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Simone Hine
Once More

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Once More: Performance as Document

Once More is a provocation regarding the nature of live performance and documentation. The five channel video has the appearance of a small incidental scene from a 1960s sitcom that is looped continually.

Contrary to appearances, the five channel video documents a continuous performance: a series of events that are repeated again and again, over the 107 minute duration. The length of the performance was determined by the recording capacity of the cameras. The videos include a fade in and out between the appearances of each character. These fades have the appearance of post-production edits, but were created through the use of physical lights, with dimming control, captured in-camera. In other words, the work appears to be a brief looped section (approximately three minutes in duration), but is actually the documentation of a single performance where the same two scenes are continuously repeated until the camera disks are full.

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The two characters are played by the artist (myself), which required constant costume changes. This occurs in real-time during the fading of the lights. The goal was to keep each repeated action the same, however it was inevitable that I would falter from time to time, revealing the methods of the work's construction. Furthermore, the debris left on the floor of the custom built set, from the celery, functions as a persistent clue to the nature of the work as performance documentation, rather than a looped video.

The videos replicate the aesthetic of 1960s sitcoms, which were often performed on sound stages to a live audience. These sitcoms are known as “multi-camera” because they consist of a single live performance that has been recorded using multiple cameras, the footage from which is edited back into a single channel for broadcast. Multi-camera programs are distinct from cinema and more elaborate single-camera television productions, which rely on multiple takes that are used to construct single actions through the editing process. This film and television industry standard provides the context for an exploration of the relationship between live performance and a performance constructed through moving image media.

Once More uses popular forms as an alternative language through which to reflect upon, critique and to explore themes central to the history of feminist performance art, including authenticity, presence, the construction of feminine archetypes, failure, and endurance.

Simone Hine



Simone Hine: *A Graceful Gravity*

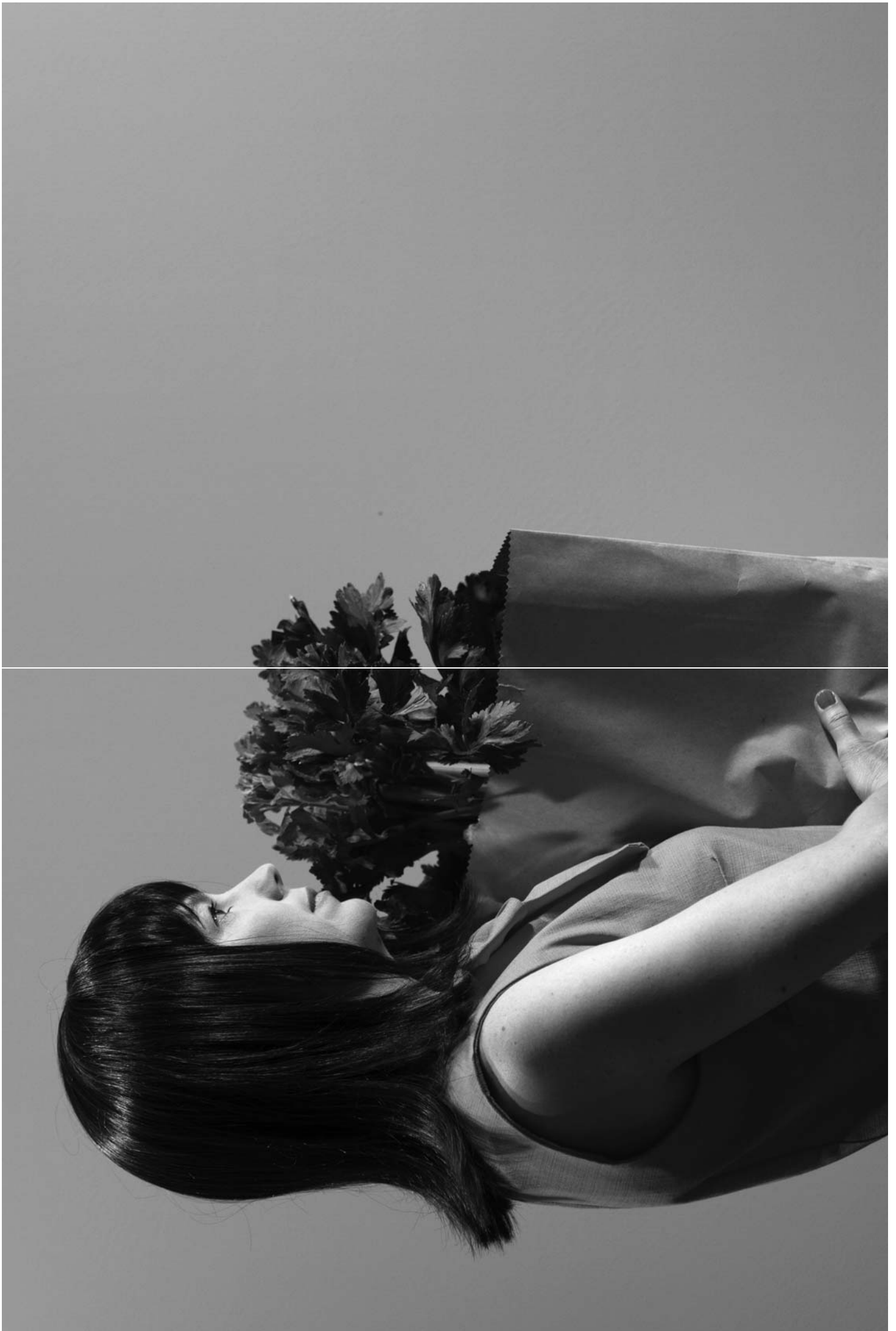
Some painters, photographers and filmmakers are exceptionally sensitive to the many and varied ways in which bodies and spaces can interact: or, more accurately, intersect. In this sense, their work is as much about how bodies occupy spaces as it is about how spaces occupy bodies. It seeks not only to picture this relation, but also to “anatomise” the vexed mutuality of its cognitive and affective, as well as its kinetic and temporal, currents. At its best, such work is capable of both revealing and questioning how we might become conscious of the ways in which spaces can influence – and even determine – our moment-to-moment sense of self, as well as our sense of agency with respect to their otherwise indifferent architectonics. These were some of my first thoughts as I began reflecting on the work of Simone Hine, whose oeuvre does exactly this.

