised by discourse as race itself, specifically through the lens of blackness, is established as a discrete attribute that could modify the “Hegelian universal subject.”<sup>382</sup> He thus locates “race as a trope of deterritorialization”<sup>383</sup> equivalent to Deleuze and Guattari's ideas of the deterritorialised minoritarian subject in *A Thousand Plateaus*. For Gaines, the condition of becoming-minoritarian via blackness produces the setting of race deterritorialisation within critical theory via the interdependence of minority and majority subjects and the destabilisation of majoritarian subjectivity. This is also the trajectory followed by Ramsay Burt regarding choreographic

378 ——— Ibid.

379 ——— Ibid., 105.

380 ——— Ibid..

381 ——— Charles Gaines, *The Theater of Refusal: Black Art and Mainstream Criticism* (Irvine, CA: Fine Arts Gallery, University of California, 1993).

382 ——— Ibid., 14.

383 ——— Ibid., 15.

and performative processes of avoiding capture as a strategy of becoming-minoritarian in Chapter 1.2. and his suggested raft of performative processes embodied by Last Yearz Interesting Negro – as signalled by her performative moniker and aesthetic emplacement – as essentially enacting a measure of refusal and (non)performance via a distancing from the economies of representation and reproduction.

These extractions can be subsumed under the critical effort of understanding what Lepecki calls the “social choreography of subjectivity”<sup>384</sup> that fundamentally conditions behaviour and our capacity to consider our own movement and gestures in the world as habits that we all engage with to live in society. These performative revelations offered critical apertures through which to reconsider the social choreographies of behavioural anthologies and their mechanisms of circulation in compliance with social contexts. Lepecki also postulates that the theoretical disclosing of performativity since the 1950s was innately accompanied by interrogations from performance artists and visual artists that engage with language to deconstruct the notion of the imperative as the ultimate and meta-determining system of command. In this way, art becomes a “cartography of comment”<sup>385</sup> through the construction of the performative score, perpetually situated between systems of command and systems of (dis)obedience, interlacing a vital association with choreographic practice and its propensity for generating and supervising action. Fluxus pioneer George Brecht’s *Word Event* from 1961 is cited as an example that recognises that every description for action, via the Event Score, is already a comment and thus inherently operative. Event Scores have a distinct historical tie to the experimental compositional classes of composer John Cage, which initiated the transfer of the frame of music to art. The effect of this was the radical gesture of the Event Score by Fluxus to disrupt all art-bound conventions and ultimately project the notion of the score onto actions, sound, visual material, objects as well as any activities from everyday life. Lepecki makes a critical claim that this highlights why dance and choreography became so important for the expanded production of art objects, as its mythological status is seen as eternally captured by and relegated to the regime of command and obedience, offering at the same time the critical space for its inevitable corruptibility. This can also be seen in Allan Kaprow’s *18 Happenings in 6 Parts* from 1959, as the scope of visual artists working at the start of Fluxus with a desire to transform the art object via the force of a choreographic score as the writing of movement. Concurrently, Simone Forti’s *Dance Constructions* from 1960-1961, a key forerunner to the discursive interrogations relegated at the level of the body by Judson Dance Theater, can be seen as an imperative to dema-

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384 ——— Lepecki, “Performance as the Paradigm of Art,” 13:16.

385 ——— Ibid., 18:21.

terialise the body away from dance and into the pure circuits of command instructed via choreography. Following Bruce Nauman's piece *Dance or Exercise on the Perimeter of a Square (Square Dance)* from 1967-1968, the work *Untitled* from 1969 stipulates the necessity to "hire a dancer"<sup>386</sup> to perform the score with precision, emphasising the processes of delegation and dispersion as the emplacement of discursive and aesthetic dismantling. These early performative interventions of deconstruction essentially offered opportunities to reconsider the function of art in the society of control. The aforementioned concurrent relations are explored in detail in Stephanie Rosenthal's publication *Move: Choreographing You: Art and Dance Since the 1960s*,<sup>387</sup> following the exhibition at the Hayward Gallery in 2010. Finally, Lepecki also describes the question of "promise and declaration"<sup>388</sup> within the Austinian imperatives of performativity as Austin's development of a Theory of Promise alongside his Speech Act Theory, validated through the figure of the politician. This particular development underscored the ontology of performance as inherently political in its potential for re-enactment – not only of a particular or prominent event as re-iteration, but more so in the notion of re-enactment operating at the level of surface so that everyone, especially an audience, could be re-inscribed via quotidian affects as performative operations of social sculpture. Tehching Hsieh's emphatic *One Year Performances, Cage Piece* (1978–1979), *Time Clock Piece* (1980–1981) and *Outdoor Piece* (1981–1982) in particular, can be seen to register all the operations of performativity through the ultimate compliance with the laws of its own performative imperatives. Hsieh's *One Year Performances* can also be seen as examples of how performativity is willed or desired by an artist to create the conditions of fugitivity via performance, thereby simultaneously inscribing the circumstances for living and laws of surviving the performance physically and psychologically as an ultimate exercise in law-making and definitive gesture of promise. Adrian Piper's *The Mythic Being* (1973–75) is another lucid example of wilful performative acquiescence by the artist via multiple conceptual and embodied channels, as an estrangement from selfhood, made for "an accidental, uninitiated audience, in the public space."<sup>389</sup> This indicates a decisive and permeable passage between contemporary art practice, the social sphere and performativity, as it demonstrates its

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**386** ——— Bruce Nauman and Janet Kraynak, *Please Pay Attention Please: Bruce Nauman's Words: Writings and Interviews* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003), 53.

**387** ——— Stephanie Rosenthal and Peggy Phelan, *Move: Choreographing You: Art and Dance Since the 1960s* (London: Hayward Publishing, 2010).

**388** ——— André Lepecki, "Performance as the Paradigm of Art," 21:33.

**389** ——— Elise Lammer and Karima Boudou, "Conversation with Adrian Piper: The Mythic Being," accessed 16 February 2018, <http://moussemagazine.it/adrian-piper-mythic-mamco-geneva/>.

capacity to induce and interpellate different types of embodiment and encompass the abundance and complexity of human agency within the practice and production of art. This is also exemplified in the analysis of Trajal Harrell's *Hoochie Koochie* in Chapter 2.2 where the series of performative citational practices via the queer assemblages and embodied languages of voguing and minimalist postmodern dance fractures and exceeds the conventions of sociality within the Barbican Gallery. It can also be understood from the aforementioned example of Funmi Adewole's *Restfulness*; where the contingency of her subjective agency and tactical performative or re-iterative embodiments ruptures the stability of the spectatorial audience-performer-artwork continuum and confuses conventions of sociality via any encounter with her in the Whitworth Gallery.

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## 1.4.2 The New Performance Turn.

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Catherine Wood's 2019 publication, *Performance in Contemporary Art*,<sup>390</sup> cites an overview of the development of an undulant understanding of both performance and performance art since the 1950s. She argues that the current habituation of performance within more prevalent frames of contemporary visual art, showing a marked resurgence since the early 2000s, fortifies again a cumulative turn to "live action, or situations, movement and participation."<sup>391</sup> She claims the prominence of the accumulation of performative forms as a complex ecology of evolving sets of "templates and patters that helps to make sense of the present"<sup>392</sup> oscillating between participatory exchange, stylised movement and radical activist actions. Mike Sell, in *Avant-Garde Performance and the Limits of Criticism: Approaching the Living Theatre, Happenings, Fluxus, and the Black Arts Movement*,<sup>393</sup> claims that since the 1950s, performance has been an artist-driven method that "enabled radicals to devise actions that could address simultaneously the structures of language, economics, politics, social institutions, cultural history and the body."<sup>394</sup> Sell offers the following overview of performance as a historic mode of critical, cultural and artistic production:

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**390** ——— Catherine Wood, *Performance in Contemporary Art* (London: Tate Publishing & Enterprises, 2019).

**391** ——— Ibid., 8.

**392** ——— Ibid., 10.

**393** ——— Mike Sell, *Avant-Garde Performance and the Limits of Criticism: Approaching the Living Theatre, Happenings, Fluxus, and the Black Arts Movement* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2008).

**394** ——— Ibid., 17.

As both practice and discourse, countercultural performance addressed the need (1) to identify and disrupt existing social, cultural and economic boundaries, (2) to systematically challenge existing discourses of experience, everyday life, and the politics of culture, (3) to produce new ways of thinking and acting that effectively valued aspects of experience, everyday life, and culture systematically excluded from the mainstream, and (4) to ground all of this in specific social and cultural situations.<sup>395</sup>

As proposed in Chapter 1.3, the pre-curatorial inherited lineage of post-modern dance which demarcates an important line of argument in the book as the dominant choreographic and curatorial presence within the contemporary museum complex, stratified the disruption of particular categories of authorship, gender and spectatorship that can be mapped onto Sell's overview. These do not allow the accurate continuance of an all-encompassing art-historical timeline, but they do, however, give insight into the particular tendencies of discursive and artistic discord at the time. A particular example of this is Yvonne Rainer's *Parts of Some Sextets – a dance for 10 people and 12 mattresses* from 1965 following the publication of the *No Manifesto*. The exchange between these two creations already infiltrates the secure groupings of discursive and embodied practices, as *Parts of Some Sextets* manifests the ideological transposition that Rainer hailed in the *No Manifesto*. Effectively, Rainer invited sculptor and conceptual artist Robert Morris to pervade her movement practice by generating an environment (hence the mattresses) that would intervene in the already emerging conventions of minimalist dance practice at the time. The effects were threefold: firstly, the artistic and choreographic category of authorship was challenged, as the origin of the work could not be traced back to the secure locale of either dance, or sculpture, nor could Rainer or Morris leverage sole custodianship of the work. Rainer articulates this sense of authorlessness in *Some Retrospective Notes on a Dance for 10 People and 12 Mattresses Called 'Parts of Some Sextets'*.<sup>396</sup> Secondly, the spectatorial conventions of performer-audience relations and sociality were challenged, as the continued displacement of the audience was an evolving feature of the work where the performance “spilled off the stage into the aisles, into the seats—displacing audiences.”<sup>397</sup> This particular

395 ——— Ibid.

396 ——— Yvonne Rainer, “Some Retrospective Notes on a Dance for 10 People and 12 Mattresses Called ‘Parts of Some Sextets,’ performed at the Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut, and Judson Memorial Church, New York, in March 1965,” *The Tulane Drama Review* 10, No. 2 (Winter, 1965): 168-178.

397 ——— Ibid., 168.

tendency can also be mapped across the expanding formats of Event Scores and Happenings that were developing during this period as part of a more radical New York-based artistic scene. The continuance of this tendency in Rainer's work is also discussed in Chapter 2.1 via the case study of *Yvonne Rainer: Dance Works* at Raven Row in London in 2014. Thirdly, stable notions of gendered artistic labour and performance were disrupted as the scored activities of dancing, moving, jumping, and falling, onto the mattresses were performed with equal measures of energy expenditure by men and women. The roles were replaceable and reversible and never assigned, as performers rotated according to their availability. The interface between the context of *Parts of Some Sextets* as a work of art and the wider placement of art in the societal crosscurrents of the time, via radical waves of societal, cultural, political and aesthetic upheaval during the 1960s, is therefore permeable, as the deliberate spilling of the work into the audience environment alongside the collapse of authorship and gendered performative labour is testament to the wilful disruption of perceived boundaries via artistic practice and its emplacement and enactment in everyday life.

The thrust of Catherine Wood's argument, however, is located in the notion that the current profusive return to performance modes instigates questions of "agency, intension and reception as essential components of understanding contemporary art today."<sup>398</sup> She suggests that the further redistribution of the relations between artist, viewer and the artwork itself via performance can arguably connect with "pre-modern and non-Western ideas about the role of art in a social context."<sup>399</sup> She also claims that the nature of performance, in its current manifestation in the field of contemporary art, is extensively diverse, almost to the point of virulent dissolution. Furthermore, the recent aversion to the nomenclature surrounding performance art in particular, mostly by younger generations of contemporary artists driving hybridised forms of artistic practice, has roots in the period of widespread experimental practice in multiple international locations from the 1950s to the 1970s. Wood situates one of the primary forces of expressly live, event-based actions instigated by the *Theater Pieces* of John Cage, Merce Cunningham and Robert Rauschenberg as the first happening entitled *Untitled Event* staged in 1952 at Black Mountain College in North Carolina. Also referred to as *Theater Piece #1*, the performance event consisted of a number of non-related or anti-causal multimedia solo performances – including film, dance, paintings, a piano recital, poetry readings and a lecture, without a narrative centre but within a choreographed time bracket – that subsequently derived a type of mythological status as the first happening as "the ripples of the

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<sup>398</sup> ——— Wood, *Performance in Contemporary Art*, 10.

<sup>399</sup> ——— *Ibid.*, 13.

event played out through the following decades in avant-garde performance.<sup>400</sup> The script, arguably a predecessor to the score, “was determined by chance operations to different participants including Cage, Cunningham, M.C. Richards, Charles Olson, Robert Rauschenberg and David Tudor”<sup>401</sup> and prompted the action, which usually occurred in the centre of the conventional theatrical space, to spill into the aisles and around the audience. The evolution of the *Untitled Event*, with an assumed diminished significance at the time of its creation, can be understood as a trace form for the unfurling experimental and performative formats of the Event Score, *A Concert of Dance* by Judson Dance Theater in 1962 and Kaprow’s Happenings. From this, a clear trajectory of critical and experimental practice navigates the development of avant-garde performance and postmodern dance. Another paramount performative movement that has origins in John Cage’s *Experimental Composition* classes in 1958 at the New School is, of course, Fluxus. Alison Knowles cites this series as one of its sources, as “Fluxus concepts originated there with the creation by George Brecht of the Event Score.”<sup>402</sup> Knowles describes the conceptualisation and constitution of the Event Score as follows:

Event Scores involve simple actions, ideas, and objects from everyday life recontextualized as performance. Event Scores are texts that can be seen as proposal pieces or instructions for actions. The idea of the score suggests musicality. Like a musical score, Event Scores can be realized by artists other than the original creator and are open to variation and interpretation.<sup>403</sup>

Knowles’ *Street Piece* from 1962 with the instruction to “*make something in the street and give it away*”<sup>404</sup> is a clear rendition of the devolved status of ‘authorship’ and the de-skilling of performance forms. Milan Knížák’s *Walking Event* from 1965, which stipulates the following – “On a busy city avenue, draw a circle about 3m in diameter with chalk on the sidewalk.

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**400** ——— Mary Emma Harris, *Starting at Zero: Black Mountain College, 1933-57* (Arnolfini Gallery, 2005), 11.

**401** ——— Mary Emma Harris, *The Arts at Black Mountain College* (Cambridge, MA, and London: MIT Press, 2002), 87.

**402** ——— Alison Knowles, “Fluxus,” accessed 11 January 2018, <https://www.aknowles.com/fluxus.html>.

**403** ——— Alison Knowles, “Event Score,” accessed 2 February 2018, <https://www.aknowles.com/eventscore.html>.

**404** ——— Alison Knowles, *by Alison Knowles*, Originally published in 1965 as a *Great Bear Pamphlet* by Something Else Press, 1965 (Digital library: Ubuweb Classics, 2004), 7.

Walk around the circle as long as possible without stopping”<sup>405</sup> – is another example of the radical collapse between the categories of the social and aesthetic spheres. Ken Friedman, in *Working with Event Scores: A Personal History*,<sup>406</sup> claims that although the Event Scores had origins in the notational scores of experimental music arrangements, they “offered a way to transmit non-musical art forms, a system for encoding, recording and transmitting art forms that wandered across the boundaries of music, theater, daily life and visual art, sometimes summed up under the term intermedia,”<sup>407</sup> suggesting that the conceptually mobile notion of an event was wittingly interpreted without restrictions within the time and space of performance. Dorothee Richter’s extensive research project *Flux Us Now* positions Fluxus as “an extremely dynamic phenomenon”<sup>408</sup> and assigns their meaning of scores as “short sets of instructions, while events are simply structured performances—as opposed to the more complex and more theatre-like Happenings.”<sup>409</sup> She situates the Event Score as a distinguishing feature of Fluxus creation and signals its fluxional status as “essentially a mediated process which does not directly give expression to the thing itself but first sets down symbols (notation) that point towards a potential outcome.”<sup>410</sup> The potency and unique dynamic movement contained in the Event Scores also generated an inimitable relationship between performance and publication, as George Maciunas coined the name Fluxus to designate an “international movement who would be known both through publications and concerts.”<sup>411</sup> *Fluxus: An Anthology*, originally assembled by composer La Monte Young in 1960 and published in 1963, used by George Maciunas as a model for Fluxus publications, embodied the dialogues between artists, composers, poets and dancers which activated “the creation of chance operations, concept art, anti-art, improvisation, indeterminacy, meaningless work, natural disasters, stories, diagrams, poetry, essays, compositions, dance constructions, music, plans of action, mathematics”<sup>412</sup> and privileged a threshold-crossing gene-

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405 ——— Milan Knížák, “Walking Event,” *Selected Fluxus Event Scores* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1965), accessed 23 August 2019, <http://web.mit.edu/uricchio/Public/documentary/fluxus.pdf>, 2.

406 ——— Ken Friedman, “Working with Event Scores: A Personal History,” *Performance Research* 7, no. 3 (2002): 124-128.

407 ——— *Ibid.*, 125.

408 ——— Dorothee Richter, “Flux Us Now, Chapter 2: Beginnings of Fluxus,” filmed 2013 at Stuttgart, accessed 16 November 2018, <http://www.fluxusnow.net/chapters.html>.

409 ——— *Ibid.*

410 ——— *Ibid.*

411 ——— Anna Dezeuze, “Origins of the Fluxus Score,” *Performance Research* 7, no.3 (2002): 78.

412 ——— *Ibid.*, 79.

alogy of art events as unfinished work that propagated a dialectical vision of performance via plurality and structure without synthetic unity. The ensuing progression of radical forms of reconfiguration within artistic practice germinated into what became known globally as “performance art proper”<sup>413</sup> during the 1960s and through to the late 1970s, induced by live, body-centred practices ulterior to the more visible object-based economies. Catherine Wood denotes that the incursion of performance art is consistently described in terms of rupture: “a radical break with traditional forms of art-making that stripped art of many of its accumulated habits and political associations”<sup>414</sup> and addressed the fissure between the immediacy of living and the consumptive tendencies of mediated reality. The expressive staging of the body, particularly visible in the methods of artists associated with Viennese Actionism, and a more general return to the body as the principal index of human agency and experience, formed “powerful images of alternatively fragile and abject bodies that push interiority to the surface”<sup>415</sup> to revive the outwardly stultified senses. Wood also supplies a prominent conceptual course via performativity as she claims that literal acts of performance art as events or mindful artistic imperatives towards action “haunts performativity as its metaphorical ancestors”<sup>416</sup> and are fully imbricated in current conceptions that represent the attitudes to or perspectives on performance within contemporary art. The basis of this definition is set in a twofold understanding of performance; firstly, as the production of live events for a provisional community and secondly, within the more pervasive logic of performativity, that “social and institutional scripts might be acting through us”<sup>417</sup> so that subjectivity and society may be reciprocally shaped. Lastly, a crucial perspective offered by Wood is that the current action-based resurgence of performance and embedded notions of performativity in contemporary art “has drawn attention to the instability of the repeated rituals of so many aspects of art-making and presentation,”<sup>418</sup> prompting a reconsideration of the entire field. She claims that the precedent of the performance turn in visual art has a similar scale of influence to preceding developments in conceptual art in the following:

...the performance perspective on visual art production – what we have learned to see as its made-ness, its transactional character, its impermanence, and its reliance upon repeated conventions of dis-

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413 ——— Wood, *Performance in Contemporary Art*, 12.

414 ——— Ibid., 13.

415 ——— Ibid., 17.

416 ——— Ibid., 22.

417 ——— Ibid., 23.

418 ——— Ibid., 22.

play – comes to inflect our understanding of what art is and means in the broadest sense.<sup>419</sup>

The radical reconfiguration of primary relations in contemporary art via performance inexorably perforates curatorial activities to embrace shape-shifting and boundary-violating performative modes of activation and production, or what Florian Malzacher suggests as the acknowledgement and centring of the social and relational aspects of art in performative curatorial strategies.<sup>420</sup> Roselee Goldberg, director of Performa and author of the early surveys of performance art, *Performance Art: From Futurism to the Present*<sup>421</sup> and *Performance: Live Art Since the '60s*<sup>422</sup> argues in her latest publication *Performance now: Live art for the 21st Century*<sup>423</sup> that the current performance turn has had chasmal and irrefutable reformative effects on the architecture, curatorial infrastructure and overall approach to preservation and programming in the museum of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The changing nature of the museum, from “institutions of quiet contemplation”<sup>424</sup> and “ideological civic engines,” to cultural production apparatus of histrionic visual display and experiential effect that realise the assembling of cross-disciplinary performative works where articulating the history of performance itself, however vernacular, has become exhibition material is conspicuous. She states the following:

For many curators, art historians and critics who had never previously considered performance’s role in shaping the history of 20<sup>th</sup>-century art, encountering this material in the museum provided the opportunity to accumulate knowledge for describing performance that would change the conversation about live art and its role in contemporary art in the most profound ways.<sup>425</sup>

Finally, Cosmin Costinas and Ana Janevski, editors of the prolific publication *Is the Living Body the Last Thing Left Alive? The New Performance Turn*,

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419 ——— Ibid.

420 ——— Florian Malzacher, “Bethinking One’s Own Strengths The Performative Potential of Curating,” in *Curating Live Arts: Critical Perspectives, Essays, and Conversations on Theory and Practice*, xviii.

421 ——— RoseLee Goldberg, *Performance Art: From Futurism to the Present* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1988).

422 ——— RoseLee Goldberg, *Performance: Live Art Since the '60s* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2004).

423 ——— RoseLee Goldberg, *Performance Now: Live Art for the Twenty-First Century* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2018).

424 ——— Ibid., 16.

425 ——— Ibid.

*Its Histories and Its Institutions*, contend in their joint Introduction<sup>426</sup> that dance, choreography and performance are currently part of the fundamental conditions of contemporary art, as the immediate contours of performance often problematise the positioning and representation of the body in the contemporary situation, recalling the radical performative zeitgeist of performance art from the 1960s and 1970s where the body was simultaneously a “site of action, revolution and gender emancipation.”<sup>427</sup> This desire for immediacy can also be ascribed to the circumstantial socio-cultural shifts at the time, persuasively captured by Guy Debord’s *The Society of the Spectacle* from 1967, where economic shifts via the evolution of media and the digital domain increasingly mediated social life via the spectacle encased as mere appearance. The concrete and material reality of the body in all its unfettered excess and transgression became dematerialised and increasingly insignificant within the mediated climate, instigating in turn an increased longing by performance artists for the radical and alacritous restoration of the body as a symptom of social life. Costinas and Janevski do, however, concede that the current new performance turn, as distinct from the circumstances that “included living bodies in exhibition spaces and of dance performances in museums from at least the 1960s,”<sup>428</sup> uncovers a contradictory performative energy that also comprehends the smooth contagion of performance pressure that overburdens the “artistic and intellectual missions of museums...to perform in the neoliberal economy of entertainment.”<sup>429</sup> They also query whether the current manifestation of the performance turn conveniently suspends a seeming crisis in the vocabulary of curating as dance and performance, at least since their museological reincarnation in the 1990s, often caught between “apparently resisting the commercialization that was engulfing the object-based art world, and serving as the perfect products of the immaterial experience economy, where memory itself is a prime commodity.”<sup>430</sup> Throughout their arguments, however, performance is positioned as a central and novel instrument for curating and organising meaning, precisely because it straddles the seemingly precarious and contradictory conditions of art-making and the production of meaning in the contemporary context, relative to how the relocation of dance

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**426** ——— Cosmin Costinas and Ana Janevski, “Introduction,” in *Is the Living Body the Last Thing Left Alive? The New Performance Turn, Its Histories and Its Institutions*, eds. Cosmin Costinas and Ana Janevski (Berlin: Sternberg Press 2018), 7-11.

**427** ——— Ibid., 9.

**428** ——— Ibid., 8.

**429** ——— Ibid., 8.

**430** ——— André Lepecki, “Dance, Choreography, and the Visual: Elements for a Contemporary Imagination,” in *Is the Living Body the Last Thing Left Alive?*, 7.

and performance and its realisation of ephemeral materiality in the museum implicate the specifications of post-Fordist labour-power conditions. The centralisation of performance as a curatorial means within this trajectory is problematic, however, as its inheritance, via the lines of argumentation relayed in this chapter, prioritises its ontological revenue as always fleetingly ephemeral or critically fugitive. This subsumed and often unchallenged critical legacy does not provide adequate critical tools to interrogate its re-emergence in the contemporary performative museum-complex, as it suffers from a critical syndrome of discursive exceptionalism where it either always escapes institutional capture and can therefore never be recognised – and is thus always misunderstood – within the conventions of art, or it continuously operates outside of the ideology of art’s performative conventions, which is simply not the case. André Lepecki, in *Dance, Choreography, and the Visual: Elements for a Contemporary Imagination*, provides a line of reasoning that encapsulates the current performative impetus towards dance and choreography as an “inescapable force for contemporary aesthetic imagination.”<sup>431</sup> He argues that the previous performance turn, originating in the 1960s as the recognition of an Austinian performative overhaul coupled with a critical retort through practice from the fields of performance and visual art, was characterised by a widespread reinvention and reformulation of both image- and object-centric frameworks. Dance, choreography and performance were part of peripheral alliances activated relationally, whereas the current new performance turn, galvanised via explicit critical-theoretical methods since the mid-1990s, is predominantly distinguished by “a particular use of dance and choreography to radically reimagine the visual arts through their own procedures and forms.”<sup>432</sup> The vast propagation of dance exhibitions, retrospectives and performative programming across the global platforms of major museums and biennials is testament to Lepecki’s proposition. The mainstay of Lepecki’s argument and the most protuberant proposition for this chapter is the notion that the political and conceptual manifestations of dance and choreography in the museum under the aegis of the new performance turn has encumbered the practice and production of art as “paradoxically, constitutively, and simultaneously both potentially revolutionary and potentially normative (sic),”<sup>433</sup> as it precipitates the enactment and demonstration of freedom of movement as captured from within by the dominant hegemony via choreographic command – its supposed spontaneity an “expression of other preconditionings.”<sup>434</sup> This seeming contradictory scope of simultaneous revolutionary

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431 ——— Ibid., 13.

432 ——— Ibid., 13.

433 ——— Ibid., 16.

434 ——— Ibid., 16.

and normative functioning becomes interesting when considered in relation to the curatorial space as eminently implicated in ideological connotations. For instance, in the curated project *Precarious Assembly* – discussed in Chapter 4 – the performance group Sexcentenary evolved their performative participation in the overall curatorial frame for the duration of the event and instigated social activities of sleeping whilst other performative events unfolded around them. This also affected audience members and prompted them to transgress the performance-frame threshold and sleep alongside Sexcentenary group members. The visual dispersal of clusters of bodies sleeping across the gallery space served as a simultaneous marker for a radical gesture (the gallery is not where we sleep) and a purely quotidian act (the bodily need for sleep) so that the curatorial frame was momentarily suspended via performative interference and augmentation. The crucial question is therefore how to work momentarily within performativity and its “invisible interpellations”<sup>435</sup> by unworking the interiority of dance, choreography and performance to avoid capture, via Ramsay Burt, or refuse via Charles Gaines and Fred Moten, the choreographic capture of subjects within “systems of representational, somatic and social commands.”<sup>436</sup> The current instantiation and consumption of the choreographic within curatorial imaginations is still undergoing a performative evolution ridding it of “ clichéd notions that trapped dance’s compositional, critical, and somatic techniques, its subjectivities and technologies”<sup>437</sup> harboured by its subaltern positionality in the museum via the mythology of its ephemerality as a traceless economy inherited through Peggy Phelan. Furthermore, the critical dismantling of a certain image of dance, often as interpellated misfire or misunderstanding of performative imperatives within the museum, and as the ultimate fusion of life and art transposed by the artists associated with Judson Dance Theater engrained via the current circulation of contemporary dance within museum arenas, is conspicuous. This has necessitated scepticism from younger generations of choreographers and performance makers concerning the machinery of institutions and who engage critical-performative methods to discern and repudiate the impact of arrested neoliberal engines of creativity that encroach on our personal lives and direct our desires from within. To conclude, the preconditions of dance, choreography and performance and their abiding link to performativity via an endless citationality of an “always singular yet always dispersed (or semi-absent) source,”<sup>438</sup> denoting its particular affective-political force or

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435 ——— Ibid.

436 ——— Ibid.

437 ——— Ibid., 17.

438 ——— Ibid., 19.

“its insistence on returning with a difference”<sup>439</sup> under the patronage of the new performance turn put forward in this chapter, requires a redress of curatorial apparatuses within the wider contemporary art field to grasp the “critical, cartographic, aesthetic, political and imaginative capacities singular to dance, choreography and performance”<sup>440</sup> alongside the differentiated onslaught of expressive bodies that it is escorting into museological institutions. The complex historical confluences of performance, performance art and performativity as delineated in this chapter and dance and choreography’s historic proclivity to engage with the deposition of systems of command and obedience and its preconditional propensity for “working out systems of agential cooperation and systems of collective fugitivity”<sup>441</sup> usher in prolific opportunities for novel approaches to curatorial considerations within the new performance turn.

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439 ——— Ibid.

440 ——— Ibid.

441 ——— Ibid.

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## **CHAPTER 2**

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## 2.1 Case Study 1:

### *Yvonne Rainer: Dance Works*

#### Raven Row, London,

#### 11 July to 10 August 2014.

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### 2.1.1 Context and Description.

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The performative exhibition entitled *Yvonne Rainer: Dance Works* curated by Catherine Wood at Raven Row (London) in 2014 arguably addresses the lacunae of the “emerging curatorial typology of the dance retrospective.”<sup>442</sup> The curatorial statement describes the exhibition overview as follows:

This exhibition is the first to present live performances of Rainer’s dance works alongside other aspects of her practice: theoretical and lyrical writing, sketches and scores, photographs of performances, documentary and experimental films, and an audio recording of one of her early performative lectures. Together these convey a vivid picture of Rainer’s production from 1961 to 1972, and its proximity to the visual arts of the time, notably to minimalist sculpture.

A highlight of the exhibition is a 45-minute dance programme performed four times daily. Dancers trained for the occasion by Rainer and her long-time collaborator Pat Catterson will perform her celebrated works ‘Trio A’ (1966) and ‘Chair Pillow’ (1969), as well as the UK premieres of the very rarely seen ‘Talking Solo’ and ‘Diagonal’ (both 1963).<sup>443</sup>

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442 ——— Maltais-Bayda and Henry, “Choreographing Archives, Curating Choreographers: Yvonne Rainer, Xavier Le Roy, and the Dance Retrospective,” 236.

443 ——— “Yvonne Rainer: Dance Works,” 11 July - 10 August 2014 at Raven Row, London, accessed 2 February 2018, [http://www.ravenrow.org/exhibition/yvonne\\_rainer/](http://www.ravenrow.org/exhibition/yvonne_rainer/).



Fig 1. *Diagonal* (part of *Terrain*), 1963. *Yvonne Rainer: Dance Works*, Raven Row, July - August 2014. © Photo by Eva Herzog.

Curator Catherine Wood's accompanying exhibition text<sup>444</sup> and opening conversation<sup>445</sup> with Yvonne Rainer and Martin Hargreaves provides further insight into the specifications, process and content of the exhibition and performance platform. Wood foregrounds Rainer's renowned tendency of testing "the boundary between ordinary behaviour and art"<sup>446</sup> by using scripted rules to create choreographic form and relays the visible influence of the teachings of Robert Dunn, and by proxy, John Cage in the early 1960s. Wood argues that Rainer's dances can be seen as "active dilemmas tested through embodiment and group interplay"<sup>447</sup> alongside a pronounced renegotiation of the relationship between "thinking and doing, between the operations of 'mind' and 'muscle'."<sup>448</sup>

444 ——— Catherine Wood, "Yvonne Rainer - Exhibition Text" 2014, Raven Row, London, accessed 5 August 2018, <http://www.ravenrow.org/texts/59/>.

445 ——— "Yvonne Rainer in conversation with Catherine Wood and Martin Hargreaves," Friday 11 July 2014, 7pm at Raven Row, London, accessed 10 August 2018, [http://www.ravenrow.org/events/yvonne\\_rainer\\_in\\_conversation\\_with\\_catherine\\_wood\\_and\\_martin\\_hargreaves/](http://www.ravenrow.org/events/yvonne_rainer_in_conversation_with_catherine_wood_and_martin_hargreaves/).

446 ——— Catherine Wood, "Yvonne Rainer - Exhibition Text."

447 ——— Ibid.

448 ——— Ibid.



Fig 2. *Trio A*, 1966. *Yvonne Rainer: Dance Works*, Raven Row, July - August 2014.  
© Photo by Eva Herzog.

In this way, dance and choreographic practice is not acclimated as a closed discipline that needs further codification to extricate its value within visual art frameworks, but rather configured, and in alignment with its accompanying intellectual projects since the 1960s, as fluid, penetrable and unruly practices aimed at addressing the potential of art as a necessary component of life. Furthermore, Wood argues that Rainer placed a body-centred performance practice in lieu of her linguistic concepts as a means of experimenting with a form of embodied methodology via the staging of the female dancing body's intellectual interior as a proto-feminist statement. This was particularly prevalent within the artistic conditions of the artists associated with Judson Dance Theater as discussed in Chapter 1.3. Additionally, a substantial part of Rainer's choreographic prominence was aimed at "the reciprocity of the theatre situation: not just between performers and audience, but also between performers themselves as they alternately moved, rested and watched each other onstage,"<sup>449</sup> embedding a precept of democratic participation within the aesthetic framework of her choreographic practice. Wood also argues that the presentation of Rainer's composite practices at Raven Row is pertinent, as her approach to dance-making within the theatre context resembles some of the processes ratified in visual art during this period: "Drawing attention away from the art object towards the mechanics and conventions of its display."<sup>450</sup>

449 ——— Ibid.

450 ——— Ibid.



Fig 3. Exhibition view, *Hand Movie*, 1966. *Yvonne Rainer: Dance Works*, Raven Row, July - August 2014. © Photo by Marcus J. Leith.

More importantly, Rainer's performative investment extended towards the lucent relationship between herself as a performer, "the depiction of labour or task,"<sup>451</sup> and the work itself, acknowledging the intermittent ideological divestment of artistic practice. This inculcates a particular political concordance in Rainer's engagement with dilemmas of authorship and the subsequent annexation of "image-mediation through representations of physical labour as dance,"<sup>452</sup> as she envisioned an alternative dispersion method for her most renowned choreographic work *Trio A* as a body-to-body transfer of knowledge via an embodied catalogue of material. *Trio A*, as a choreographic passage of movement material, is still taught and transferred by an approved number of practitioners or transmitters, including Pat Catterson and Sara Wookey who collaborated on the Raven Row performative exhibition as transmitter and performer respectively.

451 ——— Ibid.

452 ——— Ibid.



Fig 4. *Diagonal* (part of *Terrain*), 1963. *Yvonne Rainer: Dance Works*, Raven Row, July - August 2014. © Photo by Eva Herzog.



Fig 5. Exhibition view, *Lives of Performers*, 1972. *Yvonne Rainer: Dance Works*, Raven Row, July - August 2014. © Photo by Marcus J. Leith.



Fig 6. Exhibition view. *Yvonne Rainer: Dance Works*, Raven Row, July - August 2014.  
© Photo by Marcus J. Leith.

Finally, Wood suggests that Rainer’s treatment of ensemble choreographic form was not a candid depiction of utopian ends, but rather a keen cognisance of “codes of image-making and consumption”<sup>453</sup> illustrated via her legacy of precise photographic and filmic documents assembled as part of the exhibition.

*Yvonne Rainer: Dance Works* can be considered not only within the taxonomy of the aforementioned dance retrospective but perhaps more notably as a curatorial multiverse. The constellation of Catherine Wood’s curatorial approach, alongside the collaborative disposition of Yvonne Rainer’s choreographic material transmitted by Pat Catterson and dispatched transversely across its embodiments via various performers, including Sara Wookey, is axiomatically mediated, dispersed and activated amidst an array of visual and discursive documentation as composite parts of her artistic practice. As argued in Chapter 1.1, this dynamic devolves the traditional authorial forms of curatorial power by disassembling consolidated curatorial subjectivities as an ideological prerogative and distributing the production of meaning across a rhizomatic assemblage of bodies and affects. Pierre Bal-Blanc and Vanessa Desclaux enclose this within the emergent forms of curatorial practice that prioritise “the dissolution

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453 ——— Ibid.



Fig 7. Exhibition view, *Trio Film*, 1968. *Yvonne Rainer: Dance Works*, Raven Row, July - August 2014. © Photo by Marcus J. Leith.



Fig 8. Poster advertising *This is the story of a woman who...*, 1972-73. *Yvonne Rainer: Dance Works*, Raven Row, July - August 2014. © Photo by Marcus J. Leith.

of the fictive unity of the subject through a multiplicity of embodied practices.”<sup>454</sup>

In relation to this, a timely consideration of Rainer’s revised *No Manifesto* from 2008 assembles an important intertextual component of her evolving and ever-expanding artistic practice, particularly related to the rationale put forward in the subsequent sections of this chapter. The amended *No Manifesto*, in *A Manifesto Reconsidered* at the Serpentine Gallery in London in 2008 states the following:

1965

NO to spectacle

No to virtuosity

No to transformation and magic and make-believe

No to the glamour and transcendence of the star image

No to the heroic

No to the anti-heroic

No to trash imagery

No to the involvement of performer or spectator

No to style

No to camp

No to seduction of spectator by the wiles of the performer

No to eccentricity

No to moving or being moved

2008<sup>455</sup>

Avoid if at all possible

Acceptable in limited quantity

Magic is out; the other two are sometimes tolerable

Acceptable only as quotation

Dancers are ipso facto heroic

Don’t agree with that one

Don’t understand that one

Spectators: stay in your seats

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**454** ——— Pierre Bal-Blanc and Vanessa Desclaux, “Living Currency,” in *The New Curator: Researcher, Commissioner, Keeper, Interpreter, Producer, Collaborator*, eds. Caroline Milliard, Rafal Niemojewski, Ben Borthwick and Jonathan Watkins (London: Laurence King Publishing, 2016), 175.

**455** ——— Yvonne Rainer, *Moving and Being Moved* (Arnhem: Roma Publications, 2017), 31.



Fig 9. *Talking Solo* (part of *Terrain*), 1963. *Yvonne Rainer: Dance Works*, Raven Row, July - August 2014. © Photo by Eva Herzog.

Style is unavoidable

A little goes a long way

Unavoidable

If you mean “unpredictable,” that’s the name of the game

Unavoidable

The ensuing reflective interview, conducted via email with Pat Catterson, Yvonne Rainer, Catherine Wood and Sara Wookey between April and June 2019, articulates the multiform curatorial and choreographic distribution within the process of assembling *Yvonne Rainer: Dance Works* at Raven Row in 2014.

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## 2.1.2 Interview with Pat Catterson, Yvonne Rainer, Catherine Wood and Sara Wookey.

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\*Interviewee question-and-answer email exchange

1) How would you describe the different layers of your role in the process leading up to and during the production and performances for the Yvonne Rainer: Dance Works exhibition?

Pat Catterson<sup>456</sup>: My job was to choose dancers and teach the dances to them and also to make sure that the performing space was set up adequately for the dancers and the work, and lastly to stage the dances in the space.

After many Skype discussions over many months with all parties involved, it was decided we should do four shows a day with two casts of six, one doing the two earlier shows and the other the two later. This gave us coverage if someone was ill or unable to make a show. We also decided later to make two of the dancers official understudies and two others kind of captains of each cast. We also talked about the performing space: there needed to be a warm-up room and a dressing room, good safe flooring,

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**456** — Pat Catterson's parents were a ballroom dancing team, and her grandfather a Vaudevillian tap dancer. A NYC-based artist, she has choreographed 112 works, receiving many accolades including a 2011 Solomon R. Guggenheim Choreography Fellowship and multiple Choreography Fellowships from the NEA, the CAPS Program, the Harkness Foundation, as well as a Fulbright Grant. She has taught at Sarah Lawrence College, UCLA, the Juilliard School and the Merce Cunningham Studio, among many others and has been a guest artist all over the US and in Europe. Her writing has been published in *Ballet Review*, *JOPERD*, *Attitude Magazine*, *Dance Magazine Online*, the *Getty Iris*, and the *Dance Research Journal*. She first performed Yvonne Rainer's work in 1969 and since 1999 has worked as her dancer, rehearsal assistant, as well as custodian of Rainer's early works. She has staged these works on dancers, companies and student groups internationally and nationally, most recently at the Irish Museum of Modern Art, the Stephen Petronio Company and for 44 dancers in David Michalek's film "Slow Trio A." She earned her BA in psychology and philosophy from Northwestern University and her MFA in Interdisciplinary Arts from Goddard College. She retired from performing in September 2018.

access to restrooms, and a daily process for laundering their costumes. We discussed pay for the dancers and that it needed to be decent and paid in a timely way. I wanted the dancers to be treated respectfully as fellow artists. I and Yvonne made sure, for instance, that their names appeared in signage and wherever it was possible to give them credit, for instance, in subsequent videos or photographs.

I worked by myself for many weeks in New York City, getting material in my body to teach, and conferring with Yvonne where I was uncertain. I had taught Trio A and Chair Pillow many times previously, but Diagonal and Talking Solo were new for me. It was a lot of homework. I had worked on the moving material for Talking Solo in 2000 in preparation for Yvonne teaching it to two dancers in the White Oak Dance Company, but it had been a long time since, so I was mostly learning it all over again. I also taught myself one of the texts for Talking Solo and practiced it with the movements so that I knew what the dancers would be up against and could help them with the task of reciting and dancing simultaneously. For Diagonal, I needed to develop a strategy to teach its many rules that would be efficient and effective, given the amount of time I would have with the dancers.

I went to London two weeks before rehearsals would begin to audition for dancers. The rehearsal period was only going to be about ten days, as I recall, which is not much time to teach two casts four very different dances! Yvonne was not coming until the last two or three days, so most of the work was on my shoulders. We decided, because of the short rehearsal period, that the dancers had to already know Trio A. The audition process was difficult because the audition call, it turned out, was really only sent to Trinity Laban former students who had learned it from Labanotation, a very imperfect instrument. There were only I think twelve or so who came to the audition and only a couple of them knew the dance well enough. Setting up a new audition was out of the question, so I used the call-back day to re-teach the dance to the ones I thought would be able to do that. And we imported two dancers I had taught previously in Copenhagen and one I had worked with in other Trio A performances. Two others had learned the dance from Yvonne and did not need to audition. So, with that, we had our casts. At the audition, I also cast the four dancers who would do the Talking Solos and assigned their texts to memorise.

After seeing the space with Alex Sainsbury and conferring with Yvonne long distance, we decided on the set-up of seating and that we would use the second room, even though it would be a partial view for all audience members. The teaching process was intensive, but all dancers worked hard and rose to the occasion. Yvonne was happy with the results of my teaching and the staging in the space, and all only needed a little tweaking. After the first two days of shows, which went very smoothly,

Yvonne and I both returned to New York City. We kept in touch with the captains of the casts to make sure everything was going fine and to answer any questions that came up.

**Yvonne Rainer**<sup>457</sup>: I came in quite late to the process. Catherine Wood visited my archive at the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles and selected and scanned all the materials for the installation. As for the performances, I had decided which dances from my early work I wanted to be performed; Pat Catterson travelled to London without me and auditioned the dancers and taught them the material, and I arrived just in time to make some small adjustments before the first show.

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**457** ————— Yvonne Rainer is one of the founders of the Judson Dance Theater (1962), made a transition to filmmaking following a fifteen-year career as a choreographer/dancer (1960-1975). After making seven experimental feature-length films — *Lives of Performers* (1972), *Privilege* (1990), and *MURDER and murder* (1996), among others — she returned to dance in 2000 via a commission from the Baryshnikov Dance Foundation (“After Many a Summer Dies the Swan”). Since then, she has made seven dances, including “AG Indexical, with a little help from H.M.,” “Assisted Living: Do you have any money?” and “The Concept of Dust: Continuous Project – Altered Annually.” Her dances and films have been seen throughout the U.S. and Europe. Museum retrospectives of her work, including drawings, photos, films, notebooks and memorabilia, have been presented at Kunsthau Bregenz and Museum Ludwig, Cologne (2012); the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles; Jeu de Paume, École des Beaux Arts, La Ferme du Buisson, Paris, and Raven Row, London (2014). A memoir — *Feelings Are Facts: A Life* — was published by MIT Press in 2006. A selection of her poetry was published in 2011 by Paul Chan’s Badlands Unlimited. Other writings have been collected in *Work: 1961-73* (1974); *The Films of Y.R.* (1989); *A Woman Who...: Essays, Interviews, Scripts* (1999); and *Moving and Being Moved* (2017). She is a recipient of two Guggenheim Fellowships, a MacArthur Fellowship and a U.S.A. Fellowship.

**Catherine Wood**<sup>458</sup>: I will begin with the long view, as background to my interest in Rainer: I had engaged with research on Yvonne Rainer since studying for my MA in modernism at UCL, with Bryony Fer, in 1998-9. I had become interested, specifically, in the relationship between performance and sculpture through encountering the contemporary artists, Matthew Barney and Vanessa Beecroft, who were both making forms of choreography in sculptural/monumental ways. In parallel, I was studying the history of American minimalist sculpture, thinking about the encounter between human scale and the ‘theatricality’ of this work – especially in the work of Robert Morris. I was struck by the essay by Yvonne Rainer in the Gregory Battcock anthology on minimalism, where she poses an equivalence between bodies and objects, and her chart. It became clear that the work of the mostly male American sculptors that was described, critically, as ‘theatrical’ was in fact literally borne of a relationship to the important, experimental dance work of Simone Forti, Steve Paxton, Yvonne Rainer and others at Judson. This ‘minor history’ that was fundamental was repressed in significance, and I wrote about Rainer’s work, her dance and her writing as a way of understanding where this kind of sculpture had actually come from, and of redressing that narrative. I published a ‘one-work’ book on Rainer in 2007 in the series that Afterall/MIT focused on significant artworks. It was interesting that at the time, although I had been programming performance (and sometimes dance) at Tate since 2003 and there was a growing interest in this area from artists and curators alike, internationally, there were tough questions from the Afterall

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**458** ——— Catherine Wood is Senior Curator of International Art (Performance) at Tate Modern. Recent projects include *Anne Imhof, Sex*: a major commission for the Tanks at Tate Modern, and the 2018-19 Hyundai commission for the Turbine Hall with the Cuban artist, Tania Bruguera. With Achim Borchardt-Hume, Wood co-curated the Rauschenberg retrospective at Tate Modern in 2017, and initiated Tate Modern’s annual Live Exhibition in the Tanks, which has featured Fujiko Nakaya and Isabel Lewis (in 2017) and Joan Jonas and Jumana Emil Abboud (2018). Previous exhibitions at Tate Modern include *A Bigger Splash: Painting after Performance* in 2012 and *The World as a Stage* in 2007, with Jessica Morgan. She has programmed numerous performance works at Tate since 2003, including works by Mark Leckey, Joan Jonas, Guy de Cointet, Jiri Kovanda, Elaine Sturtevant, and Boris Charmatz’s *If Tate Modern was Musée de la danse...?* and initiated the online broadcast project, “BMW Tate Live: Performance Room” in 2011, which commissioned new works by 20 artists. In 2013, Wood curated *Yvonne Rainer: Dance Works* for Raven Row in London, and is author of *Yvonne Rainer: The Mind is a Muscle* (2007, Afterall/MIT press) and *Performance in Contemporary Art* (Tate Publishing, 2018). She has also written numerous catalogue essays, recently on Senga Nengudi, Charlotte Posenenske and Naufus Ramirez-Figueroa. She is on the board for the non-profit space Studio Voltaire in London.

editors about the inclusion of a 'dance work' into this art-canonical list. I had to make the case for Rainer's significance in relation to visual art as the core driver of the series.

In terms of the exhibition coming about, my friend and colleague Silke Otto-Knapp (artist) and I had discussed Rainer's work a lot; she had worked at Afterall and helped with my book, and she had also made a series of paintings of Rainer's dances from the 1960s. I had often discussed with Silke my desire to make a presentation of Rainer's work in London, but there were difficulties of doing so at Tate (aside from a presentation of *Trio A* that we staged in the Tanks in 2012). Tate's exhibition infrastructure was – at that point – very fixed into three-month slots with an economic imperative (this was before we were able to launch the annual Live Exhibition in the Tanks in 2016). Silke was also on the board of Raven Row, and she raised this idea with Alex Sainsbury, very passionately. At first, despite interest and enthusiasm for the concept, there were many questions about how such a show might materialise, what might be in it, how it could actually work in an exhibition space. We all met to discuss and began to imagine what it might be.

As a museum curator, and having undertaken research at the Getty archive, seeing their display of her materials there, as well as having seen retrospectives of Rainer's work in Philadelphia, and Cologne, as well as Trisha Brown's New Museum exhibition, and an exhibition about Merce Cunningham, also exhibitions of Simone Forti, etc. at the Musée de la Danse, I had been thinking for many years about how dance, and specifically Rainer's work, might be represented 'inside the white cube' successfully. I felt very aware of the disjunction between the apparent timelessness of the gallery space and what Brian O'Doherty calls its "eternity of display" and the time-based, event-based nature of dance. In my work at Tate, I had been thinking about the representation of performance in this context, especially the relationship between documentation that appears as a kind of hieroglyphic 'marker' of something that has occurred, and the experience of encountering a live work, as well as the question of historical re-enactment and its authenticity (or not).

My own primary concern was to not present a kind of 'souvenir' approach that included too much 'evidence' of the fact that these performances had taken place, as it were. What I wanted to do was to present primary evidence of what they looked like; what they were, in a way that could be experienced in the present tense, somehow. I wanted a visual experience of the look of the work, even if it took the form of photos and diagrams and notes: a primary set of visual materials that would spark the imagination of the viewer to picture how these sequences of choreography were when they were live, the shapes and forms they created, the patterns, the 'looks', and then how Rainer used words and diagrams to

plan the shape of her work. I wanted these aspects to intersect with each other: to show both the resonances and the gaps between the artistic plotting, planning, describing and the resultant image-photos.

Most of all, though, I felt clear from the start that I wanted live work to be the core of the show. I wanted to be sure that the so-called 'secondary material' (documents, plans, notations, scores, photos) could be seen as 'working material' in direct relationship to the live dance itself. That these could be visually cross-referenced by the viewers. This dance would, necessarily, be in the 'now', it would not be a forensic reconstruction, but a contemporary iteration. But this could be read in relation to the has-been-ness of the archival materials.

The step of meeting with Yvonne to discuss this, with Alex, was hugely significant.

We invited her to London and asked her about the possibility of re-staging the works that she had not revisited, especially *Diagonal* and others from *Terrain*. She was hesitant at first, since she had not reconsidered staging these works for many years, but then began to look at the material again and was excited, and open to it, so long as we could support a certain degree of reconstruction work, both in NY and in situ. She also wanted to know that she could work with her highly respected and trusted collaborators, Pat Catterson and Sara Wookey, to devise, rehearse and refine the dances. And to know that we could find good collaborators and dancers in London. We assured her that we could, and that we would work with another trusted colleague, Martin Hargreaves, and his network of dancers from Laban, and elsewhere, too.