Needless to say, until we’ve entered, paused in, moved through and then out of them, spaces (natural or constructed) are sites of potential becomings that might either assist or obstruct us. Whether their effect on us is positive or negative, enabling or disabling, depends largely on our level of preparedness prior to encountering and experiencing them. There is also, of course, a great lot of negotiating to be done, but this can’t be started, or ended, until we’re actually in them. When this “being in them” is both actual *and* virtual, as it so often is in Hine’s work, new layers of complexity are created, new perspectives emerge.

Indeed, Hine’s art is nothing if not an art of angles and axes. Some of these are to be found in the way she stages, performs, records and edits the scenarios that comprise the video component of her installations. Others can be found in the structuring of the latter into multi-media arrays that regularly require not only the viewer’s, but also the artist’s body to be both present and active in order to achieve figural and semantic completion. Still others make their presence felt in the form of critical “angles” she takes on conventional forms of representation and the disruptive “axes” she forces into visibility between their deconstructed components. All of which are highly visible in her use of costume and gesture: which, as in the work of Cindy Sherman, are subtly theatricalised by her always self-aware relation to them and her always thoughtful deployment of them.

Of the two, gesture is the aspect of her work that fascinates me the most. Perhaps this is because it brings to mind Gilles Deleuze’s observations on the entwining of corporeal and cinematic gestures – which, in what he (via Jean-Louis Comolli) describes as ‘a cinema of *revelation*’ is intrinsically epiphanic. While the “revelatory” aspect of Hine’s work is less about the ways fictional characters are built up, and more about the ways their identities can be ruptured, Deleuze (and Comolli’s) thoughts on the matter are worthy of close consideration. In particular, their idea that in such a cinema ‘the only constant is that of bodies, and the only logic that of linkages and attitudes,’ such that characters ‘are constituted gesture by gesture ... their own duration very precisely coinciding with that of the film.’ The point of this, we are told, is less to tell a story than to develop and transform bodily attitudes.’ While Hine’s work certainly fits this description, its rhetorical scope is far broader, and deeper. It asks: not what is it to be a body in a space, but, rather, what is it to be *this* body in *this* space? To learn the answer, you will need to experience it for yourself.

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