In discussion with Alex, I also wanted to include sequences of photographs shown not framed but on shelves or ledges (rather than framed as discrete 'artworks'), so that the time-based nature of the movement would be evident from the sequential images. This was a deliberate choice rather than showing the moments of 'climax' or 'still registration' that Rainer tried to work against in her dance work.

The other element of the show was the video and film material. For the short videos that were more like art objects, we decided to show them on monitors in galleries as objects-in-themselves.

For material that needed to be viewed (like *Lives of the Performers*: the last chronological work), we provided seating. In the main dance space, when the dance wasn't on, there were video documents that you could go and watch in the same space. The theatre of this switch from dancers performing to the audience being able to enter the 'performance space' and watch video material in there was a deliberate switch point in the experience of the show. Discussions with Alex, and also Anthony Hudek – then curator at Raven Row – about this aspect of installation, the design and so on were essential to refining an experience for the viewer as they pro-

gressed through it. The exhibition designer's input was also crucial in creating a neutral staging for the material, and this was done with great sensitivity: the tables, shelves and other forms of plinth support.

One aspect I was excited about in terms of linking the physical passage of the viewer to the content of the show was the inclusion of an audio recording of one of Yvonne's lectures in a room on the first floor. We simply decided – in discussion with Yvonne – to play the audio file in a space in which viewers could indeed follow her instructions should they so wish (and in fact, there were many dancers and dance students attending the show – quite a few did so). Yvonne's voice anyway has a powerful performative presence, and it felt important to include this as she called – in the lecture – for people's awareness of their bodies, their posture, to move their arms or necks, and so on. This drawing-attention to our shared experiences of the physical body felt like an important note within the kinaesthetic reciprocity of an exhibited dance show.

**Sara Wookey<sup>459</sup>:** I am one of five dance artists certified by Rainer to transmit her repertoire work. For the Raven Row show, I specifically participated as a dancer working with Pat Catterson, one of the other transmitters.

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**459** ——— Sara Wookey is a dance artist, public speaker and researcher who makes work for gallery, museum, theater and outdoor spaces. Her work in collaboration with visual artists, architects, urban designers and filmmakers has been shown at, among others, the Hammer Museum, REDCAT, New Museum and Barbican. Her work is currently in the collections at the Van Abbemuseum. She has worked with Yvonne Rainer since 2010 and is a certified teacher of Rainer's seminal dance work "Trio A" (1966) and other repertoire. She is currently researching the intersections of dance and visual arts institutions, developing her project "reDANCE" and lectures at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, and she is the author of *WHO CARES? Dance in the Gallery & Museum* (2015, Siobhan Davies Studios) and the chapter "Transmitting Trio A (1966): The Relations and Sociality of an Unspectacular Dance" in the edited book *Transmissions in Dance: Contemporary Staging Practices* (ed. Leslie Main, 2017, Palgrave Macmillan).

2) Fabien Maltais-Bayda and Joseph Henry describe Dance Works as a “dance retrospective” and suggest that encountering the work showed that, “The choreography was constantly reiterated across bodies, through language, and in the minds of everyone in the room – choreographer, transmitter, performers, spectators.”<sup>460</sup> This also includes choreographic distribution across the curation of visual material and archival documents. Reflecting on Dance Works, what do you think the impact of the installation work and visual documentation was alongside the live performance work?

**Pat Catterson:** Not sure. I suppose you would have to ask the audiences. I would say probably no different than if you had read about the work before in a review or other literature. The work is not the archival traces or what people have written about it. It is an experience – visceral, individual and ephemeral. Context is everything. Everyone has an individual experience at a performance. They bring their own biographies, and all other circumstances of the evening – whether they came with someone else, was it raining, did they know the dancers, had they read about the dance, do they dance themselves, were they hungry, had they heard of Yvonne, had they met Yvonne, had they seen any of her work before, or seen dance before at all, did they have enough sleep, etc. It is a meeting of contexts all around, a circumstance that is not unique to this set of performances.

**Yvonne Rainer:** I thought the installation and performances were complementary, offering a broad spectrum of my work, especially the dance work.

**Catherine Wood:** The idea of its reiteration is interesting, yes.

The distribution of movement occurred throughout: via live dancing bodies, via documents, and via drawings and notes. But it was important that the distribution had different densities and tempos. I wanted to create an experience of two kinds of time. Because neither time was ‘authentic’ in terms of representing what the work is, or was.

If the classic model for gallery exhibiting is understood (in modernism) as painting or sculpture embodying a kind of suspended non-time, non-place that somehow transcends the moment, then for time-based work, its representation can only (according to this template) be too late (and it becomes a ‘souvenir’) or too current (it loses its connection to the past, by being too new).

I wanted not only to set the texture of the preparatory aesthetic materials in dialogue with the look of the dances themselves, in literal proximity

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**460** ——— Maltais-Bayda and Henry, “Choreographing Archives, Curating Choreographers,” 235.

so that they could be cross-referred, but also to create an exhibition founded on the fracture of time between these two possibilities that was impossible to resolve, and that the experience of this historical work as an exhibition in the present tense would be suspended between these two.

(Interestingly, it was the video that bypassed this problem because it already anticipated a time of its own in its production.)

A beautiful co-incidence within the architecture of Raven Row was that the literal pedestrian activity of passers-by was visible from the performance seating, and throughout the show. So, there was a glimpse of authentic, ordinary time and movement that provided a kind of bassline for all the abstractions, compressions and compositions with the same qualities within Rainer's work.

**Sara Wookey:** From my point of view, the visual documentation was intriguing to have alongside the live dance works because it showed the levels of intricacy, rigour, craft and conceptual inquiry that goes into dance-making/choreography. I often wondered if the documentation, notes, visual ephemera, etc. were ever engaged as a way to transmit the works or to recall them in any way.

### 3) What are your thoughts on the dynamic between notions of 'authorship' and 'spectatorship' within the framework of the Raven Row exhibition and performances?

**Pat Catterson:** I don't think they are any different from any other exhibition or performance. Everyone has an individual experience. Meaning happens in the meeting of contexts as explained above. Everyone's an author of his/her own experience. Artists have limited control over that. And the dancers are the same and have individual experiences shaped by their long list of contexts, different with each show.

**Yvonne Rainer:** I can't answer that question – it is much too vague. These days I don't try to second guess spectators.

**Catherine Wood:** Authorship – much as the image of Rainer (and Judson) is focused on 'democracy' 'ordinariness' 'participation', I wanted to show clearly that authorship was important to the artist. And authorship, in a directed sense, needs spectatorship that has a formal place, too.

Rainer did, of course, muddle these things deliberately, by having performers rest as 'spectators' onstage in some of her work.

But what I had learned from Rainer's work was the degree to which she was and is very specific about how exactly the dancers (including Trio

A, with its utopian impulse for sharing) was taught, performed, re-enacted. After Pat Catterson taught the dancers the pieces, Yvonne came to correct, and this was extraordinary to witness.

What was fascinating, again, later was to see how the fantastic group of dancers themselves began to live the work, beyond Rainer's control, almost. The small moments of interaction, the passes, bumps, looks, little games, became a mode of communication as the performers got to know the work, and each other, through the duration of the show. This added a layer beyond authorial control that the work's structure permitted, but did not necessarily anticipate in a strict way. It was one of the real pleasures of seeing it unfold.

In terms of Spectatorship – the show in its totality became a space for a temporary community of gathering to witness, and to study in parallel. Many people came several times. I felt that the show represented part of a shift in London, from the notion of the exhibition as a space to look, towards it being a space to gather, witness, study, talk. This is a model that I think Raven Row allowed to be pushed quite significantly, in tune with younger artists' practices and the current direction of the ICA: understanding the equivalence between what is exhibited, what is shared socially, and intellectually. A discursive or dialogical space.

**Sara Wookey:** I am not sure what you mean here, exactly?

On a slightly related note: I suppose, for me, opening up Rainer's work to a local, national and international audience for five weeks in which all performances were free and could be returned to again and again (which many members of the public did) was significant for London. The works were presented within the intimate gallery spaces of Raven Row and, as well, to the outside public (through the cut-out window). The high-level of the spectators' interest, commitment and appreciation for this particular show was felt and what held up the event as significant as part of the history of dance and, in particular, the UK.

**4) Overall, could you consider Dance Works to be an expanded, collective score where all participating bodies were reciprocally attuned to different rhythms in time and space? How would you describe the sociality that was generated between performers and audience members?**

**Pat Catterson:** No different than any dance performance of this kind in an intimate space as was created by the Raven Row set-up.

**Yvonne Rainer:** Regarding “sociality” between performers and audience at the Raven Row Rainer show: the two rows of benches brought the spectators at times to within less than several feet of the performers – I imagine this must have been a somewhat novel experience for some of them. What I remember most vividly about the relationship was the window at the back of the adjoining gallery, which was visible to the audience and through which they could see another group of spectators peering in from the street to watch the performance from the rear – THAT was a novel experience for ME!

**Catherine Wood:** One of the things that struck me most was the way in which the dancers began to ‘own’ the work through the course of the show. Whilst at the beginning they adhered quite politely to the instruction from Yvonne and Pat Catterson, to enact the work, as it progressed, they inhabited and lived it, so that their own daily interactions as people, colleagues, friends, lovers began to show in how they ‘played’ the scores: moments of joking, flirtation, fun began to appear.

**Sara Wookey:** Perhaps, my above comment speaks to this? I would also add that the sociality I felt most was between myself, a dancer, and other dancers in the work. We lived, worked, breathed, sweated, slept and partied in the spaces of Raven Row (many of us stayed in the flats on offer on and off), and it built a kind of social cohesion within the group. Not to mention the spaces of Raven Row are former domestic spaces. I think this level of care and hospitality could be felt.

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### 2.1.3 Discussion.

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The multi-perspectival reflections gleaned from the interview and numerous personal visits to the exhibition and corresponding performances provide a fertile interlacing of oscillating positionalities to reveal what Beatrice von Bismarck, as argued in Chapter 1.1, calls relations-in-motion where “actions, constellations, spaces, and contexts participating in the production of meaning were transformed into a constitutive part of artistic practice.”<sup>461</sup> Concurrently, Gabrielle Brandstetter’s conceptual underpinning of a choreographic mode of the curatorial, similarly highlighted in Chapter 1.1, echoes Catherine Wood’s reflections on the discreet and differentiated sediments of attentive, rhythmic and temporal signatures within *Dance Works*. Brandstetter claims that the “image of the curatorial of choreography is to be developed as poetics of attention”<sup>462</sup> or more essentially “involvement as a mode of the curatorial,”<sup>463</sup> which is clearly articulated within the varied responses in the interview, and experienced within the exhibition and performative frameworks. It is also important to recognise a devolved yet distinct and often unacknowledged historical undercurrent that is more allied with Fluxus’ Event Score measures than with formal art-historical retrospective frames. The conversion of the single author to group production and participation in *Dance Works*, further divulged in the interview, aligns these practices to the historical complexes of Fluxus and Happenings as productive power relations are distributed more horizontally across, arguably, multiple permeable pre-curatorial roles of expanded choreographer, curator, transmitter and dancer/performer. This is also clear in Catherine Wood’s response to Question 4, where she refers to the dancers ‘playing’ the score in different ways to consolidate their own ownership via a deeper embodiment of the material, which ultimately disbands unified authorial power. In this sense, *Dance Works* provides a “material framework for experience”<sup>464</sup> that functions in a comparable way to a “social laboratory” by highlighting “socio-

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461 ——— Beatrice von Bismarck, “Relations in Motion: The curatorial condition in visual art – and its possibilities for the neighbouring disciplines,” *Curating Performing Arts*, eds. Florian Malzacher, Tea Tupajić and Petra Zanki, Frakcija, *Performing Arts Journal* #55 (2010): 52.

462 ——— Gabrielle Brandstetter, “Written on Water: Choreographies of the Curatorial,” in *Cultures of the Curatorial*, eds. Beatrice von Bismarck, Jörn Schafaff and Thomas Weski (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2012), 125.

463 ——— *Ibid.*, 126.

464 ——— Maltais-Bayda and Henry, “Choreographing Archives, Curating Choreographers,” 239.

poetic interaction,”<sup>465</sup> which as Craig Saper argues, was the research methodology offered by Fluxus via the Event Score. Saper proposes that Fluxus in general, and the Event Score in particular, organised information as a form of pre-Internet networked ideas that more importantly functioned as social networks or laboratories involved in the dissemination of knowledge via the social situation. This is, of course, also evident in the *modus operandi* of many of the artists associated with Judson Dance Theater, including Yvonne Rainer, and it is also the social situation of learning that Simone Forti advocates as the process of shifting the ideas of the work to interactivity within the context of the social.<sup>466</sup> Catherine Wood finds resonance with this in the interview above when she states that, “I felt that the show represented part of a shift in London, from the notion of the exhibition as a space to look, towards it being a space to gather, witness, study, talk.” Concomitantly, Gillian Young, in *The Score: How Does Fluxus Perform?*<sup>467</sup> argues that, “The event score became a mainstay of Fluxus performance practice, which hinged on information exchange, public and private participation, and the distribution of disparate effects. If this mode of performance developed by Fluxus anticipated the command structure and connectivity of the Internet, however, it also demanded embodied experience”<sup>468</sup> – an inimitable tenet of *Dance Works*’ overall curatorial consideration. Young also corroborates an important notion that the pre-curatorial conditioning of these conversions by Fluxus, and particularly the Event Score, impacted teleologically across museological institutions as “on the levels of preservation, display, and public engagement, Fluxus prefigured the challenges both digital media and performance art would bring to the modern art museum.”<sup>469</sup> Within the context of this book and in relation to the remit of curatorial typologies that deal with dance retrospectives or choreographic exhibitions, of which *Dance Works* is one, this foresight is of equal paramount importance. Young argues that this is specifically linked to Fluxus’ tendency to “integrate indeterminacy and interactive repetition into a collective performance practice that negotiated the potentials of the distribution and dispersal of experience with the embodied specificity of the live encounter”<sup>470</sup> - highlighted in the responses to Question 2 by Pat Catterson, Yvonne Rainer, Catherine Wood and Sara Wookey in the above interview. Most importantly however, and particularly pertinent in relation to the

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465 ——— Craig Saper, “Fluxus as a Laboratory,” in *The Fluxus Reader*, ed. Ken Friedman (Chichester: Academy Editions, United Kingdom, 1998), 136.

466 ——— Ibid., 137.

467 ——— Gillian Young, “The Score: How Does Fluxus Perform?” *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art* 34, n0. 2 (May 2011): 38-45.

468 ——— Ibid., 39.

469 ——— Ibid.

470 ——— Ibid., 41.

analysis of *Dance Works*, is the notion that the Event Score is “a platform for live actions and encounters networked through a curatorial consortium”<sup>471</sup> which resembles the proposal of *Dance Works* as a curatorial multiverse and identifies it via “a practice of repetition and difference that negotiates mediatised culture and embodied experience.”<sup>472</sup>

A supplementary notion worthy of careful consideration is Claire Bishop’s proposal of the dance exhibition as a hybrid performative form exemplified by a “grey zone” as the conversion of both the white cube and the black box via “the prolongation of performance to fill gallery opening hours.”<sup>473</sup> She casts its historical fidelity and current proclive emergence within the realm of the recent resurgence and artistic interest in the “performative turn of culture,”<sup>474</sup> aligned with the valence of post-Fordist economies as it has become “the regulatory ideal of our time, replacing Foucault’s idea of disciplinary surveillance.”<sup>475</sup> Bishop also argues that the ideological strength of performance, with its genealogical origins in both performance art and visual art performance, is its singularity as an event, and that the apparatus through which performance is presented is in itself a form of mediation, “informed by Fluxus and Conceptual Art’s instruction-based works.”<sup>476</sup> She makes a further claim about the ideological nature of the Event Score, as an “open-ended iterability” that:

was so radical and noncommodifiable in the 1960s – implying that anyone and everyone could fulfil the work – has become, since 2000, a stabilizing force: a way to guarantee aesthetic continuity between different iterations, to ground meaning and value in a secure authorial figure, and thereby enabling live performance to enter the marketplace.<sup>477</sup>

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471 ——— Ibid., 42.

472 ——— Ibid.

473 ——— Claire Bishop, “Black Box, White Cube, Gray Zone: Dance Exhibitions and Audience Attention,” *TDR: The Drama Review* 62, no. 2 (Summer 2018): 24.

474 ——— Ibid., 23.

475 ——— Ibid., 23.

476 ——— Ibid., 25.

477 ——— Ibid., 26.



Fig 10. *Chair Pillow*, 1969. *Yvonne Rainer: Dance Works*, Raven Row, July - August 2014. © Photo by Eva Herzog.

This configuration is particularly interesting in relation to *Dance Works*, as Bishop postulates that the current “prevalence of performance in museums predominantly takes the form of contemporary dance”<sup>478</sup> accented via the traditions of Merce Cunningham and Judson Dance Theater, since both had systematically “fostered rich interdisciplinary collaborations with visual artists.”<sup>479</sup> This is, of course, also aligned with the more abstract and divergent trajectories wielding conceptual dance as a curatorial instrument, as discussed in Chapter 1.1. Bishop argues that the sundry impact of these concurrent shifts has resulted in an essential re-temporalisation of performance from event-time to exhibition-time via:

new forms of virtuosity and an attentiveness to the exhibition itself as a form. It also prompts adaptation to the new economics of cultural production: the flexibility to deal with project-based, site-specific work; the ability to adapt existing pieces to the space-time of a different institution (the museum); the production of choreography that can operate in a continual flow without beginning, middle, or end; and a willingness to exhibit not just one’s work, but also one’s labour.<sup>480</sup>

478 ——— Ibid., 27.

479 ——— Ibid., 28.

480 ——— Ibid., 29.

The ideological consignments of both the black box and the white cube are inevitably brought to the fore as conduits of immediacy and community and timelessness and sanctity respectively. As argued in Chapter 1.1, they are not ostensibly neutral frames that guide and arrange attention, and “thus construct viewing subjects.”<sup>481</sup> Bishop argues that the designation of a dance exhibition is significant as it produces a “hybrid apparatus”:

When dance is inserted into an exhibition, then, the viewing conventions of both the black box and the white cube are ruptured: a single-point perspective (seating in the theatre, standing in front of a work) is replaced by multi-perspectivalism and the absence of an ideal viewing position...Because of the spectator’s undefined position, the protocols surrounding audience behaviour are less stable and more open to improvisation.<sup>482</sup>

Within this purview, the dance exhibition recalls the intimacy and experimentalism assigned to the black box at a time when these principles are no longer tantamount with that apparatus but acquired rather by the white cube. Bishop claims that the subterfuge from black box to white cube brings “two distinct spatial ideologies and sets of behavioural conventions into tension,”<sup>483</sup> as it bestows temporality upon an institution that customarily refutes time and contrasts the sedentary attentiveness of the black box with the mobile and ambulatory attributes of the white cube. Importantly, she claims that it is not just the opposing ideological discourses and apparatus of the black box and white cube that hang in the balance, but more importantly, the truncated impact on modes of attention, as museum programmes are more orientated towards accommodating performative forms. It is important to critique this notion, however, as the time-based modes referred to by Bishop allow multiple behavioural variants, however acutely conscripted within the apparatus of the white cube, via collective experiences and selective drifting through different intensities of attentiveness to the performance, its peripheries and socialities in situ. Bishop implies this as she suggests that durational forms of dance and performance accrue a productive mode of internal meditation that aligns with the contemplative lineage of the white cube.<sup>484</sup> She seems to suggest that this liminal mode demarcates the grey zone of the dance exhibition as “an apparatus in which behavioural conventions are not yet established and up for negotiation.”<sup>485</sup> She argues that this bol-

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481 ——— Ibid., 30.

482 ——— Ibid., 31.

483 ——— Ibid., 30.

484 ——— Ibid., 38.

485 ——— Ibid.

sters contemporary spectatorship via the inclination to operate on multiple levels, as audiences qualify “full, embodied attention and absorbed thinking to exist alongside the process of continuous archiving and communication with others.”<sup>486</sup> In this way, the dance exhibition enables a paradoxical re-temporalisation of the sensorium of affective experience via “embodied immediacy, shared collective presence, physical proximity, a sense of place, and an internal meditation in the company of others”<sup>487</sup> in tandem with more rapidly advancing forms of digital mediation that have become “integral to our self-constitution as subjects and as an audience”<sup>488</sup> functioning therefore as both “a symptom of and compensation for the virtualization of perception.”<sup>489</sup> The mainstay of Bishop’s argument is, however, that the grey zone of the dance exhibition problematises the composition of contemporary attention – and by extension the configuration of the contemporary subject at this particular historical moment – as suspended between “physicality and virtuality, being institutionally shaped and being self-constituted.”<sup>490</sup> Again, it is important to highlight that what Bishop underlines as a timely hybridised anomaly actually alludes to the instructive social conscription of the performative mode that the Event Score interface activated. This is also garnered from both Yvonne Rainer’s and Catherine Wood’s interview responses in relation to the unique, surprising and spontaneous composition of different audiences within and outside the Raven Row space, almost beckoning the quotidian hailing of Judson Dance Theater, via the intractable multiplicity of the public.

To conclude, the current development of homilies around dance curation within the wider discourses surrounding the economies and ecologies of art production and presentation encases *Dance Works* as a salient example of the curatorial imbrication of both archive and repertoire.<sup>491</sup> It functions as an interrogative curatorial gesture, a socio-poetic laboratory where the descendent opposing pressures of both the black box and the white cube and the inherited binaries of body and document/object often “perpetuated between material archives and embodied knowledge,”<sup>492</sup> are somewhat suspended. Within the scope of the curatorial parameters of *Dance Works*, the “dancing body acts as a signifying entity that juggles the affective resonance of somatic presence with its

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486 ——— Ibid., 39.

487 ——— Ibid., 40.

488 ——— Ibid.

489 ——— Ibid.

490 ——— Ibid.

491 ——— Maltais-Bayda and Henry, “Choreographing Archives, Curating Choreographers,” 243.

492 ——— Ibid.



Fig 11. Exhibition view. *Yvonne Rainer: Dance Works*, Raven Row, July - August 2014. © Photo by Marcus J. Leith.



Fig 12. Exhibition view, Rehearsal of *Dance Fractions for the West Coast*, 1969, Connecticut Rehearsal, 1969. *Yvonne Rainer: Dance Works*, Raven Row, July - August 2014. © Photo by Marcus J. Leith.

coded semiotic production”<sup>493</sup> amid citational and mediated circuits of archival materials. The curatorial context of *Dance Works* allows a “heuristic phenomenology”<sup>494</sup> where the mobile bodies of the spectators are implicated in the choreographic distribution via occasional interaction with the layered transmission of material from both the archive and repertoire – essentially “opening up the valences of spectatorship both discursively and phenomenologically.”<sup>495</sup> This also fundamentally counters a longstanding essentialist discursive myth that the live body somehow typifies a consecrated and unmediated presence and affect, similarly disputed by Amelia Jones in the following: “There is no possibility of an unmediated relationship to any kind of cultural product, including body art.”<sup>496</sup> Finally, Fabien Maltais-Bayda and Joseph Henry offer a vital conception of the suggested curatorial multiverse of *Dance Works* via the dance retrospective typology by claiming that it “warrants a discursive and archival plurality”<sup>497</sup> that allows “more fluid ontologies of authorship and spectatorship”<sup>498</sup> to unfold by accumulating multiple voices within the framing. These voices signal both its constellated past and its potential continuance – essentially undoing any adherence to author-centric chronologies of curatorial subjectivities. *Dance Works* is therefore a prominent manifestation of a contemporary curatorial consortium activated at the intersections of evolving modes of spectatorial and authorial subjectivities via the progression of a historically present choreographic occurrence.

\*A special thank you to Raven Row founding director Alex Sainsbury for his generous sharing of the exhibition photographs and to Kathrin Bonnar for the technical transfer of the images. Acknowledgement of the dancers included in the images are as follows: Megan Armishaw, Antigone Avdi, Irina Baldini, Povilas Bastys, Emilia Gasiorek, Samuel Kennedy, Morighan MacGillivray, Alice MacKenzie, Amanda Prince-Lubawy, Rebecca Stancliffe, Rosalie Wahlfrid, Emelie Wangstedt and Sara Wookey. A further acknowledgement of Martin Hargreaves for the organisation of the live performances as part of the exhibition.

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493 ——— Ibid., 242.

494 ——— Ibid., 243.

495 ——— Ibid., 245.

496 ——— Amelia Jones, “‘Presence’ in Absentia: Experiencing Performance as Documentation,” *Art Journal* 56, no. 4 (1997): 12.

497 ——— Maltais-Bayda and Henry, “Choreographing Archives, Curating Choreographers” 241.

498 ——— Ibid., 236.

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## 2.2 Case Study 2:

### Trajal Harrell: *Hoochie Koochie*

#### Barbican Gallery, London,

#### 20 July to 13 August 2017.

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### 2.2.1 Context and Description.

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American choreographer Trajal Harrell's *Hoochie Koochie* (2017), curated by Leila Hasham, builds on several performative exhibitions at the Barbican Gallery (London) and presents the first ever performance exhibition of the New York-based choreographer. The exhibition is informed by a two-year residency at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York (2014 - 2016), and stages over fourteen of Harrell's performances. This includes one of the earliest works he created in 1999, *It is Thus from a Strange New Perspective That We Look Back on the Modernist Origins and Watch It Splintering into Endless Replication*, which he articulates as "my first attempt to combine an interest in voguing and early postmodern dance through the lens of minimalism."<sup>499</sup> In the exhibition publication, Harrell states that, "The selected pieces provide a survey of my work – from my first experiment with minimalism to my most recent pieces, bringing together ideas and movements from history and fiction spanning many cultures and centuries."<sup>500</sup> Interestingly, the performative exhibition is never proclaimed as a retrospective of Harrell's work by either Harrell himself or curator Leila Hasham, possibly as it continuously evolved in the present moment to unfold future "fields of possibilities"<sup>501</sup> or plateaus of

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**499** ——— Trajal Harrell, "A Conversation between Trajal Harrell and Leila Hasham" in *TRAJAL HARRELL: Hoochie Koochie*, eds. Trajal Harrell, Leila Hasham and Sara Jansen (London: Barbican Art Gallery, 2017), 21.

**500** ——— *Ibid.*, 21.

**501** ——— Trajal Harrell, "The Ghost of Montpellier Meets the Samurai," programme item October 2015 at Le Festival d'Automne à Paris, accessed 5 August 2017. <https://www.festival-automne.com/en/edition-2015/trajal-harrell-the-ghost-of-montpellier-meets-the-samurai>.

meaning through a changing, daily programme of live performances, harking back to a more metonymic interpretation of Harrell's very first piece, *It is Thus from a Strange New Perspective That We Look Back on the Modernist Origins and Watch It Splintering into Endless Replication*. Harrell stated in his conversation with Hasham that: "One of the really exciting aspects of a performance exhibition of this scope is that the work born in the past comes alive in the future. Performance is, in fact, only of the now. So, in this context of the Barbican, this is, truly, something only of this moment."<sup>502</sup> In this sense, it is not strictly the re-enactment of previous works either, as this would imply identification with a historic root, a memorial repetition that transports the past to inhabit the present as such. Rather, the intertextual and performative potential of his work and the playful aesthetic tension become central to the politics of displaying the situatedness of the performance work in the Barbican Gallery. Harrell's best-known series, *Twenty Looks or Paris is Burning at the Judson Church* (2009-2013), creates a visible dialogue between postmodern dance and New York's voguing scene. Matthew MacLean argues that this gives shape to a counter-historical speculation: "What kind of performance would have emerged if, in the early 1960s, a dancer from the formative years of Vogueing in New York had headed downtown from Harlem to the Judson Memorial Church, where Trisha Brown, Lucinda Childs, Steve Paxton et al. were developing what would become 'postmodern dance'? If instead of 'saying no' – as per her 1965 Manifesto – to spectacle, virtuosity, glamour, style, camp and seduction, among other things, Yvonne Rainer had said YES?"<sup>503</sup>

As discussed in Chapter 1.3, Rainer's *No Manifesto* or "manifesto of renunciation"<sup>504</sup> demonstrates the relevance of the concept of absence for art theory and provides an emblem for Judson Dance Theater, as a movement in general. Rainer's much-quoted phrase, "Dance is hard to see"<sup>505</sup> (1966), ushered in against a backdrop of cultural anxieties, demonstrated the subversive work that Rainer was proliferating by undoing the "habits

**502** — Harrell, "A Conversation between Trajal Harrell and Leila Hasham" 25.

**503** — Matthew McLean, "Made to Measure: Trajal Harrell talks 'realness', daydreaming, and his performance *Twenty Looks or Paris is Burning at the Judson Church* (S)," *Frieze*, 27 June 2016, <https://frieze.com/article/made-measure?language=de>.

**504** — Ann Daly, "What Has Become of Postmodern Dance? Answers and Other Questions by Marcia B. Siegel, Anna Halprin, Janice Ross, Cynthia J. Novack, Deborah Hay, Sally Banes, Senta Driver, Roger Copeland, and Susan L. Foster," *TDR* 36, no. 1 (Spring, 1992): 48-69.

**505** — Yvonne Rainer, "A Quasi Survey of Some 'Minimalist' Tendencies in the Quantitatively Minimal Dance Activity Midst the Plethora, or an Analysis of Trio A' [1966]," in *Minimal Art: A Critical Survey*, ed. Gregory Battcock (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995 [1968]), 271.

of spectatorship, conditioning our seeing of bodies offered to view.”<sup>506</sup> Her persistent investment in the political discourse around the peculiar tension between the body and its display or what Rainer called “the seeing difficulty,” instigated Carrie Lambert-Beatty to refer to Rainer as a “sculptor of spectatorship” with an impetus to alter the viewer’s perceptual prediction. Lambert-Beatty demonstrates how Rainer’s body of work, mobilised by the *No Manifesto* – and related performance work in Happenings, Fluxus, and Judson Dance Theater – connects with “the transformation of the subject-object relation in minimalism and with emerging feminist discourse on the political implications of the objectifying gaze,”<sup>507</sup> as she destabilised the habits of viewing shaped and enfranchised by the spectacle of mass-media conglomerates by linking avant-garde art to the wider cultural effects of the 1960s. Concurrently, Madison Moore, in *Walk for Me: Postmodern Dance at the House of Harrell*,<sup>508</sup> claims that Trajal Harrell positions his work as a direct response to Yvonne Rainer’s *No Manifesto*, and by extension to Guy Debord’s *The Society of the Spectacle*, whose aphoristic prose reveals the ways modern life has been deeply eroded by the spectacle via “a social relationship between people that is mediated by images.”<sup>509</sup> Furthermore, Ramsay Burt, as referenced in Chapter 1.3, also argues that Rainer’s articulation of the *No Manifesto* and preceding choreographic explorations with Judson Dance Theater manifested the socio-cultural and theoretical dimensions that underscored the “alternative values of a new countercultural politics”<sup>510</sup> predicated on the invention of forms. Burt argues that speaking about the body as Rainer did via the *No Manifesto*, and articulating aspects of their collective experience of performing radical, innovative and often minimalist quotidian dance material, the dance artists associated with Judson Dance Theater, and Yvonne Rainer in particular, provided a lens through which they could both critique and counter normative approaches to dance making and living. Burt also suggests that the ways of thinking about ‘the body’ and its fluctuating social and political habitus instigated by Judson Dance Theater still underscore procreant counter-cultural praxis for thinking and living intertwined with artistic practice positioned between conflicting alternatives as exemplars of the generative potential of the political as agonism via

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**506** ——— Lambert-Beatty, *Being Watched: Yvonne Rainer and the 1960s*, 8.

**507** ——— *Ibid.*, xi.

**508** ——— Madison Moore, “Walk for Me: Post-Modern Dance in the House of Harrell,” *Theater* 44, no. 1 (2014): 5-23.

**509** ——— Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: Zone Books, 1994), 12.

**510** ——— Ramsay Burt, “The Politics of Speaking about the Body,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Dance and Politics*, ed. Rebekah J. Kowal, Gerald Siegmund and Randy Martin (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 252.

Chantal Mouffe's *Artistic Activism and Agonistic Spaces*.<sup>511</sup> Burt proposes that when Rainer quotes 'the body', she is citing an entity ingrained in a continuous circuit of disappearance to represent rather the materiality of her social and political experience which performatively engages with an agonistic argument against hegemonic strictures. The performative gusto that the *No Manifesto* engendered therefore operates on multiple levels and draws attention to the relational qualities of artistic and socio-political contexts. Furthermore, as explicated in Chapter 1.3, Sally Banes' seminal contribution to understanding the contextual specifics of Rainer and the Judson Dance Theater artists' ideological reach was in the construction of a particular manifestation of democratic ideology through collective, experimental processes and communal artistic practice that consequently rendered the body more neutral in its commitment to the *No Manifesto* and subsequent expansion towards quotidian and gestural inscription via the toils of the residuum. It is important to highlight that Judson's hailing of democracy's body, particularly via the iteration of Rainer's *No Manifesto*, is often critically secured via the scholarship of the post-Judson pedagogic era by validating its position within the domain of performance studies aligned with Peggy Phelan's publication *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance*.<sup>512</sup> This association is unproductive and inherently contradictory, as the notion of the Judsonian body as democratic or unmarked is not only impossible via the argument put forward in Chapter 1.2, but moreover exposes the intersectional discrepancies, via Rebecca Chaleff<sup>513</sup> and the arguments in Chapter 1.3, that resulted in the indirect non-disclosure of non-white bodies as important contributors to radical artistic practice. The Judsonian body was therefore not the body of democracy per se, and certainly not unmarked, but perhaps alluded to a less-marked disposition by destabilising overt hegemonic binaries.

Trajal Harrell suggests that his own experimentation with postmodern dance, accelerated by a revisionist rethinking of contemporary dance in the early 1990s that underpinned a rejection of spectacle, virtuosity and theatrics focusses on the production of authenticity through a contemporary prism by recycling Rainer's *No Manifesto* to corrode the partial myth of the Judsonian neutral body. He argues that the concurrent voguing scene in Harlem emerged at a similar temporal moment and produced an alternative subjectivity that was highly stylised, gestural and performative which exposed the fictional nature of the neutral body and its projected

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**511** ——— Chantal Mouffe, "Artistic Activism and Agonistic Spaces," *Art & Research: Journal of Ideas, Contexts, and Methods* 1, no. 2 (Summer 2007), <http://www.artandresearch.org.uk/v1n2/mouffe.html>.

**512** ——— Peggy Phelan *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993).

**513** ——— Chaleff, "Activating Whiteness," 71-84.



Fig 13. *Wall Dance*, Trajal Harrell: *Hoochie Koochie*, 2017 (installation).  
© Tristan Fewings / Getty Images

future as proposed within the canon of postmodern dance. The central driver of this evolving choreographic inquiry perpetuates his question: “What would have happened in 1963 if someone from the ball scene in Harlem had gone downtown to perform alongside the postmoderns at the Judson Church (sic).”<sup>514</sup> Rather than historical re-enactments, Harrell re-thinks how the past is processed in the contemporary moment to disrupt the linearity of the art-historical context and consequent cultural production through the paradigm of performance and the body as lived archive.

A particular example of this is in *Wall Piece* (Figure 13) where two dancers, clad in black and grey, strut back and forth against the stark white walls of the Barbican’s Gallery locked in what appears to be a war of poses. One is ‘throwing’ the highly stylised shapes of the voguing ballroom scene in 1960s Harlem, the other the minimalist movements pioneered by experimentalists of postmodern dance operating out of Judson Memorial Church in Greenwich Village.

The choreographic score also goes beyond the dance battle tag and the representation of seemingly opposing canonised movement material. It is Harrell’s re-imagination of historical dance scenarios to explore concepts of spectacle and authenticity in performance, alongside performative iterations of race, gender, sexuality and identity as the bodies of the two performers always exceed themselves as subjects, objects and makers

514 — Harrell, “A Conversation between Trajal Harrell and Leila Hasham” 22.

of gesture overlain with historical notions of how expression conveys the myriad meaning attached to gender and race. Dick Hebdige, in *Posing... Threats, Striking... Poses: Youth, Surveillance, and Display*,<sup>515</sup> proposes the apotropaic politics of performative posing when he claims that: “To strike a pose, is to pose a threat”<sup>516</sup> based on the self-display of punk women who, when posing, supposedly “transformed the fact of surveillance into the pleasure of being watched.”<sup>517</sup> Curator Sabel Gavaldon, in the performative lecture *VOZ RARA – To Strike a Pose is to Pose a Threat*,<sup>518</sup> incites the necessity of tracing the history of dissident gestures and the genealogy of those poses that confront the norm to generate spaces for imagining alternative futurities for the body. He claims that the stylised poses from a voguing performance belong to this stratum of politicised, performative gestures. Gavaldon, when writing about gesture and subcultural style, looks at the emergence of voguing as a case study in radical performance from the 1960s countercultural movement. His research, which is also interesting when read in the context of Harrell’s intertextual performance revisions, departs from an understanding of the body as a living political archive in order to map out the different legacies and embodied histories that intersect via the drag ball culture that emerged from Harlem in the 1960s. He considers the ways in which minorities use their bodies to produce dissenting forms of beauty, subjectivity and desire to extend beyond the individual into a terrain of “collective struggles and minority resistance.”<sup>519</sup> The citational and performative power of these types of gestures is therefore brought to the forefront. Furthermore, Madison Moore argues that the drag ball, from which the tradition of voguing emerges, is a dance form tied to poorer communities who use the street as a public performance space and has always been the place where “queer people of colour have removed themselves from the gendered and racist politics of everyday life and created their own unique social worlds and aesthetic interventions.”<sup>520</sup> Moore argues that the delicate traces of “black gay culture”<sup>521</sup> lacing the context of Harrell’s dance works and the polemical question

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**515** ——— Dick Hebdige, “Posing...Threats, Striking...Poses: Youth, Surveillance, and Display,” *SubStance* 11, no. 4, Issue 37-38 (1982/1983): 68-88.

**516** ——— Ibid., 82.

**517** ——— Ibid., 86.

**518** ——— Sabel Gavaldon, “VOZ RARA – To Strike a Pose is to Pose a Threat,” talk by Sabel Gavaldon, 21 October 2017, 11, <https://grand-union.org.uk/gallery/to-strike-a-pose-is-to-pose-a-threat-a-talk-with-sabel-gavaldon/>.

**519** ——— Sabel Gavaldon, “A Museum of Gesture,” exhibition guide by La Capella, Barcelona, 27 November 2013, [https://issuu.com/sabel/docs/a\\_museum\\_of\\_gesture\\_2013](https://issuu.com/sabel/docs/a_museum_of_gesture_2013).

**520** ——— Moore, “Walk for Me,” 16.

**521** ——— Ibid., 18.

tying voguing to postmodern dance make his work compelling. He claims that the main difference between the two aesthetic forms is that postmodern dance questioned the rubrics of dance, whereas voguing facilitated an interrogation of queerness and “queer world-making.”<sup>522</sup> In this sense, the divergent histories of the voguing scene, where members extracted themselves from their quotidian reality to create almost phantasmagorical personalities as an alternative ‘authentic self’, and the experimental dance scene housed at Judson Church, where members inserted themselves into the social aesthetic fabric of the everyday in search for more authentic ways of being, frame the specificity of Harrell’s work.

Dramaturge Martin Hargreaves, in his *Hysterical Seduction Workshop*<sup>523</sup> offers a valuable lens of critique on posing as a stylised and inherently citational gestural movement lexicon via Susan Sontag’s *Notes on Camp*<sup>524</sup> as flamboyant and duplicitous mannerisms susceptible to a double interpretation that is extricated from the residuum that preoccupied the aesthetic of Judson Dance Theater. He argues for its representational validity within the current passage of dance into the museum and gallery in the following statement:

If one of the dominant modes in which dance has entered the gallery is through a focus on the labour of the body as a resistance to the circulation of fetish object and the accumulation of capital, then we might want to argue that a main trope has been the valorisation of the non-spectacular body, the ‘pedestrian’, or even the actual or real body of the artist with strong reference to the spirit of the Judson Church Collective. There has been another tendency however, towards the excessively theatrical, the wildly gesticular, the hysterically expressive. This staging of the body does not ruin the smooth operations of reproduction through refusal but through excess. One way to think through this is the sensibility of Camp.<sup>525</sup>

Herein, Hargreaves hails a more complex tracing back to the notion of duplicitous gestures or double movements via feminist and queer choreography to a body politics of undecidability that taps the tenets of double interpretation and coils through “chains of quotations.”<sup>526</sup> He poses a potent

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522 ——— Ibid., 19.

523 ——— Martin Hargreaves, “Hysterical Seduction: On Camp, Duplicity and Quotation,” description of Dance Critical Theory Group Public Workshop, Chisenhale Dance Space, London, 25 August 2016, <https://www.chisenhaledancespace.co.uk/whatson/hysterical-seduction/>.

524 ——— Susan Sontag, “Notes on ‘Camp,’” in *Against Interpretation and Other Essays* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1966), 284-289.

525 ——— Hargreaves, “Hysterical Seduction.”

526 ——— Ibid., 2.

question that challenges the smooth yet divergent aesthetic blend of voguing and pedestrian movement that Harrell proposes in the following: “How might seduction help us think through the body as implicated in visual cultures of susceptibility and openness whilst also thinking through wit as a site of resistant agency and performative subjectivity?”<sup>527</sup>

Harrell articulates the complicity of citational and performative gestural relevance in his work when he states that: “The voguing tradition uses constructions of gender, artificiality and social roles to critique authenticity and democracy’s representation – creating what they term ‘realness.’”<sup>528</sup> The notion of ‘realness,’ as it pertains to original ballroom culture, is one of the work’s key occupations as a performative route to authenticity. This is articulated by Dorian Corey in the famous documentary *Paris is Burning* by Jennie Livingston from which Harrell’s *Twenty Looks or Paris is Burning at The Judson Church* title derives. Realness in this context means undetectable as a mode of self-presentation and preservation that allows the performer to “walk out of that ballroom into the sunlight and onto the subway and get home, and still have all their clothes and no blood running off their bodies.”<sup>529</sup> Realness here is a tactical mode of authenticity as a matter of appearance and perception which fundamentally departs from a performative mode that is ontologically identical to the construction of self via an inner essence but predicated rather on the condition of being unidentifiable – perhaps akin to a type of bodily presentation as both refusal and (non)performance. The layered constructions of posing as the embodiment of realness via the minoritarian politics of the drag ball, performs a double-rupture in Harrell’s work in the Barbican Gallery as the performers become entangled in a complex interplay of misfires within the representational field where their citational force and performative carriage as queer racial subjects is counteracted by the minimalist movement language of the postmodern canon, with a constructed yet opaque reference to the irony implicated in neutralising a movement language that derives from excess. They seem to appear rather from within another movement lexicon that is already circumscribed and naturalised by the hegemonic surveillance of the gallery apparatus and severed from its original body politic and queer identity politics. In this sense, Harrell’s performative response to Yvonne’s Rainer’s “No to Camp” utterance in the *No Manifesto* via the Wall Dance seems ambiguous in its playful sardonicism that ‘posing’ is always-already a chain of quotations. Madison Moore poses a challenging question aimed at Harrell’s chosen aesthetic platform, which seems to counter Judson Dance Theater’s radical removal

<sup>527</sup> ——— Ibid., 2.

<sup>528</sup> ——— Harrell, “A Conversation between Trajal Harrell and Leila Hasham,” 23.

<sup>529</sup> ——— Dorian Cory, *Paris is Burning*, documentary film by Jennie Livingstone (New York: Academy Entertainment, Off White Productions, 1991).

of dance from the hallmarks of institutionalised art and reinsertion into the social strata of the street and where voguing was invented in the following: “What was to gain by presenting his works in high-powered art institutions rather than on house ball floors or in nightclubs?”<sup>530</sup> Furthermore, Michael McLean claims that there is a temptation to read Harrell’s work in terms of “erasure, re-insertion and the righting of historical injustices”<sup>531</sup> and argues that there is real scope for redress as postmodern dance is overwhelmingly white, which follows the critical route of Chapter 1.3. McLean also claims that sexuality is strangely illegible in much of the Judson Dance Theater’s work, given that many of its key figures are or were queer. This can be ascribed to their collective interest in diffusing the binary construction of sexuality in much of dance’s historical discourse by ‘performing’ gender as inconsequent. The insertion of ‘posing’ into the seemingly genderless vocabularies of postmodern dance as a divergent lexicon of stylised gendered embodiment was therefore a device that Harrell used to stall contemporary dance’s more deadening tendencies as a dossier of gesture and citation that generates social fiction via choreography as cultural mythology. In light of the work and its composite parts as semi-historical conjectures, Harrell suggests that the intertwining of these disparate dance vocabularies functions as an archival mechanism to disclose dance’s historical gaps and interrupt the art-historical canon through the embodied transmission of both postmodern dance and voguing, in an attempt to critique the smooth consumption of Rainer’s ‘no’s’ in the manifesto’ and turn them into “maybes.”<sup>532</sup>

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530 ——— Moore, “Walk for Me,” 22.

531 ——— Matthew McLean, “Made to Measure: Trajal Harrell talks ‘realness’, daydreaming, and his performance *Twenty Looks or Paris is Burning* at the Judson Church (S),” *Frieze*, 27 June 2016, 3, <https://frieze.com/article/made-measure?language=de>.

532 ——— Moore, “Walk for Me,” 22.

## 2.2.2 Discussion.

The critical discussion of Harrell's *Hoochie Koochie* is two-fold. Firstly, its performative charge as a work of art with a particular aesthetic remit and spectatorial conditioning in the Barbican Gallery as the matrix of production and reception is analysed. Sabine Gebhardt Fink's critical notion of the "twofold performative act"<sup>533</sup> is positioned as a departure point to examine the "signifying operation"<sup>534</sup> of the performance. Secondly, Jasbir K. Puar's notion of the "body as 'queer assemblage'"<sup>535</sup> is implemented to discern the performative ruses of the movement and gestural languages that the choreographic score offers, alongside an interrogation of the bodily schema of racial and sexed subjects as overtly stylized bodies that is constructed in the work via their acts of aesthetic production.

The experience of revisiting Harrell's *Hoochie Koochie* at the Barbican Gallery on multiple occasions instigated a process of critical reflection that was multi-layered and generative. The distinctiveness of each witnessing of the work became productive in uncovering the deeper performative, aesthetic and affective address as well as the layering of reception within the scopic complex of the gallery apparatus. A performative reading of the work itself foregrounds the inherent and seeming tension between the aesthetic languages of voguing and postmodern dance via Judson Dance Theater. Furthermore, the apparent removal from their original artistic socialities via clubs, community halls and urban street cultures and relocated to the Barbican Gallery context configured an understated relation between the performers and their queering of the gestural languages of minimalist dance and voguing and the majority white audiences. Sabine Gebhardt Fink's conception of the twofold performative act in addressing art works via performance theory is significant in that it allows a pervasive reading of a work's operation across multiple systems of signification to account for differentiated recipient models in "performative artistic acts situated between artist and addressee."<sup>536</sup> The spectatorial framework for the choreographic work and the performative marking of the bodies producing the aesthetic labour triggered numerous complexities. The scheduled performance encounters and often unmarked spatial parameters resulted in a protuberant passage of spectators caught

**533** ——— Sabine Gebhardt Fink, "Talking Back and Queer Reading - An Essay on Performance Theory and its Possible Impacts on Dissemination of Art," *OnCurating* 6, "1, 2, 3, - Thinking About Exhibitions" (2010): 23.

**534** ——— Ibid., 25.

**535** ——— Puar, "Queer Times, Queer Assemblages," 121.

**536** ——— Gebhardt Fink, "Talking Back and Queer Reading," 25.

between aesthetic cross-currents where Rainer's dictum of "the seeing difficulty" affiliated with dance's dissolution across wider aesthetic fields signals the curatorial difficulty of assigning an appropriate mode of affective attention and spatial economy to the performative encounter. It also unveils the challenges of the roaming gaze bolstered by the gallery environment's mechanism for performative display. As a result, the seductive openness via the camp aesthetic – as proposed by Hargreaves and Hebdige's insinuation of a ripe, embodied and subversive reciprocal gaze inherent in performative posing – is perhaps impermeable within the frame of the Barbican, as the recourse to the sensitive and responsive attentiveness and affective transformation that communion with excessive performative bodies afford becomes slightly distanced. Consequently, the spectrum of spectatorial gazing upholds the sovereignty of the gallery as aesthetic apparatus by decentering the situated body politic of the original dance forms and deeming the social politics of transmission via specific bodies in the institution of the Barbican Gallery as less transformative.

In *Queer Times, Queer Assemblages*<sup>537</sup> Puar posits a deliberate ontological positioning of the affective range of bodies entangled with discursive fields and layers of signification. She states the following:

Queerness as an assemblage moves away from excavation work, de-privileges a binary opposition between queer and not-queer subjects, and, instead of retaining queerness exclusively as dissenting, resistant, and alternative (all of which queerness importantly is and does), it underscores contingency and complicity with dominant formations. queerness as assemblage enables attention to ontology in tandem with epistemology, affect in conjunction with representational economies, within which bodies...interpenetrate, swirl together, and transmit affects to each other.<sup>538</sup>

She argues that this provides a more rhizomatic acknowledging of intersectional and identarian paradigms within the signification systems of representation in corroboration with the spatial, temporal and corporeal conjunctions, implosions and rearrangements that affective trajectories summon. She claims that the shift from intersectionality to assemblage, closely related to the Deleuzian assemblage as "a series of dispersed but mutually implicated networks,"<sup>539</sup> corrodes the divisible analytics of race, class, gender and sexuality bound to the politics of intersectionality and attunes rather to the interlaced forces that fuse and disperse "time, space,

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537 ——— Puar, "Queer Times, Queer Assemblages," 121–139.

538 ——— Ibid., 121–122.

539 ——— Ibid., 127.

and body against linearity, coherency, and permanency.<sup>540</sup> Furthermore, she contends that intersectional approaches often demand “the knowing, naming, and thus stabilizing of identity across space and time”<sup>541</sup> that repudiate the fictive and performative processes that underscore notions of identification and subject formation. This can be read in tandem with José Esteban Muñoz’s conception of “disidentification performances”<sup>542</sup> through which he articulates the hybrid transformations and horizontal synchronicity of a range of symbolic systems and aesthetic strategies that minoritarian subjects need to interface with to “activate their own senses of self.”<sup>543</sup> Both voguing and the quotidian tendencies of postmodern dance are performative aesthetic strategies of bodily and gestural inscription with political implications beyond their aesthetic representation. Both these approaches to practice originated in subcultural circuits where minoritarian subjects, albeit mostly white in the case of Judson Dance Theater, created counter-public spheres that encouraged the fictive mingling of liminal performative identities beyond the gamut of intersectional figures. Another valuable interpretative course is again via Sabine Gebhardt Fink’s twofold performative act, as it allows a clear interrogation of the performative act alongside a re-interpretation of Butler’s theories on performativity within larger arenas of representational apparatus via the context of performance art. In accordance with this double measure of activation, the initial charge of the performative act determines agency within the quotidian scope. The tributary act that is of particular interest in relation to the performative inscription and gestural languages of *Hoochie Koochie*, is “re-enacted and re-presented in the field of performance art.”<sup>544</sup> Although Harrell states that he did not want his relationship to the citational spirals and contexts of voguing to be “based in identity politics,”<sup>545</sup> the choreographic apparatus that prescribes the affective nexus of the bodies and the aesthetic labour of their performative acts in *Hoochie Koochie* designates a intersection of racial and sexual schemata via “queerness-as-sexual-identity”<sup>546</sup> that challenges the performativity of the ‘given body’ and the potential for agential breaching. Furthermore, the gestural articulation through the inherited, albeit displaced, vocabularies under the signs of voguing and postmodern dance as closed circuits of gestural vocabularies performed in set intervals repletes an assigned meaning to the bodies

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540 ——— Ibid., 128.

541 ——— Ibid.

542 ——— José Esteban Muñoz, *Disidentifications: Queers of Colour and the Performance of Politics* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

543 ——— Ibid., 5.

544 ——— Gebhardt Fink, “Talking Back and Queer Reading,” 23.

545 ——— Moore, “Walk for Me,” 18.

546 ——— Puar, “Queer Times, Queer Assemblages,” 121.

of the performers as carriers of transmissive meaning and generators of performative affect. The parameters of the performative acts in the Barbican Gallery cannot be construed as inscribing binary or essentialist operations, as the seeming intermingling or affective transformation between the performers, their performative languages, bodily stylisation or within the performative encounters with spectators are mostly robust. The melange of discursive, affective, aesthetic and artistic-political terrains is a powerful residue of the body politic and practices of both voguing via the subcultures of drag ball and postmodern dance's penetration of the residuum. These are the "dispersed but mutually implicated networks"<sup>547</sup> that the assemblage of *Hoochie Koochie* inherits and makes apparent. It is precisely via the repetition of stylised and patterned bodily inscription in twofold performative acts, situated in a socio-representational apparatus, that agency and artistic practice can be regenerated and implicated in a "politics of divergence."<sup>548</sup> The limits of deviation in *Hoochie Koochie* within the apparatus of the Barbican Gallery is unclear, as the disciplinary practice of discourse is covertly operational within the relative relations of power. The signifying operation of *Hoochie Koochie* seems akin to an aesthetic-theoretical exercise and radical artistic practice as it starts to set in motion renewed relations between the multiplicity of performative identities, subjectivities, ideological apparatus and material legacies of potential historical relations between voguing and postmodern dance in order to facilitate affective transformation and transgress "the seeing difficulty." Harrell's intention of turning Yvonne Rainer's "no's" in the 1965 manifesto into "maybes" signals its performative activation via agonistic artistic operation in response to the manifestorial hailing.

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547 ——— Ibid., 127.

548 ——— Gebhardt Fink, "Talking Back and Queer Reading," 23.

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# CHAPTER 3

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## 3. Performativity as Method

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### 3.1 Expanding the Practice: Reassembling “Relations-in-Motion.”

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Performativity as a methodological approach, as it is rendered in this book, is a multi-nodal configuration of interconnected and co-emergent discursive and affective processes that essentially coil though the twin peaks of curatorial and choreographic gestures and the contingent material(s), occurrences, events, encounters, bodies and subjectivities that they generate in the museum. Furthermore, performativity as method in this context is also nebulously entangled in the institutional and exhibitionary complex<sup>549</sup> – and the subsequent relationship between spectacle and surveillance – of both the white cube and the black box and therefore extends any potential rupture via the iterability of its affects into an ever-evolving and expanding field of cross-disciplinary artistic practice and research. It also acknowledges the art-historical and contemporary disciplinary contours of the choreographic and curatorial fields set out in Chapters 1.1 - 1.4. These overlapping considerations strongly relate to the proposition of curation as a performative mode of artistic research presented by Jane Linden and Patrick Campbell in *Expanded practice and curation as creative process: an introductory assemblage*.<sup>550</sup> They advocate for the methodological precision of expanded and performative research-driven artistic practices to track the complex ways in which unwieldy creative processes expend through the body and “evade, obfuscate or otherwise illuminate

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**549** ——— Tony Bennett, “The Exhibitionary Complex,” *New Formations*, no. 4 (Spring 1988): 73-102.

**550** ——— Jane Linden and Patrick Campbell, “Expanded Practice and Curation as Creative Process: An Introductory Assemblage,” *Repertório: Teatro & Dança* 19, no. 27 (2016): 11-20.

more traditional, discursive forms.”<sup>551</sup> This is a radical departure from the art-historical disciplinary remit of curation where the primary function of the curatorial subject licensed proprietary power over any output, material, meaning or knowledge produced. Benjamin Buchloh states that traditionally the curator’s central purpose was “to function as an agent who offers exposure and potential prominence in exchange for pertaining a moment of actual practice that is about to be transformed into myth and superstructure”<sup>552</sup> – instilling a vertical and hierarchical axis for power relations within representational and institutional systems. Performativity, as an artistic-research paradigm for curatorial practice, is therefore essentially process-orientated and more horizontally or laterally communicative. According to Linden and Campbell, it also permits an “explorative, discursive and importantly performative environment which was seen to be conceptually and pragmatically of value as an alternative forum unheeded by the constraints of a conventional exhibiting/public performance platform,”<sup>553</sup> thereby reassembling the ongoing process of meaning-making “away from the ‘resolved’ public-facing product as evidence of research.”<sup>554</sup> Ergo, curation, as an expanded artistic process, can deterritorialise and re-emerge in other formations via the research trajectory, producing “an interlinked constellation of (interdisciplinary) outputs”<sup>555</sup> as a “fluid, material reconfiguring of mutating ideas, an extended imaginative consideration of emergent forms and strategies.”<sup>556</sup> Simon Ellis, in *That Thing Produced*,<sup>557</sup> similarly describes the artistic-research compound via performance practice in the following:

The distinctiveness of these exchanges rests with the ambiguity and slipperiness of the affective responses and thinking set in motion by artistic-research. That is, any performative offer through artistic-

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**551** ——— Ibid., 14.

**552** ——— Benjamin Buchloh, “Since Realism there was...” in *L’Exposition Imaginaire: The Art of Exhibiting in the Eighties*, eds. Evelyn Beer and Riet de Leeuw (The Hague: Rijksdienst Beeldende Kunst, 1989), 98.

**553** ——— Linden and Campbell, “Expanded Practice and Curation as Creative Process,” 13.

**554** ——— Ibid.

**555** ——— Ibid., 15.

**556** ——— Ibid., 15.

**557** ——— Simon Ellis, “That Thing Produced,” in *A World of Muscle, Bone & Organs: Research and Scholarship in Dance*, eds. Simon Ellis, Hetty Blades and Charlotte Waelde (Coventry: C-DaRE, 2018), 480-498, <https://www.coventry.ac.uk/research/research-directories/research-news/2018/c-dare-e-book/>.

research, makes possible an unpredictable and unimaginable number of understandings and affects.<sup>558</sup>

Analogously, dance scholar Kim Vincs, in *Rhizome/Myzone: A Case Study in Studio-based Dance Research*,<sup>559</sup> adopts Deleuze and Guattari’s rhizomatic knowledge model to address the often experienced methodological dilemmas between practice, theory and situated subjectivity, identity and politics within formal academic research contexts and argues that performative practice “inevitably sabotages and exceeds the most carefully targeted research questions.”<sup>560</sup> It is also clear that Linden and Campbell draw explicitly from Deleuze and Guattari’s notion of the ‘assemblage’ knowledge-convex as a conceptual model for expanded curatorial research and practice and relay the following explication:

An assemblage comprises two segments, one of content, the other of expression. On the one hand it is a machinic assemblage of bodies, of actions and passions, an intermingling of bodies reacting to one another; on the other hand it is a collective assemblage of enunciation, of acts and statements, of incorporeal transformations attributed to bodies.<sup>561</sup>

This fundamental re-composition of the behaviour of curation as an artistic process of research foregrounds how it functions rather than what its products primarily mean, thereby evading the primacy of stifling representational and interpretative hegemonies. Linden and Campbell also argue that the “emergent, complex, unsettling relationships provoked by a continuing praxis”<sup>562</sup> necessarily intertwine the political valence of artistic inquiry with its aesthetic qualities, as its conduct becomes central in valuing and evaluating its impact and effects on the world via “bodies and enunciations.”<sup>563</sup> They conclude that the reorientation of curation towards an expanded research and creative process already exemplifies “the ways in which the layered decision-making processes informing the facture of artistic assemblages resonates with a curatorial practice, both within and

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**558** ——— Ibid., 487.

**559** ——— Kim Vincs, “Rhizome/MyZone: A Case Study in Studio-based Dance Research,” in *Practice as Research. Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry*, eds. Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 99-112.

**560** ——— Ibid., 100.

**561** ——— Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 103.

**562** ——— Linden and Campbell, “Expanded Practice and Curation as Creative Process,” 16.

**563** ——— Ibid.

beyond the white-box space of the gallery.”<sup>564</sup> This is also developed in the context of an expanded performance practice as a research framework by Joanne ‘Bob’ Whalley and Lee Miller in *Ghostings: The Hauntologies of Practice*.<sup>565</sup> They argue comparably that “praxical bodies” abstain from revealing their citational and embodied traces through purely discursive frameworks, and as a result their enunciations often misfire beyond the black box or “the material context of artistic practice.”<sup>566</sup> These aspects, considered primarily from performative research-driven contexts, allow inter-subjective dynamics to inform curatorial strategies so that, as expanded practice, curation can “potentially be positioned as subversive acts.”<sup>567</sup>

A further condition for methodological precision within the performative paradigm of curatorial artistic-research is an ideologically contingent shift from Tony Bennett’s exhibitionary complex to Griselda Pollock’s exhibitionary encounter. Bennett’s extensively circulated *The Exhibitionary Complex*<sup>568</sup> trails Douglas Crimp’s initial conceptual endeavour in applying Foucault’s power-bound theories of “panopticism” from *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*<sup>569</sup> to museums. Bennett considers the art-historical exhibition interface of museological institutions and the subsequent transference between spectacle and surveillance as the passage from the spatial politics of the museum’s social scale in instructing ‘exemplary public discipline’ via parameters of roving civic confinement as scripted modern subject formation. Griselda Pollock’s converse revisionist exploration of the substitutionary concept of the exhibitionary encounter from *What if Art Desires to be Interpreted? Remodelling Interpretation after the ‘Encounter-Event’*<sup>570</sup> offers a model hinged on the politics of difference via “an understanding of interpretation as a collaborative activity solicited by the artwork as an event that precipitates an encounter with difference and thus extends the viewer, rather than instructs them, in given scripts of cultural meaning.”<sup>571</sup>

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564 ——— Ibid.

565 ——— Joanne ‘Bob’ Whalley and Lee Miller, “Ghostings: The Hauntologies of Practice,” *Repertório: Teatro & Dança* 19, no. 27 (2016): 28-36.

566 ——— Ibid., 29.

567 ——— Linden and Campbell, “Expanded Practice and Curation as Creative Process,” 17.

568 ——— Tony Bennett, “The Exhibitionary Complex,” 73-102.

569 ——— Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1977).

570 ——— Griselda Pollock, “What if Art Desires to be Interpreted? Remodelling Interpretation after the ‘Encounter-Event,’” *Tate Papers* 15 (Spring 2011), accessed 18 January 2018, <https://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/15/what-if-art-desires-to-be-interpreted-remodelling-interpretation-after-the-encounter-event>.

571 ——— Ibid.

Pollock describes the ideological undertones in the seismic shift via the exhibitionary encounter as follows when she states that it is:

a concept dense with accumulated and contradictory genealogies. These allocate space for several elements: the artworks as material objects (but also as images and texts), the space of their arrangement and the phenomenological encounter with them, the participating visitor, viewer or agent of the encounter, the invitation to the encounter generated by one who has taken responsibility for the assemblage and the institutionalised occasion without imagining that his or her initiating proposition or criteria for choice and arrangements holds any authority. The invitation initiates the occasion for several lines of potential engagement and conversation between what is there, who is there, what is not there but could be, what will be done there and what the event will do. Performative and argumentative, invitational yet propositional, interventionist yet located within an institutional framing, the project is paradoxical and beyond reason [...].<sup>572</sup>

She furthers this rationale by claiming that the notion of the exhibitionary encounter makes possible, from the locale of the curatorial gesture, a double movement of inscription into systemic meaning by the producing subject that – similar to the entrance into and return from the symbolic order via sexual difference or Barthes’ *Mythologies* as a secondary yet ideologically formed representation system discussed in Chapter 1.2. – manifests as a complex assemblage that is culturally and communally “mediated by the manner in which the traces have been ‘interpreted’ by others.”<sup>573</sup> This allows a fundamental performative shift in the ontological function of the encounter with art by providing an opening for research drivers to ask context-specific questions about “what artistic practice is doing”<sup>574</sup> as well as ‘where’ and ‘when’ and ‘by whom’ that doing occurs. In this way, a performative research orientation fosters endless spirals of potential relations between interpretation and affect to be set in motion so that the act of art-making – and in context of this book, the curatorial gesture – registers creative and performative difference via “the economy of a complex material, intellectual, sensuous, affective and social practice.” Linden and Campbell similarly argue that more explicitly performative research paradigms in art-making and curation allow a phenomenological encounter with the assemblage that enables an “interventionist potential, tempered by, but not restricted to, the institutional contexts in which they

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572 ——— Ibid.

573 ——— Ibid.

574 ——— Ibid.

are embedded.”<sup>575</sup> Hence, the poetic and performative curatorial assemblage is “a complex citational praxis involving and affecting bodies”<sup>576</sup> within the constant yet emergent present of performance practice and research as ceaselessly “re-assembled and re-signified.”<sup>577</sup> Essentially, the performativity paradigm as a research-driven model for expanded curatorial processes assembles the relational and ideologically charged conditions of performance practice via “disparate, synchronistic and sometimes confrontational encounters of different voices”<sup>578</sup> as fertile fields of intellectual and practical experimentation. Within this work, the constitutive curatorial act and choreographic event, *Precarious Assembly*, is evaluated as a performative assemblage via the research trajectories adduced from the above-mentioned critical routes. Terminological and methodological clarity is still necessary, however, as the nomenclature surrounding the performative turn and the cascading critical engagement of the performative as a cultural index – as discussed in Chapter 1.1. – causes amorphous and at times confusing applications across the artistic-research domain. The array of ancillary academic texts exploring the reach of performativity within performance discourse is well documented. Erika Fischer-Lichte’s *Culture as Performance*<sup>579</sup> and the more prominent *The Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics*<sup>580</sup> have been prolific for scholarship pertaining to performativity within new theatre practices in Europe. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s seminal contribution via *Performativity and Performance*<sup>581</sup> has been pervasive within American contemporary theatre studies. Furthermore, Chantal Pontbriand’s *Parachute: The Anthology (1975-2000) Performance & Performativity [Vol. II]*<sup>582</sup> has had a significant impact on Francophone performance scholarship and beyond, and her more recent *Per/Form: How to Do Things with[out] Words*,<sup>583</sup> – the publication that followed the performative exhibition with the same title at CA2M

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575 ——— Linden and Campbell, “Expanded Practice and Curation as Creative Process,” 18.

576 ——— Ibid.

577 ——— Ibid.

578 ——— Ibid., 19.

579 ——— Erika Fischer-Lichte, “Culture as Performance,” *Modern Austrian Literature* 42, no. 3 (Special Issue: Performance, 2009): 1-10.

580 ——— Erika Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics* (Routledge: London and New York, 2008).

581 ——— Andrew Parker and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Performativity and Performance* (Routledge: London and New York, 1995).

582 ——— Chantal Pontbriand, *Parachute: The Anthology (1975-2000) Performance & Performativity [Vol. II]* (Zurich: JRP/Ringier and Les Presses du Réel, 2013).

583 ——— Chantal Pontbriand, *Per/Form: How to Do Things with[out] Words* (Zurich, Madrid: Sternberg Press, co-published with CA2M Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo, 2014).

Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo in Madrid – argues that both performing and performance are concepts that activate reality. In the exhibition text, she claims that, “Performativity (what performing and performance activate) offers resistance against a homogenization of the world. It leads to renewal, change, and expands the potentiality of things and beings.”<sup>584</sup> Although Pontbriand’s contributions offer a clear departure from performativity’s origin in Austinian Speech Act Theory, none of the above-mentioned texts offer an explicit research-driven route that straddles the methodological coupling of practice and theory. It is also not within the parameters of this book to explore the divergent critical trails of the aforementioned texts and their impact on contemporary Performance Studies.

Barbara Bolt’s *Artistic Research: A Performative Paradigm?*<sup>585</sup> and Brad Haseman’s *A Manifesto for Performative Research*<sup>586</sup> and *Rupture and Recognition: Identifying the Performative Research Paradigm*<sup>587</sup> have anchored the terminological and methodological relay across creative practice and research. Bolt’s argument rests on the notion that “the performative force of art, that is, its capacity to effect ‘movement’ in thought, word and deed in the individual and social sensorium”<sup>588</sup> effectively enables “a reconfiguration of conventions from within.”<sup>589</sup> This generative potential is identified as a mode of research where art is both “productive in its own right as well as being data that could be analysed using qualitative and aesthetic modes.”<sup>590</sup> Performative research methodologies are therefore predicated on their inherent interdisciplinarity and their “material and social relationality.”<sup>591</sup> Commencing from the assertion, via Dorothea von Hantelmann, that all art is on some level ontologically performative and operates according to “repetition with difference,”<sup>592</sup> Bolt petitions a further clarification in its operation as a mode of research by claiming that the instruments of research “emerge as co-producers in collaborative and, in the case of audiences, participatory approaches that may not be pre-determined at the outset of the research.”<sup>593</sup> Brad Haseman’s rendition treads a critical path

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584 ——— Ibid.

585 ——— Barbara Bolt, “Artistic Research: A Performative Paradigm?” *Parse Journal* 3 (Summer 2016): 129 – 142.

586 ——— Brad Haseman, “A Manifesto for Performative Research,” *Media International Australia incorporating Culture and Policy* 118, no. 1 (2006): 98-106.

587 ——— Brad Haseman, “Rupture and Recognition: Identifying the Performative Research Paradigm,” in *Practice as Research*, 147-158.

588 ——— Bolt, “Artistic Research,” 131.

589 ——— Ibid.

590 ——— Ibid., 136.

591 ——— Estelle Barret and Barbara Bolt, *Practice as Research: Context, Method, Knowledge* (London: I.B. Tauris. 2007), 7.

592 ——— Ibid., 137.

593 ——— Estelle Barrett, “Introduction: Extending the Field: Invention, Applica-

closer to performativity's Austinian Speech Act Theory heritage as he elicits that the research production in and of itself can be seen to be performative. In *Tightrope Writing: Creative Writing Programs in the RQF Environment*,<sup>594</sup> Haseman claims that:

When research findings are presented as performative utterances, there is a double articulation with practice that brings into being what, for want of a better word, it names. The research process inaugurates movement and transformation. It is performative. It is not qualitative research: it is itself – a new paradigm of research with its own distinctive protocols, principles and validation procedures.<sup>595</sup>

In this way, performativity's research drivers focus on "process, participation, events, expressive actions and experience"<sup>596</sup> without reducing or contracting the outcomes via reportage. Rather, the performative research utterance or production convenes an antecedent link between the utterance and the 'thing' produced, to relay Simon Ellis again, that enacts effects in the world.

Bolt presents Derrida's notion of "différance" as the performative-research paradigm's cardinal recurrent dynamic of iterability and petitions Butler's expansion of Austin's theoretical speech act frame to determine that performativity includes bodily acts. To further secure her theoretical standpoint, Bolt also reviews von Hantelmann's original contribution in order to delineate that the theoretical capacity of performativity's reach grasps the overall "production of experience in contemporary art"<sup>597</sup> with the aim of arriving at a more layered and nuanced understanding of the processes that cultivate artistic research. She also argues that what is of value within the currency of performative artistic research is that performativity "contests the very notion of the subject"<sup>598</sup> via its iterative and citational practices as it perpetuates that which it names. Her prime

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tion and Innovation in Creative Arts Enquiry," in *Material Inventions: Applying Creative Arts Research*, eds. Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014): 3.

**594** ——— Brad Haseman, "Tightrope Writing: Creative Writing Programs in the RQF Environment," *TEXT* 11, no. 1 (April 2007): keynote address, 24 November 2006 for *Perilous Adventures: Creative Writing Practice and Research in the Higher Degree and Beyond, the Eleventh Annual Conference of the Australian Association of Writing Programs, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane*.

**595** ——— Ibid.

**596** ——— Barbara Bolt, "Artistic Research: A Performative Paradigm?" *Parse Journal* 3 (Summer 2016): 137.

**597** ——— Ibid.

**598** ——— Ibid., 138.

attestation, however, is that arts practice and research itself is inherently performative as it “enacts or produces “art” as an effect”<sup>599</sup> within particular socio-cultural contexts at a historical juncture to reveal the conventions of which it is a repetition.<sup>600</sup>

This also assures performativity’s central disposition as a research paradigm via its inherent re-iterability that, according to Bolt, has allowed consequential measures to ameliorate the apertures of the art-historical canon through re-iteration via more recent feminist, queer and postcolonial practices and scholarship.<sup>601</sup> The crux of this component of Bolt’s argument hinges on the concept that the performative research paradigm’s originary knowledge is divulged through the handling of iteration as a productive force and source of innovation and movement rather than through conscious acts of transgression alone.<sup>602</sup> As a research process, performativity definitively initiates transformation through iterability, as “repetition is never repetition of the same. It is always repetition of difference,”<sup>603</sup> so that the research conventions, as the concurrent context of theory and of practice, can chart the fissures that shift practice in the field. Bolt argues that this fundamental notion has allowed an understanding of “art as an effect and also what art does in the world.”<sup>604</sup> She also argues that performativity’s underlying principle of iterability is immanently “subject to the dynamics of *différance*”<sup>605</sup> and therefore always generative of difference so that, via Butler and Derrida, “originary knowledge emerges from the mutability that is inherent in iterability.”<sup>606</sup> It also accounts for the performative paradigm’s propensity to gauge the novel nature of artistic production.<sup>607</sup>

Bolt’s most valuable assertion in the context of this book is the drive for methodological clarity via the application of Austin’s proposed triadic relation between “the locutionary, illocutionary and the perlocutionary dimensions of the speech act”<sup>608</sup> to enact more precisely the notions of force or movement and effect within the research process. Bolt cites James Loxley’s monograph *Performativity*<sup>609</sup> to privilege the conception that the effect of the performative act is always predicated on the perlocutionary utterance. Loxley attests that the perlocutionary aspect of an utterance, in this instance the detailed naming of the research endeavour and its

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599 ——— Ibid.

600 ——— Ibid.

601 ——— Ibid., 139.

602 ——— Ibid.

603 ——— Ibid.

604 ——— Ibid.

605 ——— Ibid., 140.

606 ——— Ibid.

607 ——— Ibid.

608 ——— Ibid.

609 ——— James Loxley, *Performativity* (London: Routledge, 2007).

curatorial or choreographic gestures as performatives, examines any effect it “achieves on its hearers or readers that is a consequence of what is said,”<sup>610</sup> including any discursive, material or affective repercussions. Bolt suggests that the Austinian notions of the “illocutionary” and the “perlocutionary” provide an explicative focus and a means of addressing the distinct nature of performative productions. This is most clearly demonstrated in the discussion of *Precarious Assembly*, where the illocutionary utterance of the curatorial act, as an intentional and performative summons, offering or promise, sets in motion the more choreographic-oriented gesture of the perlocutionary effect or event itself with discreet and at times unpredictable effects on participants and spectators in the locale of the Whitworth Gallery. Bolt claims that the aim of a performative research paradigm is therefore not to position “correspondences but rather to recognise and ‘map’ the ruptures and movements that are created by artistic research,”<sup>611</sup> reiterating the assemblage of knowledge production via performative research. As artistic research is emergent and experiential, invariably implicating a situated approach to practice, Bolt suggests that it is precisely through “tracing the complex and multi-dimensional relation between the illocutionary and the perlocutionary”<sup>612</sup> that we may begin to “map the movement in concepts, understandings, methodologies, material practice, affect and sensorial experience that arises in and through the research experience.”<sup>613</sup> Hence, guided performative research questions that articulate what was revealed through the work or more importantly ‘what did the work do?’ assemble a fluid methodological continuum between the theoretical constructs of the research and experimentation via practice. The perlocutionary effects of the exhibitionary encounter and the inevitable shifts that arise via the social reality of the performative event instigates the potential transformative power of art via originary knowledge. Bolt argues that this shift or movement in thought, word and deed in the individual and social sensorium that is enabled through theories of performativity<sup>614</sup> is an internal reconfiguration of self that occurs through the experiential-performative capacity of art as comprehensively recognised in Dorothea von Hantelmann’s original bequest in *How to Do Things with Art: The Meaning of Art’s Performativity*. The reassembly of the phenomenological and experiential conditions of the exhibitionary encounter, its relational and discursive framing and the requisite “embodied experience that is central to our encounters with art”<sup>615</sup> are all encompassed within the performative research par-

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**610** ——— Ibid., 169.

**611** ——— Bolt, “Artistic Research,” 140.

**612** ——— Ibid., 141.

**613** ——— Ibid..

**614** ——— Ibid., 142.

**615** ——— Ibid.

agon. An incongruous omission by both Austin and von Hantelmann, however, even within von Hantelmann’s timely theoretical effort to restore specificity to the term via methodological precision within the expanded domain of contemporary art, excludes performance and performance art from the realm of art’s performativity. The suspension of both performance and performance art proper, in von Hantelmann’s appraisal at least, seems premised on more traditional conceptions of theatrical ‘enactment’ than the current pervasive iterability of contemporary performance and choreographic practice within museological arrangements. It is necessary to form a more inclusive rendition and theoretical purview for performative research processes to accompany the evolution and expansion of contemporary interdisciplinary artistic practice. Edward Scheer, in the felicitously titled article *How to Do Things with Performance Art*,<sup>616</sup> remedies this apparent exception. Scheer discerns the current ambit of the institutional mediation of performance art as a form of contemporary ritual and states that: “Within the art world performance art has taken its place as a particular modality of ritual and its effects are purely symbolic and, at best, redistribute the values, terms and experiences of art rather than the sensibilities of the larger population.”<sup>617</sup> Peter Sonderen, in *Of Theory, Performativity and Research*,<sup>618</sup> locates a similar account of the significance and aftermath of performance art and performativity via its absorption into art and research domains and claims that there is a “growing attention to ritual in place of myth. It is no longer myth – that is, the textual archetype – that is seen as the essential starting point, but the ritual itself in its execution.”<sup>619</sup> Dorothea von Hantelmann, who also designates the exhibition format of contemporary art practice as a distinctly modern social ritual within the cultural format of the museum,<sup>620</sup> corroborates the important supposition that the exhibitionary transformations of our current period require the staging of a new ritual, “after that of the exhibition.”<sup>621</sup> Her current book project, titled *The Exhibition: Transformations of a Ritual*, intimates the augmentation of the form via accumulating interdisciplinary

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**616** ——— Edward Scheer, “How to Do Things with Performance Art,” *Performance Research: A Journal of the Performing Arts* 19, no. 6 (2014): 90-98.

**617** ——— Ibid., 90.

**618** ——— Peter Sonderen, “Of Theory, Performativity and Research,” in *Unpacking Performativity* 9, eds. Gaby Allard and Peter Sonderen (Arnhem: ArtEZ Press, 2015), 52-65.

**619** ——— Ibid., 57.

**620** ——— Dorothea von Hantelmann, “The Exhibition. A Lecture Demonstration,” public talk, September 2018 at Museum of Contemporary Art, Belgrade, accessed 15 January 2019, <https://wscsd.com/index.php/2018/09/19/lecture-by-dorothea-von-hantelmann-the-exhibition-a-lecture-demonstration/>.

**621** ——— Ibid.

practices and contemporary art phenomena, including performance and performance art.

Scheer stations Austin's felicitous illocutionary or perlocutionary acts, as direct or indirect performatives, as pivotal in understanding performance art as a performative that "has an aesthetic quality and performs or produces a real change in the state of affairs,"<sup>622</sup> essentially re-engaging both performance and performativity as a creative and socio-political stratagem. He also charters this variance to enable the distinction "between the productions of existing entities (performances) and the forces that give the entity its shape (performatives),"<sup>623</sup> upholding Bolt's methodological differentiation. Scheer critiques von Hantelmann's insistence that performance art "operates with an ideology outside of the social systems of the museum and the market"<sup>624</sup> in *The Societal Efficacy of Art*<sup>625</sup> as the detrimental implication of this insistence essentially disqualifies any of its attempts at rupture from the status of the performative.<sup>626</sup> Scheer's main issue is that "the image of performance art constructed here,"<sup>627</sup> a consummate withdrawal from both the institution and the symbolic, is deficient and obsolete. He counters von Hantelmann by contending that performance art has "increasingly been absorbed by the institution and has lost some of its radical valency or its purely avant-garde function as a result but gained visibility and viability"<sup>628</sup> within the codex of iterability that outlines the fundamental conventions of art's performativity. This correlates with Adela Yawitz's inference that the neoteric immersion of performance art collectables within museum networks has radically altered the coordinates of experience within wider art economies.<sup>629</sup> Catherine Wood, in her conversation with Joanna Warsza titled *Reinventing the Template*,<sup>630</sup> ingeminates this by summing that the role of performance art within the canon of

**622** ——— Scheer, "How to Do Things with Performance Art," 94.

**623** ——— Ibid.

**624** ——— Dorothea von Hantelmann, *How to Do Things with Art*, 19.

**625** ——— Dorothea von Hantelmann, "The Societal Efficacy of Art," in *How to Do Things with Art*, 8-20.

**626** ——— Scheer, "How to Do Things with Performance Art," 94.

**627** ——— Ibid., 95.

**628** ——— Ibid.

**629** ——— Adela Yawitz, "Priceless Art: Performance Art in Economies of Disillusion," in *How to Frame: On the Threshold of Performing and Visual Arts*, eds. Barbara Gronau, Matthias von Hartz and Carolin Hochleichter (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2016), 115-120.

**630** ——— Joanna Warsza in conversation with Catherine Wood, "Reinventing the Template," in *Empty Stages, Crowded Flats: Performativity as Curatorial Strategy* (Performing Urgency #4), eds. Florian Malzacher and Joanna Warsza (Berlin: House on Fire, Alexander Verlag and Live Art Development Agency, 2017), 42-54.

modern art history made practicable a pre-curatorial performative mode by “making relations, actions and contingencies visible within the frame of art.”<sup>631</sup> A further revision by Scheer is directed at von Hantelmann’s claim that all art is ontologically performative, as no art is non-performative, while he claims rather that “art is always performative because it always involves a degree of interaction between the subject and the world [...] across the interfaces of the senses. This kind of thinking implies that the primary purpose of art making is not representational but directed at the activation of the senses.”<sup>632</sup> He claims that this inference is precisely why the composite inclusion of performance art within art’s performativity is vital, as the “experimental aesthetics and difficult subject positioning of performance art is clearly establishing a sensorial site but also a mode of engaging alternate possibilities for sensing the world and one’s place in it.”<sup>633</sup> Scheer’s conclusive critique inscribes the notion that performance art “can suspend identity,”<sup>634</sup> within the wider convention of art’s performative iterability and proffers Judith Butler’s original exposition that “the creative instance of the embodied performance in the drag act, in its very parodic citationality”<sup>635</sup> is a precedent of how resignification functions. Scheer essentially argues that “von Hantelmann’s radical exclusion of the embodied gestural practice of performance art is a misprision of its place in the development of the theory Butler espouses and that she relies on in her discussion of performative art.”<sup>636</sup> He argues instead, contiguous to Butler’s theory, that the notion of rupture can also be recognised via “the ‘performative force’ of acts that rehearse conventions in unconventional ways”<sup>637</sup> via tactical performative behaviours that recode relations and reshape their symbolic function, perforating their deeper ideological base. This is important as it also qualifies the legitimate mutable reorganisation of re-iterability within the performative-research domain by encoding the rudimentary experience of the exhibition as a type of socio-artistic script within itself via its context of research and practice.<sup>638</sup> Scheer advocates performance art’s effectual agential essence in “acting on and across subjects and the world”<sup>639</sup> via a play of forces that identifies “alternative arrangements, alternative compositions of the elements producing different outcomes in the social.”<sup>640</sup> Once the proposed integration

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631 ——— Ibid., 52.

632 ——— Edward Scheer, “How to Do Things with Performance Art,” 95.

633 ——— Ibid.

634 ——— Ibid., 94.

635 ——— Ibid., 95.

636 ——— Ibid.

637 ——— Ibid.

638 ——— Ibid.

639 ——— Ibid.

640 ——— Ibid., 96.

of performance art into the circumscribed conventions of art's performativity is gained, the status of art's representation can be surpassed via the manner in which the perlocutionary effect of the performative exhibitionary encounter is "perceived, felt, thought and experienced"<sup>641</sup> and handled through the re-composition of its iterability via the research paradigm.

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## 3.2 Performativity as Curatorial Strategy: Precarious Assemblages.

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Performativity, within the parameters of a curatorial and artistic research mode as outlined and discussed in the previous section, is already clearly traceable within the conception and discourse surrounding expanded curatorial practices. Irit Rogoff and Beatrice von Bismarck, in *Curating/Curatorial*,<sup>642</sup> describe it as:

the dynamic field where the constellational condition comes into being. It is constituted by the curating techniques [...], by the participants – the actual people involved who potentially come from different backgrounds, have different agendas and draw on different experiences, knowledges, disciplines – and finally by the material and discursive framings, be they institutional, disciplinary, regional, racial, or gender specific.<sup>643</sup>

Florian Malzacher's mandate for a more explicit manifestation of performativity as a curatorial strategy in *Bethinking One's Own Strengths: The Performative Potential of Curating*<sup>644</sup> and *Feeling Alive: The Performative Potential of Curating*,<sup>645</sup> reinforces the description above and appends further specifications for a more substantial uptake of performative tools along curatorial strata. He argues that more expedient applications of performativity across curatorial mechanisms and situations activate "a temporary

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**641** ——— Ibid.

**642** ——— Irit Rogoff and Beatrice von Bismarck, "Curating/Curatorial" in *Cultures of the Curatorial*, 21-38.

**643** ——— Ibid., 24-25.

**644** ——— Florian Malzacher, "Bethinking One's Own Strengths: the Performative Potential of Curating," in *Curating Live Arts*, xvi-xxi.

**645** ——— Florian Malzacher, "Feeling Alive: the Performative Potential of Curating," in *Empty Stages, Crowded Flats*, 28-41.

particular but porous reality that refers to many other realities”<sup>646</sup> to sanction “the idea of a curatorial, performative field that keeps things in flux and enables a playful (but serious) enacting of different positions.”<sup>647</sup> His rendition focusses on the understanding that the curatorial as performative attends to the present by devising a “particular temporary discursive as well as physical sphere by organizing encounters in time and space”<sup>648</sup> which inevitably choreographs “specific densities of spatial complexities.”<sup>649</sup> He also endorses performativity’s “permanent proximity to failure, chance, mistakes, and loss of control”<sup>650</sup> as crucial productive incentives for more context-responsive curatorial “spaces of negotiation.”<sup>651</sup> Malzacher proposes that performative curating follows an intrinsically constructivist credence that all contributing elements are affected by context and interaction as allocated via the liveness of the situation and the co-presence of all participants.<sup>652</sup> He also attests that the tools of live arts generate social and self-reflexive art forms as a “paradoxical machine that allows us to observe ourselves while being part of the performance”<sup>653</sup> to subdue the “artificial outside of pure criticality.”<sup>654</sup> Malzacher essentially contends that more explicit forms of performative curating “creates situations and practices that are symbolic and actual at once”<sup>655</sup> as social performances with open-ended results that highlight relational aspects and social and political implications.<sup>656</sup>

These conceptual assimilations, alongside the due insertion of performance art into the wider reaches of art’s performative covenants, are important for the expansion of the field via practical experimentation as processes of transposition that “continuously destabilize existing institutional structures, actors, approaches and formats.”<sup>657</sup> The performative research paradigm also enables the curatorial act to propound dialogical approaches and process-oriented methodologies that, according to Elisa

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646 ——— Malzacher, “Bethinking One’s Own Strengths,” xix.

647 ——— Ibid., xix.

648 ——— Ibid., xx.

649 ——— Ibid., xix.

650 ——— Ibid., xviii.

651 ——— Malzacher, “Feeling Alive,” 31.

652 ——— Ibid.

653 ——— Ibid.

654 ——— Ibid.

655 ——— Ibid.

656 ——— Ibid.

657 ——— Elisa Ricci, “Curatorial practices as counter-spaces: the expansion of a field,” in *Envisioning the Practice: International Symposium on Performing Arts Curation: Conference Proceedings*, organised by Dena Davida and Jane Gabriels, ed. Helen Simard (Montreal: Université du Québec à Montréal, 2014), 14.

Ricci in *Curatorial practices as counter-spaces: the expansion of a field*,<sup>658</sup> generate “a rhizome-like web of performative, dialogical, relational, visual and creative spaces.”<sup>659</sup> These constellated entanglements are precarious, as the process-oriented methodologies that illuminate them imply the risk of failure via a “compound of ritual and improvisation.”<sup>660</sup> Curatorial practices that foreground these aspects, which also reveal more incisive choreographic contingencies, create temporary spaces where processes of continuously fluctuating tensions between setting and improvising issue the generative and at times productive exchanges that develop heterogeneous formats for the long-term transmission of curatorial knowledge. This can be ascribed to the inherently performative nature of knowledge exchange itself, where curatorial practices that emphasise the generative devices of performance, choreographic and research processes simultaneously perform as preparatory rituals that rehearse potential social change. Judith Schwarzbart argues that the museum is, of course, not foreign to time-based practices since the Fluxus movement introduced a variety of time-based art forms to visual art contexts,<sup>661</sup> but the particular forms of sociality and moments of encounter accessed via more recent performative tools allow an “on-going renegotiation of the relationship between work and audience, or art and society.”<sup>662</sup> Florian Malzacher upholds that performativity, as an overt curatorial strategy, accentuates the notion of productive displacement by converting the instruments of theatre, dramaturgy or choreography to shift the institutional, aesthetic, and architectural frames of visual art contexts and change the grids of perception and reflection within the museum.<sup>663</sup> Catherine Wood extends this by proposing that the ‘choreography of human relations,’ as performance procedures that point to the provisional nature of relations via more explicit performative curatorial acts or gestures, has the potential to innovatively re-invent the template of visual art formats through methods of live fabulation that agitate “social scripts and make it perform a little differently.”<sup>664</sup> She also claims that this has a deeper ideological and institutional impact because “when you push against the norm, it registers internally – very much like the repeated, ritualised behaviour of performativity.”<sup>665</sup> Finally, Emelie Chhangur, in *What Can Contemporary Art Perform? And then Trans-*

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**658** ——— Ibid., 14-21.

**659** ——— Ibid., 15.

**660** ——— Ibid., 20.

**661** ——— Judith Schwarzbart, “Curating Performance on the Edge of the Art Museum,” in *Envisioning the Practice: International Symposium on Performing Arts Curation: Conference Proceedings*, 201.

**662** ——— Ibid., 206.

**663** ——— Malzacher, “Feeling Alive,” 36.

**664** ——— Warsza and Wood, “Reinventing the Template,” 52.

**665** ——— Ibid.

gress?<sup>666</sup> underlines a profound interconnection between the performative, curatorial, choreographic, research and artistic practice apogees by encouraging creative research processes that make curatorial projects perform the very ideas contained within them.<sup>667</sup> She argues that this involves orchestrating the conditions that allow bodies to move unencumbered through time and space via a curatorial practice-in-movement that “has the potential to seamlessly evolve aesthetic frameworks into social encounters.”<sup>668</sup> She claims that this sets in motion “relations between different people, ideas, and spaces where the brokering of divergent viewpoints, perspectives, and forms of artistic production is a central part of the curatorial work”<sup>669</sup> via “different historical, social, and culturally submerged practices.”<sup>670</sup> This relegation also highlights Ricci’s aforementioned fluctuating dynamic between setting and improvising as a precarious assemblage of evolving and co-emergent performative, curatorial and choreographic practices. Chhangur ultimately professes the following:

A choreographic form that engenders a curatorial act - that is, what brings things together in order to set things in motion through time and space – is what opens these static systems up to dynamic potentialities. The opening up may not always be generative but it is always productive, its impact sometimes manifesting itself much later than the time-space of the actual project because the curatorial act has set something in motion beyond our control.<sup>671</sup>

From the conjoined inferences in this chapter, it becomes practicable and plausible to discuss the methodological and research compendium of the practical component of the publication – namely, *Precarious Assembly* at the Whitworth Gallery in 2016 – as a precarious performative assemblage of generative illocutionary curatorial utterances and productive perlocutionary choreographic effects.

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**666** ——— Emelie Chhangur, “What Can Contemporary Art Perform? And then Transgress?” in *Envisioning the Practice: International Symposium on Performing arts curation: Conference Proceedings*, 1-13.

**667** ——— Ibid., 3.

**668** ——— Ibid., 2.

**669** ——— Ibid.

**670** ——— Ibid., 5.

**671** ——— Ibid., 7.

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## **CHAPTER 4**

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## 4. On Practice: *Precarious Assembly* Whitworth Gallery, Manchester, 4 August 2016.

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### 4.1 Project Overview: *Footnotes to the Process and Performance.*

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The practical curatorial event *Precarious Assembly*,<sup>672</sup> staged in the Whitworth Gallery in Manchester on 4 August 2016, was the culmination of an Arts Council England funded practice-based research series initiated by Accumulations: an artist-led and feminist-orientated collective consisting of performance and experimental movement artists Dani Abulhawa,<sup>673</sup> Hannah Buckley,<sup>674</sup> Amy Voris<sup>675</sup> and myself. *Precarious Assembly* formed part of a longitudinal research-output series entitled *The Female Lineage Project*, designed to engage a personal heritage and vernacular range of regional, national and international female and feminist activists, artists, curators, performers, practitioners and theorists who conscript our collective creative practices via four, broad themes. These span gendered spaces, women's work, feminist archival practices and intergenerational exchange. These themes were loosely explored by each of us via curated public-facing performative or exhibitionary frameworks. For example, Amy Voris curated a *shrine to women's work*<sup>676</sup> reflecting the matrilineal influences of the eleven invited artists' 'working' and 'playing' lives, effectively straddling notions of women's work and feminist archival practices.

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672 ——— *Precarious Assembly*, Accumulations website, accessed 20 August 2018, <https://www.accumulationsproject.com/precarius-assembly/>.

673 ——— <https://www.daniabulhawa.com/>.

674 ——— <http://www.hannah-buckley.com/>.

675 ——— <https://www.amyvoris.com/about/>.

676 ——— Voris Amy, *a shrine to women's work*, exhibition, 1 – 13 August 2016 at Studio 307, AWOL Studios, Hope Mill, Manchester, <https://www.accumulationsproject.com/a-shrine-to-womens-work/?wppa-occur=2&wppa-cover=0&wppa-album=31&wppa-photo=538>.

In turn, Hannah Buckley developed the *We Are Now*<sup>677</sup> year-long workshop series, a bi-weekly all-female intergenerational movement group that developed into an intergenerational live performance event.

*Precarious Assembly*, co-curated mostly by Dani Abulhawa and myself, formed the conclusive performative event that harnessed a tapestral interweaving of all the thematic threads. Our curatorial intension accentuated a combined interest in curating experimental movement, performance and body-based processes that were potentially a submerged or sub-altern part of artistic or performance practice in the sense that the work was unfinished, unpolished, and to some extent undisciplined. This resolve was part of our wider charge of diverting our interest in contemporary choreographic practices away from its partial inheritance as another orchestrating “command system”<sup>678</sup> and instead, focus on aspects of experimental dance and movement practice with a precedented ancestry in potential minoritarian processes, as relayed via Lepecki’s notion of minoritarian practices of becoming within performative processes of becoming-woman, becoming-black, or becoming-molecular, for instance. We were therefore particularly interested in inviting aspects of performative or artistic practice that engaged with this potential – that is, by way of notions of personal or subjective artistic lineages, or private or domestic aspects of practice that were not necessarily apposite to be staged or displayed. These aspects perhaps escaped the realm of visibility within artistic practice itself, thereby inviting potential modes of recovering ulterior performative embodiments. We were also interested in creating a curatorial framework where these unfolding, unpredictable and durational performance works could be removed from the spectre of theatrical display – including any haunting ideological connotations to modes of temporal and spectatorial capture via the black box – whilst also vexing the established and somewhat stable conventions of the exhibitionary display format within the Whitworth itself. We were not interested in replacing one framework with another, but rather acknowledged our desire to alleviate both historically loaded frameworks and inadvertently experiment with Claire Bishop’s suggested grey zone, as discussed in Chapter 2.1. We recognised that our curatorial conditions were therefore mostly a precarious assemblage, as multiple layers of potential performative activation were indeterminate, which in turn would accrue an unsettled dynamic between a constructed or choreographed performative exhibitionary ritual and incidental improvisational effects.

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**677** ——— Hannah Buckley, “We Are Now,” Accumulations website, accessed 21 August 2018, <https://www.accumulationsproject.com/we-are-now/>.

**678** ——— Please refer to discussion in Chapter 1.2 in regard to the constructed thread of hegemonic or majoritarian ideological apparatuses of capture.



Fig 14. Whitworth Gallery, Manchester, view of extension and gallery atrium.  
Image available at: <https://www.whitworth.manchester.ac.uk/about/policydocuments/>.

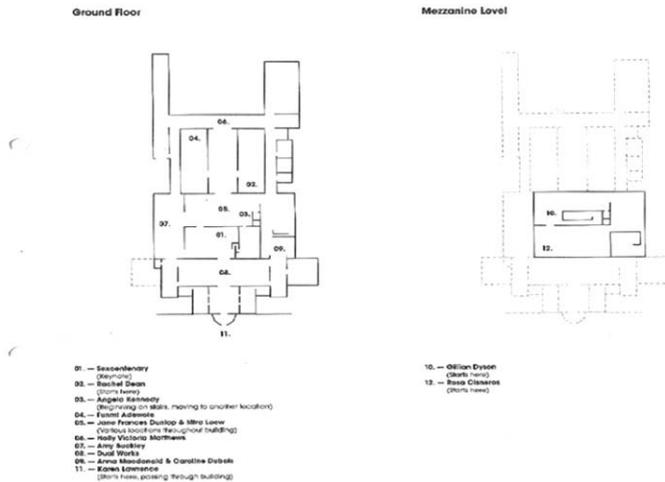


Fig 15. Scanned copy of pages 7-8 of performance schedule, information and documentation handout indicating the layout of the Whitworth Gallery and corresponding locations of starting points of performative schedule.

We approached the Whitworth with a proposition to populate the gallery spaces with serpentine, circuitous and prolonged spatio-temporal performances as part of their newly initiated Thursday Lates programme – a supplementary after-hours evening programme that platformed alternative templates of live performative encounters and socialities, similar to the addendum format of live events by gallery and museum programmes without a dedicated and integrated performance department or facilitated space. Our curated open-call for performance participants therefore functioned as an illocutionary performative directive, as



Fig 16. Performative exhibition view of performance schedule, information and documentation handout. Available at: <https://www.accumulationsproject.com/precarious-assembly/>. Photograph: © Christian Kipp.

we were interested in actuating mutinous performance practices as well as hailing potential minoritarian, subaltern or submerged aspects of practice, either as part of unfinished creative-performative practices or a part of the identity, subjectivity or personal lineage of the artists themselves, into the exhibitionary complex of the Whitworth.

The accompanying introductory text to the event, co-written by myself and Dani Abulhawa, evidenced in the scanned copies of the performative event handout in the ensuing pages and shared under the title *Footnotes to the Process and Performance*<sup>679</sup> articulates the layers of influence and thinking as part of the illocutionary curatorial presage.

For a full list of titles, descriptions and biographies of all twelve participating artists follow the link: <https://www.accumulationsproject.com/precarious-assembly/>.

<sup>679</sup> ——— Dani Abulhawa and Sarah Spies, “Footnotes to the Process and Performance,” *Precarious Assembly*, Accumulations website, accessed 12 December 2018, <https://www.accumulationsproject.com/precarious-assembly/>.



Fig 17. Scanned copy of front and back cover of performance schedule, information and documentation handout.

Fig 18. Scanned copy of pages 1-2 of performance schedule, introductory text and documentation handout.

Fig 19. Scanned copy of pages 3-4 of performance schedule, introductory text, artists details and documentation handout.

Fig 20. Scanned copy of pages 5-6 of performance schedule, introductory text, artists details and documentation handout.

## Footnotes to the Process and Performance

In May 2016, we sent out a call for proposals for *Precarious Assembly*. We asked artists to propose the creation or adaptation of a performance for a specific location within, throughout or around the Whitworth building that would engage with a lineage of female artists, activists and family heritage, and that would respond to the history of female artists and curators who have exhibited in the Whitworth throughout its 108-year history. The twelve projects that were selected represent a wealth of different approaches to contemporary body and/or movement-based practices that integrate live performance, installation and video work. Importantly, each of the projects presented as part of *Precarious Assembly* functioned as a portal into the artists' own somatic and artistic heritage drawn from unique family

histories, everyday encounters, educational experiences and social and personal politics.

The title and conceptual driver for Accumulations' *Precarious Assembly* comes from philosopher and gender theorist Judith Butler's most recent publication, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*.<sup>680</sup> Butler focuses on the realpolitik of bodies assembling in protest and argues that precarity – the destruction and diminishment of liveable conditions – has been a galvanising force in revising the role of the body and its concerted actions, gestures and performances in politics. She claims that the assembly of specifically marked bodies in specific places at specific times enacts an embodiment of political discourse that has an expressive dimension beyond the literal, verbal and, at times, representational – the very fact of people gathering 'says' and 'does' something potentially very powerful. She links assembly with precarity by pointing out that every person exists within a system of dispossession or precarity and that we each rely upon political and social institutions and each other to support our own precariousness. In this way, every-body is to some extent bound to conditions of precarity through varying degrees of persistence and resistance, and this dynamic brings out the dual dimension of socio-political agency in everyday life.

Our aim here with the staging of *Precarious Assembly* throughout the Whitworth – a civic and socialised institution – as an embodied, performative gesture of spatial and critical intervention, serves as a footnote or a documenting comment to Butler's positions. We are particularly interested in how this can relate to the assembly of audience(s) at performance events and to the (dis)appearance of bodies in a performative context. Most important is the relation to the ethical and/or political relationship between spectator(s), artist(s)/performer(s) and immediate environment. The conceptual impetus for this was formed around our combined questioning of how performance events, especially when they are staged outside of their normative theatrical contexts but still within the bounds of the exhibitionary surveillance apparatus, might be understood as moments of precarious assembly – particularly so when the artistic practices and processes that inform them tend towards the personal, liminal, embodied, processual and durational. The twelve projects presented provide a particular assemblage of lineages and practices of female artists and curators that represent a challenge to conventional spectatorial practices or to fixed categories of performance and address notions of divergent feminist ancestral artistic lineage.

The spectatorial gaze of traditional theatrical and performance presentations, and by extension, the roaming gaze embedded in the usual

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680 ——— Judith Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (Cambridge MA; London: Harvard University Press, 2015).

conventions of exhibition formats, have been addressed and challenged by numerous artists and theorists through both practice and writing. Historically, the issue has been mapped onto concerns around an asymmetry of power in relation to the theories of Michel Foucault<sup>681</sup> that are implicitly associated with gender and the male gaze – as articulated by feminist theorists such as Lois McNay.<sup>682</sup> More recently, the issue intersects with concerns about an increasing surveillance and commercial culture – through performance theorists such as Nicolas Whybrow<sup>683</sup> – and the conditions of living within the “corporation spirit” of “control societies” from Gilles Deleuze<sup>684</sup> that justify and uphold political polarity.

With *Precarious Assembly*, we are interested in what escapes the gaze of surveyance through performance and what kinds of relations are rooted in embodiment and through durational aesthetics and framing. Similarly, Markus Hallensleben, in *Performative Body Spaces: Corporeal Topographies in Literature, Theatre, Dance, and the Visual Arts*,<sup>685</sup> notes that performative spaces that collect and assemble bodies play a culturally performative role as producers of interactive social spaces. As both cultural object and performing subject, and instances of visibilising the multifarious roles within performers’ and spectators’ socialities, these bodies assembling inevitably bind the political with the theatrical, the epistemological and the civic, constructing a charged and socially productive space.

Thus, the ultimate outcome of significance or value, given the focus and scope of our remit, does not have learning how to choreograph and perform a protest or intervention within the bounds of representational discourse as a primary concern, but rather a more fundamental and much more precarious kind of movement, viz: one that is defined by the rehearsal of intersubjective action and unencumbered movement. This instance of potential exchange between performer and spectator via a performative exhibitionary encounter must be “learned, rehearsed, nurtured, and above all experimented with, practiced, and experienced.”<sup>686</sup> We are therefore interested in offering an alternative format of engagement by inviting spectators into the work and asking them to become co-producers of the work

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**681** ——— Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1991).

**682** ——— Lois McNay, *Foucault and Feminism: Power, Gender, and the Self* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1992).

**683** ——— Nicolas Whybrow, *Performance and the Contemporary City: An Interdisciplinary Reader* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

**684** ——— Gilles Deleuze, “Postscript on the Societies of Control,” *October* 59 (1995): 3-7.

**685** ——— Markus Hallensleben, *Performative Body Spaces: Corporeal Topographies in Literature, Theatre, Dance, and the Visual Arts* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2010).

**686** ——— Lepecki, “Choreopolice and Choreopolitics,” 15.

and active in what Henri Lefebvre<sup>687</sup> articulates as the “rhythms of lived space.” We want to contribute actively to performative environments that dissolve a separation between performers’ and artists’ bodies and the assembled bodies of spectators that signifies the collapse of a simple diametric power structure, and disperses power relations to the micro level of multiple interactions and endless possible encounters.

The spatial composition of the Whitworth and its interactive exhibits, especially Elizabeth Price’s *IN A DREAM YOU SAW A WAY TO SURVIVE AND YOU WERE FULL OF JOY*,<sup>688</sup> and the curatorial and performative dimensions of *Precarious Assembly*, interpellate visitors as potential active agents. Here, the expansive gallery space offers the availability of roaming yet attentive spectators, open to encounters as individuals who equally move and perform within a precarious performative format in which outcomes are not completely knowable, and there is much opportunity for productive failure. In much the same way that Butler’s real world theory progresses towards the consideration of cohabitation and possible ethical obligations, *Precarious Assembly* is interested in placing every person present into a role that highlights their co-emergence and reciprocity within the space. We recognise that the twelve projects operate across multiple themes, intersecting obliquely with each other and offering different perspectives on the ideas and knowledges they propose. We hope that *Precarious Assembly* might offer a transitory space within which visitors may (re)negotiate their engagement and (re)locate themselves within multiple overlapping histories of gendered cultural production in the present moment.

The succeeding section, an abridged version of a chapter co-written with Dani Abulhawa and published in *Feminism and Museums: Interventions, Disruption and Change* (Volume One)<sup>689</sup> in 2017, provides an initial reflective framework through which to articulate and analyse certain performative perlocutionary effects within *Precarious Assembly*. The eventual discussion extends the method of performative analysis and expands on some of the assertions gleaned in the consequent critical reflection.

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**687** ——— Henri Lefebvre, *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life*, trans. Gerald Moore and Stuart Elden (London and New York: Continuum, 2004).

**688** ——— Elizabeth Price, “*IN A DREAM YOU SAW A WAY TO SURVIVE AND YOU WERE FULL OF JOY*,” August 4, 2016 at Whitworth Gallery, Manchester, accessed December 11, 2016, <https://frieze.com/article/dream-you-saw-way-survive-and-were-full-joy>.

**689** ——— Jenna C. Ashton, ed., *Feminism and Museums: Interventions, Disruption and Change* (Volume One) (Edinburgh & Boston: MuseumsEtc, 2017).

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## 4.2 (En)gendering “Undisciplined” Space: Reflections on *Precarious Assembly*.<sup>690</sup>

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Elke Krasny, in her book, *Women’s Museum: Curatorial Politics in Feminism, Education, History and Art*, draws particular attention to the multifarious relational engagements between women’s museums and the politically conscious strategies of feminist curating as “transnational, transdisciplinary, trans-generational and trans-institutional [...]”.<sup>691</sup> She argues that the practices and agency of feminist curatorial processes ultimately question the relationships between institutionalisation, institutional critique and canonisation and “underline how this complex set of intersections has become profoundly troubled through critical contemporary feminist curatorial practices.”<sup>692</sup> It is therefore all the more important to understand how feminist curators become active agents by shaping the understanding and distribution of knowledge production within the various contexts of artistic practice. Within feminist frameworks and practices, curatorial agency, beyond the actual curating of exhibitions or platforms, prioritises the role of political and social empowerment through participation in the museum and gallery. Ultimately, the need for a public for feminist artistic interventions into the canon leads to either the creation of self-organised platforms or to temporary alliances with existing institutions, requiring expanded fields of research and innovative paradigms of interdisciplinary crossovers.<sup>693</sup>

**Accumulations’** *Precarious Assembly* at the Whitworth Gallery in Manchester in August 2016 provides a situated case study of how an artistic-performative intervention offered precisely what Krasny articulates as essentially the on-going project of feminist transformation.<sup>694</sup> Our aim with the staging of *Precarious Assembly* as an embodied curatorial

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**690** ——— Dani Abulhawa and Sarah Spies, “(En) gendering “Undisciplined” Space: Reflections on Precarious Assembly,” in *Feminism and Museums: Interventions, Disruption and Change* (Volume One), ed. Jenna C. Ash-ton (Edinburgh and Boston: MuseumsEtc, 2017), 406-421.

**691** ——— Elke Krasny, *Women’s Museum: Curatorial Politics in Feminism, Education, History, and Art* (Vienna: Löcker Verlag, 2013), 17.

**692** ——— Ibid., 19.

**693** ——— Ibid., 22.

**694** ——— Dani Abulhawa, Hannah Buckley, Sarah Spies and Amy Voris, “Precarious Assembly,” Accumulations, Manchester-based artists’ collective, <https://www.accumulationsproject.com/precarious-assembly/>.



Fig 21. Sexcentenary's performative intervention, *WE REFUSE TO BE UNSEEN*, within a space curated by Elizabeth Price. Available at: <http://www.accumulations-project.com/sexcentenary/>. Photograph: © Christian Kipp.

gesture of spatial and critical intervention served as a performative footnote relating to Judith Butler's *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*<sup>695</sup> as we were particularly interested in how Butler's theories could relate to the assembly of audience(s) at performance events and to the (dis)appearance of particular bodies in a performative context.

Another layer of what we have come to recognise as a feminist curatorial driver focussed on the creation and facilitation of a fundamental and much more precarious movement assemblage via the parameters of the ambulatory performative pathways within the Whitworth Gallery spaces.

The spatial composition of the Whitworth Gallery and our performative intervention, especially within the setting of Elizabeth Price's *IN A DREAM YOU SAW A WAY TO SURVIVE AND YOU WERE FULL OF JOY* which was on display during *Precarious Assembly* (Figures 21 and 22), offered an insight into durational artistic labour as gendered, liminal and deeply embedded within the ethics and politics of artistic practice. The bodies of the artists, who each identified as female, bar one artist, were engaged with as performative subjects evolving over time and through space, revealing intimate details about their embodied practices alongside their intricate socio-artistic heritages. Their bodies became the blended live archives of both their artistic practices and socialities, revealing the deeply gendered

<sup>695</sup> ——— Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*.



Fig 22. Funmi Adewole, *Restfulness*, within a space curated by Elizabeth Price. Available at: <http://www.accumulationsproject.com/funmi-adewole/>. Photograph: © Christian Kipp.

landscape that is constantly traversed and where the cartographies of their bodies offer multiple opportunities for productive failure within a gendered system (Figure 23), ultimately mobilising agency and allowing multiple subjectivities to co-emerge and co-exist.

In much the same way that Butler’s real world theory progresses towards the consideration of co-habitation and ethical obligations, *Precarious Assembly* was interested in placing every person present into a role that highlighted their ethical consideration, potential agency and co-responsibility in artistic production. We recognised that the twelve projects operated across multiple themes, such as notions of visibility and invisibility within ageist paradigms, sensitivities around motherhood and artistic (re)production and centralising multiple and often precarious embodiments of female histories, artistic legacies and lived experience, intersecting with each other and offering different perspectives on the ideas and knowledge they proposed and produced. We were interested in offering a space within which visitors could negotiate their engagement and continuously locate themselves within multiple overlapping histories of gendered cultural production, ultimately providing momentary opportunities for social empowerment through participation in the gallery-complex of the Whitworth as a socialised and surveying institution, which, in turn, provided a transitory and subtle challenge to patriarchal-capitalist systems embedded within its dominant scopic regimes.



Fig 23. Gillian Dyson, *Not at Home*. Available at <http://www.accumulationsproject.com/gillian-dyson/>. Photograph: © Christian Kipp.

The *Precarious Assembly* event revealed interesting knowledges for us, particularly in terms of understanding how a dynamic between visibility and invisibility played out in the event and how the merging of different performances created a configuration of undisciplined space.

Several of the performances presented were not easy to see or find within the gallery, due to their recurrent movement or mutability of format. At the most extreme end of the invisibility continuum, it was possible that, for some visitors to the event, several of the performances existed only on paper or in the individual's imagination of what the description might have elicited in live performance. By contrast, other performances engendered partial invisibility, with performance duration and locality or spatiality-related aspects as the key attributional variables. Several performances could really only be seen or experienced in fragments, whilst others that had a short duration and were located in a small area of the gallery tended to avoid visibility because the activity took place in and around various artworks already located in the gallery. Corresponding differentiation in performance location variously qualified or tempered audience engagement, with respect to vantage points or sight lines in particular. This almost frustrating inability to fully absorb any one performance at a time eschews any possibility of a standard viewpoint or a reliable mode of roaming exhibitionary surveyance. The group of assembled, and at times scattered bodies that were the visitors attending *Precarious Assembly* represented a delicate spectatorial constellation, with each person located in



Fig 24. Sexcentenary, *WE REFUSE TO BE UNSEEN*. Available at <https://www.accumulationproject.com/sexcentenary/>. Photograph: © Christian Kipp.

fluctuant relation to another, in relation to the existing artworks of the gallery, and in relation to the performers in situ.

The combination of specific features of the Whitworth Gallery, and the peripatetic, vagarious and wandering improvisational nature of several of the pieces – pertaining to unknowability – meant that there was much emancipated interaction between performances. It became necessary for the performers to improvise responses to interruptions they had often not prefigured in the development of their work. For example, one of the performance groups, Sexcentenary, a collective of women who identify as older, and who are committed to the collaborative performance of gender, feminism and ageing,<sup>696</sup> included a series of aleatory actions in which they occupied the entrances into several of the galleries, effectively preventing performers or audience members from exiting and entering (Figure 24).

<sup>696</sup> — Sexcentenary, *WE REFUSE TO BE UNSEEN*, performative presentation, 4 August 2016 at the opening of *Precarious Assembly*, The Whitworth, Manchester, accessed 12 August 2017, <https://www.accumulationproject.com/sexcentenary/>.



Fig 25. Gillian Dyson, *Not at Home*. Available at <https://www.accumulationsproject.com/gillian-dyson/>. Photograph: © Christian Kipp.

At one point, they were blocking the entrance to the Elizabeth Price exhibition at precisely the moment that another artist, Gillian Dyson, was making her way into that gallery to begin her third and final performance sequence as part of her project *Not at Home*.<sup>697</sup> The result was an impasse in which Sexcentenary and Dyson stood directly opposite one another in the doorway. As curators of the event, our reading of Sexcentenary's impromptu blocking activities was as a comment upon or critique of the exclusionary practices of dominant museum or gallery conventions, especially as Dyson was nude at the time and her performance propagated notions of private or domestic artistic practice (Figure 25).

In this moment, Sexcentenary's concept was quite literally played out performatively across the spatial, social and even curatorial constellations. As they blocked another artist from completing her work, the action functioned as an expanded performative illustration of their own creation of a restriction, both imaginary and material. Whether it was clear or not to the audience that this was part of the planned work, it created a moment in which the audience, as well as the performers, were given space to con-

<sup>697</sup> ——— Gillian Dyson, *Not at Home*, performance, 4 August 2016 at The Whitworth, Manchester, accessed 12 August 2017, <https://www.accumulationsproject.com/gillian-dyson/>.



Fig 26. Funmi Adewole, *Restfulness*, within a space curated by Elizabeth Price. Available at: <http://www.accumulationsproject.com/funmi-adewole/>. Photograph: © Christian Kipp.

sider, “Who and why are they blocking or excluding?” and “Who and how am I in relation to this?” The moment put into immediate practical, performative and signifying terms the complexity of a particular system of museum and gallery politics. Other interactions included Jane Frances Dunlop and Mira Loew’s shared project as continuous relations-in-motion: navigations, coordinates and proximated positions within the Whitworth by means of which Loew placed herself within close proximity to and sometimes within other artists’ performances. Though Dunlop and Loew had planned this, the precise details of their work remained undisclosed, which meant that other performers often had to deal with subtle interruptions from Loew that they were not expecting.

Projects such as those from Funmi Adewole (*Restfulness*, Figures 26 and 27) and Karen Lawrence (*Coming Home*) began with fairly defined parameters that became extended and developed as the event progressed. Adewole moved around the gallery occupying several areas, and sometimes this meant that she was present within the background of other people’s works. For example, she moved to lie underneath the staircase in the centre of the gallery at the moment that Angela Kennedy was descending the same staircase to deliver a poem entitled *Women’s Work* before she continued to roll across the gallery floor for her second performance,



Fig 27. Funmi Adewole, *Restfulness*, within a space curated by Elizabeth Price. Available at: <http://www.accumulationsproject.com/funmi-adewole/>. Photograph: © Christian Kipp.

*Horizontal.* These kinds of chance encounters sometimes had a poetic resonance with one another, such as in this example where Adewole's adoption of the persona of a homeless woman taking rest from the perpetual movement of having no fixed abode underneath the stairs both mirrored and contrasted the different kinds of work Kennedy was performing. This impromptu scene was further developed when a member of Sexcentenary came to join Adewole, sitting next to her under the stairs.

Karen Lawrence, in her performance *Coming Home*, initially created a journey through the gallery, but later began to play within different spaces, leaving us wondering how much this later work was planned or was simply an improvised response to the way the event was developing into a more chaotic landscape.

The open-plan nature of the gallery meant that standing between two rooms often elicited a type of visual-aural-atmospheric bleed and the ability to watch or hear several elements happening simultaneously. This happened even more pronouncedly when the roaming, improvised pieces intersected with each other. It became difficult at times to discern which performances were which, and who was involved. There was a feeling that we were all continuously involved and implicated, with pervious and imaginary edges drawn between the bodies of performers and audience members. It was almost always possible to be within one piece, whilst simultaneously finding yourself between pieces.



Fig 28. Holly Victoria Matthews, *Feed*, in the Whitworth's atrium.  
 Available at <http://www.accumulationsproject.com/holly-matthews/>.  
 Photograph: © Christian Kipp

Holly Victoria Matthews's *Feed* (Figure 28) exemplified this in its conceptual scope. Physically, her work was fixed in its location – the Whitworth atrium – involving the artist drawing and writing her own stream of consciousness over the course of the three-hour event onto a large sheet of thick paper extending across most of the length of the upper promenade. Matthews's durational performance recorded her impressions of the event including associative thought, subliminal connections, fabrications and divinations, thereby operating both performatively and symbolically across the range of performances unfurling as part of the event.

As the evening progressed, the spatial composition of *Precarious Assembly* became increasingly unruly in a manner that we have termed “undisciplined,” a material and symbolic undoing of the ritualised civic and spatial conventions socialised and sanctioned by museological institutions. Following from Foucault's theorisation of the “discipline society”<sup>698</sup> and Deleuze's discussion of “control societies,”<sup>699</sup> we propose that the fostering of forms or configurations of undisciplined space within the gallery and museum, particularly through performative curatorial means that induce and activate templates of performance practices within these spaces, represents a performative-spatial critique via an attempt to play with, and effectively divert power from, the institutional mechanics and conventions

<sup>698</sup> ——— Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*.

<sup>699</sup> ——— Gilles Deleuze, “Postscript on the Societies of Control.”

of the art museum context: lexicons of visibility, delineation, definition. Importantly, this was not a prefigured curatorial incentive when we proposed *Precarious Assembly*, but rather arose from the curatorial framework we established, alongside the layout of the gallery and the interaction and performative iteration(s) of these specific performances at a particular point in time – akin to the temporary alliances with existing institutions and expanded fields of interdisciplinary crossovers that Elke Krasny frames within the paradigm of activist feminist curatorial production.

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### 4.3 Discussion. *Endnotes on Footnotes:* Towards Curatorial and Performative Assemblages of Performance.

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Curatorial methodology, as a relationally constellated and intrinsically research-orientated procedure, foregrounds the iterative coupling of the theoretical lines and the interconnected reprisal of practice(s) via specified and intentional configurations in what Wiebke Gronemeyer, in *The Curatorial Complex: Social Dimensions of Knowledge Production*,<sup>700</sup> terms “curatorial methodology as a performative disposition.”<sup>701</sup> Gronemeyer provides a valuable redress of curatorial operations, an intricate nexus that she terms the curatorial complex as a radical departure from Tony Bennett’s much earlier power-bound aphorism via the exhibitionary complex – to recast and encompass its propensity for discursive, iterative and signifying functioning. She claims that within this emendation:

The curatorial is conceptualised as a performative form of production generating and constituting sociality, discourse and critique over the conditions of knowledge production in contemporary times [...].<sup>702</sup>

Her notion of the “performative quality of the curatorial” is particularly applicable to the context of this work, as it foreparts the proclivity to structure “the situation in which it is performed through the mode of its

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**700** ——— Wiebke Gronemeyer, *The Curatorial Complex: Social Dimensions of Knowledge Production* (Paderborn, Germany: Wilhelm Fink GmbH & Co. Verlags-KG, 2018).

**701** ——— Ibid., 219.

**702** ——— Ibid.

addressing.”<sup>703</sup> Its associated constitutive effects function much like Barbara Bolt’s emphasis on the perlocutionary effects of the curatorial or the choreographic within the lexicon of performative research. Boris Buden, in *Towards the Heterosphere: Curator as Translator*,<sup>704</sup> who Gronemeyer references in relation to her own conceptualisation, emphasises that the performative quality inherent in curatorial acts is premised on the desire to build relations between art and knowledge from a vantage point that “intentionally never comes to fruition.”<sup>705</sup> It is therefore always constitutive of building relational conditions for knowledge production without necessarily expounding the corollaries, as it “performs a form of sociality that manifests itself as a desire to relate.”<sup>706</sup> Gronemeyer argues that these curatorial inceptions anticipate notions or forms of speculation of “openness, or rather incompleteness, and even failure to produce”<sup>707</sup> and most importantly that:

The constitutive effect of the performative quality of the curatorial is that it creates a new and different interpretative context that partly disposes of the original constitutional context of what it displays and presents.<sup>708</sup>

The performative appetite of curatorial works within this vanguard therefore attempts to render the above-referenced transformative potential visible and performable within a field of cultural production by reconfiguring the communicative or signifying markers within the ideologically formed space of curation.<sup>709</sup> This includes, according to Gronemeyer, the updating or divergence of notions of spectatorship, public address and constitution, mediation and meaning production.<sup>710</sup>

Funmi Adewole, whose performance work was presented as part of *Precarious Assembly*, offers a further inference that the emerging terrain of performative curation – or more precisely, the performative curation of performance – manifests a particular process or mode of cultural, creative and discursive distillation, intimating the performative assemblage as the momentary sedimentation of a nebulous form. In *Curating Performance from Africa on International Stages: Thoughts on Artistic Categories and*

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703 ——— Ibid., 222.

704 ——— Boris Buden, “Towards the Heterosphere: Curator as Translator,” in *Performing the Curatorial Within and Beyond Art*, ed. Maria Lind (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2012), 23–44.

705 ——— Buden, “Towards the Heterosphere,” 28.

706 ——— Gronemeyer, *The Curatorial Complex*, 222.

707 ——— Ibid., 223.

708 ——— Ibid.

709 ——— Ibid., 247.

710 ——— Ibid., 249.



Fig 29. Funmi Adewole, *Restfulness*, within a space curated by Elizabeth Price.  
Available at: <http://www.accumulationsproject.com/funmi-adewole/>.  
Photograph: © Christian Kipp.



Fig 30. Funmi Adewole, *Restfulness*, within a space curated by Elizabeth Price.  
Available at: <http://www.accumulationsproject.com/funmi-adewole/>.  
Photograph: © Christian Kipp.

*Critical Discourse*,<sup>711</sup> Adewole argues for the necessary emplacement of diverse performances within the assemblage that underlines the curation of artistic practices “as part of dialogues and histories of ideas,”<sup>712</sup> as the notion of curating or framing is inevitably steeped in cultural and social politics.<sup>713</sup> Adewole claims that the curatorial space is equally important for expanding performance and choreographic practices, as it can create a “space to think”<sup>714</sup> and deepen the critical discourse in the field.<sup>715</sup>

The uptake of the curatorial as a performative in Gronemeyer’s open-ended yet visible and performable transformative potential and Adewole’s space to think are particularly pertinent here as they tender towards a means of appraising the perlocutionary effects of *Precarious Assembly*, as a particular instance of experimental practice within the performative research paradigm, in very specific terms. Effectively, what this means is that questions of what was gleaned from *Precarious Assembly*, namely, what types of precursory performative relations were prevalent to enable transformative potential and what kind of space to think registered via its performative effects, can be dispensed via its behavioural emergence from history, amid its ambit of context and conventions and along its speculative reach into the future. Adewole’s own performance within the curated framework of *Precarious Assembly – Restfulness* - provided a particularly productive sphere of action through which to consider the performative quality of the curatorial as a space to think. Adewole’s performative transformations throughout the duration of the event facilitated a relational opening that would not be possible within the ascendant spectatorial conventions of either the museum or the theatre. This was also aided by the notion that subject positions within performance art practices are inherently complex and refractory, as they are borne of a process with a disparate and permeable spatiotemporal reality, often unrelated to the immediate present in which they are enacted. During the creative process, these myriad performative embodiments transit through amorphous symbolic strata that are summoned by sublimated cultural mythologies that both submerge and inscribe bodily configurations of enactment, only to re-emerge via appropriated and relocated manifestations within the ideologically complex matrix of the Whitworth. Adhering to the parameters of Judith Butler’s queer appropriation of performativity, this almost guarantees citationality, appropriation and redeployment within reiterative contexts. Adewole herself insinuates this in the description of *Restfulness*:

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711 ——— Funmi Adewole with Jareh Das, “Curating Performance from Africa on International Stages: Thoughts on Artistic Categories and Critical Discourse,” in *Curating Live Arts*, 46-56.

712 ——— Ibid., 46.

713 ——— Ibid., 49.

714 ——— Ibid., 46.

715 ——— Ibid., 47.

My inspiration comes in part from the exhibition, IN A DREAM YOU SAW A WAY TO SURVIVE AND YOU WERE FULL OF JOY, curated by Elizabeth Price. In the section called ‘Work’ you will find Edward Onslow Ford’s marble sculpture *Snowdrift* (1901) and Giulio Paolini’s sculpture *Nécessaire* (1968) which is a stack of blank sheets of paper. The sculptures make me think about rest and the labour it takes to get it, keep it, and find it again. And about the tyranny of labour that does not lead to rest. My woman is homeless and wears her bedclothes and her bedding. She carries many objects but only objects that have a story. If you ask her about one of them, she will tell you everything you need to know and nothing more. My mother fuelled my love of stories. Her vivid accounts of people she had met in the streets of Lagos would make me cry with laughter. From my mother’s performances (she would never call them that) I learnt a lot about the world [...].<sup>716</sup>

The material reality of Adewole’s body in the Whitworth, alongside her signification and performative citationality within this discursive and representational field, intersects with the important issue of racialised subjectivity raised by Sara Salih in *On Judith Butler and Performativity*,<sup>717</sup> where she relays Butler’s query about what other “regimes of regulatory production contour the materiality of bodies”<sup>718</sup> and imparts her assertion that “[t]he symbolic – that register of regulatory ideality – is also and always a racial industry, indeed, [it is] the reiterated practice of racializing interpellations,”<sup>719</sup> so that the symbolic also underscores a racialising set of norms that inadvertently produces the subject via racially informed conceptions.<sup>720</sup> The relational opening that Adewole’s performance enabled, as multipart performatives within *Precarious Assembly*, mediated via a performative signifying practice that assembles the spectators or audience as culturally intelligible subjects implicated in an exchange of meaning and interpretation with her as both performer and interpellated subject in the Whitworth, revealed an interesting, complex and contradictory set of effects. This was especially discernible, and at times palpable, when Adewole traversed the space marked as a ‘homeless woman’ (Figures 31 and 32). Coasting or trailing audience members could not fully grasp or identify

716 ——— Adewole, “Restfulness.”

717 ——— Sara Salih, “On Judith Butler and Performativity,” in *Sexualities and Communication in Everyday Life: A Reader*, ed. Karen Lovaas and Mercilee M. Jenkins (London and Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2007), 55-67.

718 ——— Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, 17.

719 ——— Ibid., 18.

720 ——— Ibid., 130.



Fig 31. Funmi Adewole, *Restfulness*, within a space curated by Elizabeth Price. Available at: <http://www.accumulationsproject.com/funmi-adewole/>. Photograph: © Christian Kipp.



Fig 32. Funmi Adewole, *Restfulness*, within a space curated by Elizabeth Price. Available at: <http://www.accumulationsproject.com/funmi-adewole/>. Photograph: © Christian Kipp.

her body, performance or subjectivity, which in turn unsettled their active interpellations of her difference within the space, both assumed and performatively constituted. She became simultaneously difficult to recognise yet highly visible within the gallery landscape via a conflation of stylised gestures and Moten's (non)performance. This is particularly significant given Salih's assertion that certain "performatives do not try to conceal their genealogy" but "go out of their way to accentuate it."<sup>721</sup> In this way, the performative force of Adewole's performance recognises the radical contingencies and relations inherent in the differences that are performatively installed by and in discourse, so that the seemingly unexpected effects of her work, and its variant failures, citations and re-citations in the Whitworth, graft appropriated and redeployed performative potential into the politics surrounding the production of her choreography for *Restfulness*, by acting out hidden dispositions that are written on and through her body, as well as the curatorial assemblage of *Precarious Assembly*. These perlocutionary effects are somewhat incalculable, since "performatives and their significations do not begin or end,"<sup>722</sup> but it does accentuate the gravity of the contravention of narratives as urgent versions of knowledge transfer within arts practice in what Adewole herself articu-

<sup>721</sup> ——— Salih, "On Judith Butler and Performativity," 58.

<sup>722</sup> ——— Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 241.

lates as “a space for potential rethinking and shifting perspectives.”<sup>723</sup> These contravening narrative contingencies and precarities within curatorial frames, in this case *Precarious Assembly*, bid a ritualistic release from the performative conventions and formats of art as it intersects with the illegibility of bodies, subjectivities and performances that resist clear categorisations and represent more complex and intersectional identities, such as Adewole in *Restfulness*. This in turn also challenges any assumed or muted understanding of spectatorship – as a definitive and mediated mode of public address – as the audience is never passive, even within more contemplation-orientated formats warranted by institutions such as the Whitworth.

The transformational potential of *Precarious Assembly* is more speculative and is hinged on the conception of undisciplined space as articulated in section 4.2, via the potential material and symbolic undoing of the ritualised civic, spatial and disciplinary conventions in the Whitworth. The performative imprint of *Precarious Assembly* within the Whitworth, as “a choreographic form that engenders a curatorial act,”<sup>724</sup> performs a relationality that attempts to undo all forms of distinction and separation, between perceived disciplinary boundaries as well as spatial nodes or configurations of separation between and amongst audiences and performers. It is neither distinctly curatorial nor choreographic but rather a blended mediation of live performative bodies in performance throughout the gallery – perhaps akin to what Maria Lind terms as “unorthodox forms of mediation.”<sup>725</sup> Its immanent effects therefore extend beyond the sphere of curatorial communication or signification as a form of unstable assemblage that approaches what is shown via performance and performative bodies in an attempt to choreograph a particular yet inconclusive narrative via an undisclosed and incomplete reach between the curatorial and the choreographic. Its performative indecipherability also reveals its potential futurability via ‘what’ and ‘who’ it brings “together in order to set things in motion through time and space [...]”<sup>726</sup> It is essentially a curatorial act that “has set something in motion beyond our control.”<sup>727</sup>

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723 ——— Funmi Adewole with Jareh Das, “Curating Performance from Africa on International Stages: Thoughts on Artistic Categories and Critical Discourse,” in *Curating live arts: critical perspectives, essays, and conversations on theory and practice*, eds. Dena Davida, Jane Gabriels, Véronique Hudon and Marc Pronovost (New York: Berghahn Books, 2019), 49.

724 ——— Chhangur, “What Can Contemporary Art Perform? And then Transgress?,” 7.

725 ——— Lind ed., *Performing the Curatorial Within and Beyond Art*, 12.

726 ——— Chhangur, “What Can Contemporary Art Perform? And then Transgress?,” 7.

727 ——— Ibid.

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# **CONCLUSION**

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The performative qualities of choreography and dance in the contemporary museum – if we follow the Austin-Althusser-Butler delineation of performativity and its relations to performance, performance art and the “new performance turn” as segmented in this book – inscribed as the persistent repetition of choreographic acts that crystallise into appearance via the templates of exhibitionary formats and the politics of display, can easily be annexed under the affective economies of neoliberal hegemonic ideologies that produce, capture and circulate bodies and artistic practices via a mimesis of movement that Noyale Colin articulates as the “intensification of cultural capitalism.”<sup>728</sup> The proliferation of these effects extend into the museum as a mediated yet socialised and civic institution to instil what André Lepecki theorises as the propensity for a type of contemporary “choreopolitics”: the “daily choreography of conformity that emerges,”<sup>729</sup> even within the contemporary arts museum as potentially the most experimental of environments.<sup>730</sup> Hito Steyerl’s notion of the “cinematic machine of the contemporary museum-as-factory”<sup>731</sup> and the tantamount loss of viewer sovereignty and subjectivity within the museum as institution is further testament to the complexities bolstering the undercurrents of contemporary interdisciplinary arts practice. The recent intrusion of choreographic practice and dance on visual culture and the subsequent symbolic divorce of the theatre and the black box as its historic privileged apparatus alongside its numerous discomforts within the white cube – an incursion into visual culture comparable to the earlier integration of photography, film and video as arts into the conventions of the art-historical canon<sup>732</sup> – also has varied and complicated effects on the reconfiguration of the visual and experience in both the museum and gallery beyond the scope of this book. Furthermore, the fostering of a reified yet polysemic image of dance in the museum via choreography as an “art of command,”<sup>733</sup> to relay William Forsythe, subsumes its problematic performative disposition to re-articulate protocol as an ideological apparatus of capture where the institutional function of choreography “reproduces whole systems of

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728 ——— Noyale Colin, “The critical potential of somatic collectivity under post-Fordism,” *Journal of Dance & Somatic Practices* 10, no. 2 (December 2018): 235.

729 ——— Lepecki, “Choreopolice and Choreopolitics,” 20.

730 ——— *Ibid.*, 18.

731 ——— Hito Steyerl, “Is a Museum a Factory?” *E-Flux Journal* 7 (June 2009), accessed 11 June 2017, <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/07/61390/is-a-museum-a-factory/>.

732 ——— Mark Franko and André Lepecki, “Editor’s Note: Dance in the Museum,” *Dance Research Journal* 46, no. 1 (2014): 1.

733 ——— Mark Franko, “Dance and the Political: States of Exception,” in *Dance Discourses: Keywords in Dance Research*, eds. Susanne Franco and Marina Nordera (London: Routledge, 2007), 17.

obedience.”<sup>734</sup> Its prospects as a mimetic phenomenon within the museum is therefore deeply problematic and yet, its “foregrounding of the critical potential of bodily practice in the face of neo-liberalism”<sup>735</sup> forms a valuable constituent within the forces swaying the emergence of museological practices that withstand the more exploitative tenets of post-Fordist capitalism. The palate for a politics of complexity and social collectivity that choreographic practice and dance demonstrate in the museum complex can partially be co-opted and coerced under the auspices of choreographed surveillance as well as provide performative formats for rupture, resistance and subversion. Furthermore, choreographic templates and dancerly imprints that exhibit a “flickering duration”<sup>736</sup> of transient and immaterial labour within the museum and gallery also perform ephemeral traces that further conscript “ephemerality as the ultimate quality of cultural production,”<sup>737</sup> which undermines attempts at disruption but also provides momentary conditions that, according to Franco Berardi, rehearse and pre-empt a potential “change in social relations, and the creation of a new form of the social environment [...]”<sup>738</sup> The micro-politics of dance as a radical somatic practice of performative embodiment that activates relational awareness of the subjective body in space-time alongside intersubjective collective responsiveness precipitates continual “processes of undoing existing patterns”<sup>739</sup> that collapse “culturally dominant understanding and practices of the body.”<sup>740</sup> Choreographic practices that articulate and manifest these political and critical potentialities via the “iteration of the desire to live away from conformity”<sup>741</sup> in the persistence of their relational repetition through compositional imperatives of embodiment can be understood as dual manoeuvres of performativity that demonstrate an “insistence on going against the flow,” in accordance with Sara Ahmed’s feminist allegory of wilful acts of creative divergence.<sup>742</sup> Lastly, dance and

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734 ——— Lepecki, “Choreopolice and Choreopolitics,” 20.

735 ——— Colin, “The critical potential of somatic collectivity under post-Fordism,” 236.

736 ——— Ibid., 236.

737 ——— Ibid., 239.

738 ——— Franco Bifo Berardi, “Automation and infinity of language: Poetry versus financial semicapital,” in *Rehearsing Collectivity: Choreography Beyond Dance*, eds. Elena Basteri, Emanuele Guidi and Elisa Ricci (Berlin: Argobooks, 2012), 31.

739 ——— Kirsty Alexander and Thomas Kampe, “Introduction,” *Journal of Dance & Somatic Practices* 9, no. 1 (2017), 3.

740 ——— Isabelle Ginot, “From Shusterman’s Somaesthetics to a Radical Epistemology of Somatics,” *Dance Research Journal* 42, no. 1 (2010): 18.

741 ——— Lepecki, “Choreopolice and Choreopolitics,” 23.

742 ——— Sara Ahmed, *Willful Subjects* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014).

choreography's readiness for "curatorial organization"<sup>743</sup> highlights their most prolific performative potential, not just because of a penchant and affinity for chaperoning differentiated performative bodies through the institutional spaces of art and inscribing and interpellating them into the aesthetic politics of these spaces, but more for the levels of curatorial engagement that "follows choreographic persuasion"<sup>744</sup> and forms of address "as an invitation in temporary choreographic situations."<sup>745</sup> Gabriele Brandstetter, author of *Written on Water: Choreographies of the Curatorial*,<sup>746</sup> to which the title of this book is partially indebted, also offers an opportune performative deliberation on what the concept of choreography does to contiguous disciplines in *Choreography Beyond Dance – A Dance Promise*.<sup>747</sup> This can be understood and interpreted as a manifestorial imperative – an Austinian performative promise – that allows a timely and permissive repetition of a curatorial parcours that moves between the forces of curatorial illocutionary utterances and choreographic perlocutionary effects to articulate the "relationality of curatorial matters."<sup>748</sup> The promise of dance and choreography as a curatorial act by means of the assured performative trajectories that the book title invites, and untethered from its more recent critical, cultural and cross-disciplinary value could unfold from "constellations, encounters and situations in which a productive instability and insecurity,"<sup>749</sup> – precarious assemblages of choreographies of the curatorial as such – brings processes and bodies "together in order to set things in motion through time and space [...]"<sup>750</sup>

"Choreographies of the Curatorial: contexts, Tensions and Performative Trajectories Between the White Cube and the Black Box" (Chapter 1.1) assembles the thematic threads and historic influences that map the theoretical foundations for the book. In "Curating the Choreographic," the expansion and migration of choreography proper towards the notion of a mostly conceptual rendering via the choreographic, as extracted from its corporeal home in dance practice, is reviewed. Erin Brannigan's *Dance and the Gallery: Curation as Revision* is used as a departure point to procure what she constructs as the unstable assembly of undisciplined cho-

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743 ——— Gabriele Brandstetter, "Choreography Beyond Dance – A Dance Promise," in *Rehearsing Collectivity: Choreography beyond Dance*, 45.

744 ——— Ibid.

745 ——— Ibid., 49.

746 ——— Gabrielle Brandstetter, "Written on Water: Choreographies of the Curatorial," in *Cultures of the Curatorial*, 119-132.

747 ——— Brandstetter, "Choreography Beyond Dance," 45-53.

748 ——— Gabriele Brandstetter, "Proposing Intervals – Curating as Choreography," in *Curating Live Arts*, 346.

749 ——— Brandstetter, "Choreography Beyond Dance," 53.

750 ——— Chhangur, "What Can Contemporary Art Perform? And then Transgress?," 7.

reographic practices in gallery and museum contexts. “Constellating the Curatorial: Expanding the Museum” charts the abstract and concrete exchanges between the historic conventions of the black box and the white cube as the resident apparatuses of choreography and curation respectively to elucidate some of the deeper relations alongside concurrent and divergent developments. The museum is therefore more than just another site for choreography and dance – it is historically charged and ideologically loaded. Tony Bennett’s influential *The Birth of the Museum* is positioned to articulate the ideological machine of the museum complex to charter civic capacities that shape subjects that are implicated in the residual power-bound tenets of the exhibitionary complex as an apparatus for surveyed and controlled cultural production. Claire Bishop’s *Radical Museology* and Dorothea von Hantelmann’s *The Experiential Turn* provide more current renditions of the effects of evolving conventions within the rituals of museal and exhibitionary practice. Finally, Gabrielle Brandstetter’s *Written on Water: Choreographies of the Curatorial* trails the more recent transformative, expansive and constellated impact of choreographic practices on processes of curation that marshal interdisciplinary, affective and performative exchanges. “Intersections of Performativity” outlines the lineage of performativity via its theoretical origins in J.L. Austin’s reality-making Speech Act Theory in *How to Do Things with Words*. Concomitantly, Shannon Jackson’s *Performativity and Its Addressee* provides a notable overview of its critical mutations within the field of cultural production to align with Dorothea von Hantelmann’s prolific *How to Do Things with Art – The Meaning of Art’s Performativity* that renders the performative a novel instrument of critical artistic practice. Both Jackson and von Hantelmann enlist gender theorist Judith Butler’s joining of Austinian performative language theory and the Althusserian ideological codex – *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses* – to discern the interpellative power of artistic conventions and the rituals of institutional practices in the production of contemporary subjectivity. This lineage provides a fertile and necessary critical habitus for the deployment and comprehension of performative bodies in the museum alongside the behaviour of choreographic means within the hallmarks of curatorial practice.

“Ungoverning Choreography as Apparatus of Capture: Histories, Mythologies and the Social Choreography of Visual Pleasure and Performative Bodies in the Museum” (Chapter 1.2) covers more complex conceptual terrain by entwining the mediated layering of both public social life and cultural representation within the chronicles of art history. In “Ideological Force Fields and Choreographic Capture in Context,” Roland Barthes’ *Mythologies* is used as a discursive lens to address the accumulative layering of cultural representation and organised collective cultural values in increasingly sophisticated technological societies. As a secondary yet powerful

signification system, Barthes' critique of myth recognises its potency in choreographing latent political ideologies embodied within everyday phenomena, so that the seeming terra incognita of collective cultural values via the formation of subjectivity is actually deeply imbricated in interpellated ideological forces within the museum as the sanctified institution of cultural representation. Andrew Hewitt's conceptualisation of social choreography forms an important part of the conceptual bricolage of the chapter, as it recognises the historic undercurrents of ideological formation and the interplay of power, micro-politics and embodiment that underpin choreographic inscription and wields choreography as an orchestrated bourgeoisie apparatus for ideological reproduction. More recent manifestations of the hegemonic power inscriptions of choreography as apparatus is explored via André Lepecki (2007) and Ramsay Burt's (2017, 2018) explication of it as patriarchal and majoritarian command system and as mechanism of capture within neoliberal ideological force fields, respectively. Conversely, the notion of becoming-minoritarian via a history of experimental dance practice that foregrounds tactics and intersections of 'womanliness' and 'blackness' as counterpoints to these processes of majoritarian capture by choreography proper is presented in the contemporary examples of Last Yearz Interesting Negro (Jamila Johnson-Small) and Funmi Adewole. In "Feminist Discursive Inheritance: The Subtle Dance of the 'Double Movement,'" this is traced circuitously via the lineage of the synchronous feminist project of discursive and artistic interventions into the art canon. Feminist critique, as presented by Abigail Solomon-Godeau surrounding the elusive, contradictory and historically problematic symbolic female archetype staged and performed via the illuminated photographic self-portraits of the Countess de Castiglione is presented as a performative instance of "productive mimesis" and "double movement," via Luce Irigaray and Hillary Robinson. This is aligned with the wilful double minoritarian manoeuvre of Adewole in the performance of *Restfulness* as part of the curated event *Precarious Assembly* where she actively engages with the complicated mythological and symbolic constructs and intersections surrounding her in the Whitworth Gallery. "Historical Figurines: Spectres of the Countess de Castiglione's 'Bazaar of Legs'" charts the spectral charge of the legs of the Countess as a performative force that both sexualised her image and infiltrated the image of the legs of the court ballerina as a fetishised and marketable commodity. This is situated in relation to the feminist dance scholarship of Lynn Garafola, Ann Daly, Elizabeth Dempster, Susan Leigh Foster and Carol Brown that critiques the problematic fashioning of the sexual ideology of the female dancing body via the ballerina from the early Renaissance to the emergence of the female pioneers of Modern Dance and beyond. These threads are positioned as the haunting inheritance of sexual difference as ideology that

follow, implicate and interpellate dancing and performing rambunctious bodies in the largely sepulchral landscape of the art museum.

Democracy's Body?: Pre-Curatorial Conditions of Judson Church Theater" (Chapter 1.3) delineates the discursive overhaul and remediation of the post-modern body, especially through a re-writing of the female dancing body from the aforementioned historical representational capture via the radical dance and choreographic practices of the artists associated with Judson Dance Theater. As the putative predecessors of current manifestations of choreography in museums of contemporary art – by way of their insistence on de-skilling the vocabularies of dance via embodied movement languages of the everyday to their democratic forms and formats of choreographic practice and spectatorship and pronounced exchanges with fine artists, composers and other forms of radical interdisciplinarity – Judson Dance Theater instilled the pre-curatorial conditions shaping the most visible threads of enmeshed choreographic practice in the museum today. Their entangled histories, politics and radical artistic practices are explored in "(Her)stories in Context: The Everyday Discursive Body Politic of Judson Dance Theater" to uncover some of the more complex socio-political and ideological forces consecrated in their radical practices during the 1960s – especially through the inculcation of the myth of the pedestrian aesthetic. "Contemporary Curatorial Contexts: Judsonian Revivals" situates current curatorial translations of their work across the spectrum of contemporary art museums within this manifold history. The presentation of *Judson Dance Theater: The Work Is Never Done* at MoMA in 2018 is used as a litmus marker for its placement within current intersectional socio-politics of representation. "Activating Whiteness: Galvanising Intersectional Pre-Curatorial Conditions" articulates the need for a deeper critique of discourses of the body through contemporary choreographic practice and for more radical intersectional engagement in the curatorial re-staging and framing of dance histories, including those that are positioned within the historic avant-garde. Rebecca Chaleff's prolific *Activating Whiteness: Racializing the Ordinary in US American Post-modern Dance* (2018) is used to speculate on the potential for more inclusive, intersectional and reparative curatorial iterations of dance history in the museum.

"The New Performance Turn" (Chapter 1.4) underlines the problematics inherent in the paradigmatic inversion of performance and art along the historic discrepancies of the developments of performance and performance art from the composite positions of performance studies, visual art and art history. *Performance as the Paradigm of Art*, a speculative and seismic model adduced by André Lepecki, traces the disparate yet proximated development of the theoretical underpinning of performance and its sometimes interchangeable taxonomy within these fields. As an unfin-

ished and unstable theoretical project, the entangled history of performativity, post-Austinian aeon, emerges via a variegated set of theoretical canons and discrete radical artistic practices – including Fluxus’ “Event Scores”, Kaprow’s “Happenings,” Simone Forti’s *Dance Constructions*, Tehching Hsieh’s *One Year Performances*, Bruce Nauman’s scored works and Adrian Piper’s *The Mythic Being*, to name but a few. “The New Performance Turn” traces the more recent taxonomic confluence and divergence between Catherine Wood’s *Performance in Contemporary Art* (2018), RoseLee Goldberg’s *Performance and Live Art* series (1988, 2004, 2018), and Cosmin Costinas and Ana Janevski’s *Is the Living Body the Last Thing Left Alive? The New Performance Turn, Its Histories and Its Institutions* (2015) in an attempt to map the complex and evolving cartography of the current propagation of dance exhibitions, retrospectives and performative programming that call for a refraction of methods for curating choreography under the aegis of the proclaimed new performance turn.

The two case studies, *Yvonne Rainer: Dance Works*, curated by Catherine Wood at Raven Row (London, 2014) and *Hoochie Koochie* by Trajal Harrell and curated by Leila Hasham at the Barbican Gallery (London, 2017) are positioned to frame and digest the performative means of their differing interpellated curatorial spaces and the assembling of approaches that underpin the persuasion and production of performative bodies for each. Trajal Harrell’s performative instruction of Rainer’s historic *No Manifesto* – alongside the deeper aesthetico-political interrogation of post-modern dance and its transfer via more intersecting contemporary identities as part of the process of creating *Hoochie Koochie* – serves as an interesting creative yoke between the two works that also accentuates the creative litany and aesthetic politics that separate them. Queer theorist Jasbir K. Puar’s conception of “Queer Assemblages” operates across both curatorial and choreographic frames and positions their affective assemblages as instances for the valuation of the non-spectacular and excessively theatrical body, respectively. These antithetical manners of ‘staging’ the body within the ideological and curatorial heterospheres of Raven Row and the Barbican Gallery subtly probe the processes of cultural reproduction through refusal and excess, respectively. Claire Bishop’s most recent conception of the dance exhibition as a grey zone or hybrid apparatus that ruptures the viewing conventions of both the black box and the white cube is perused in relation to *Yvonne Rainer: Dance Works* in particular.

“Performativity as Method” (Chapter 3) predicates the methodological parameters of the book by firstly constellating a delineation of curation as an expanded artistic practice within research frameworks (Linden and Campbell, 2016) and secondly reviewing Barbara Bolt (2016) and Brad Haseman’s (2006, 2007, 2010) advancements of artistic research as a performative paradigm per se. “Expanding the Practice: Reassembling

‘Relations-in-Motion’” draws theoretical filaments through Bolt’s considerations of methodological precision via Butler’s fundamental expansion of Austin’s speech acts to include bodily acts, Derrida’s notion of “différance” as the recurrent dynamic of iterability that underpins performative-research and von Hantelmann’s veritable charge that arts practice, and research itself by pure extension, is inherently performative as it enacts or produces art as an effect. The main thrust of methodological assurance arrives via the dispensation and application of the illocutionary and perlocutionary dimensions of curatorial processes of research and production – which is highlighted as the discreet relational paradigm in *Precarious Assembly* between the illocutionary utterance of the curatorial act as an intentional and performative summons, offering or promise, and the momentum and improvisation of the more choreographic-orientated gesture of the perlocutionary event itself with unpredictable effects on participants and spectators in the locale of the Whitworth Gallery. Finally, Edward Scheer’s *How to Do Things with Performance Art* is proffered to reform the ideological positioning of performance and performance art within art’s performative conventions and thus recuperate its value within the performative research paradigm. “Performativity as Curatorial Strategy: Precarious Assemblages” returns to the curatorial and choreographic conceptual taxonomies of Chapter 1.1. to consider their relationality within performative research convergences. Florian Malzacher’s mandate for more explicit manifestations of performativity as curatorial strategy provides the research driver for a more specialised consideration of the proposed choreographic or curatorial assemblage as a protean and precarious alliance between its inherent theoretical relations and expanding fields of practice.

Chapter 4, an analysis of the curated performative event *Precarious Assembly* at the Whitworth Gallery in 2016, describes and examines the application of the performative methodology outlined in Chapter 3, alongside a deeper interrogation of the immediate and prolonged effects of the event itself. The curatorial instigation and process – as illocutionary utterance – is described in relation to some of the theoretical undertones, persuasions of artistic practice and aesthetic-political concerns. The event’s feminist affordance is relayed via an abridgement of the co-published chapter *(En)gendering “Undisciplined” Space: Reflections on Precarious Assembly*, which also articulates its perlocutionary performative force as producing undisciplined space as a means of undoing some of the more rigid ideological and spectatorial conventions within the spatial politics of the Whitworth. Wiebke Gronemeyer’s theoretical notion of the curatorial complex, and more specifically her proposition of the performative quality of the curatorial, is activated in relation to Funmi Adewole’s performance of *Restfulness* within the curation of *Precarious Assembly*

alongside her own conjecture of the importance of curatorial framing for the discursive and critical development of performance practice. Ade-wole's work is foregrounded as a particular exemplar of the intersecting strands and theoretical overtones that course through this book.



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Contemporary choreographic and curatorial practice have a somewhat contentious relationship, arguably ranging from co-operative exchanges at the vanguard of experimental artistic practice to more proprietary tensions within the neoliberal real-estate of major contemporary art institutions. The context of this publication therefore examines the arc of curatorial frameworks that since the early 21st century continues to excavate Western contemporary choreographic practice for its potential to negotiate the systems that govern collectivity, transmission, embodiment, mediation, participation, and immaterial exchange under the ‘new’ performance turn. The performative qualities of both choreography and dance in the contemporary museum can easily be annexed under the affective economies and exhibitionary formats of the politics of display within neoliberal ideologies that circulate bodies and artistic practices via a mimesis of movement or what André Lepecki (2013) terms the *mise-en-scène* of ‘choreopolitics’. Yet at the same time, radical somatic practices and curatorial approaches that underscore performative embodiment and activate relational awareness of the subject in space-time also instil formats of rupture, resistance and subversion. These discreet approaches within choreographic practice, coupled with performativity as both curatorial and theoretical methodology, unearth a necessary politics of complexity for the constellations of future *choreographies of the curatorial*.

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