

Recall

On the 20th of September 2013 at the Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Hannah Raisin performed *Dear Carolee, Love Cindy, Love Hannah*. To use Raisin's words, the performance was a homage to Carolee Schneemann's performance *Interior Scroll* (1975).

Raisin walked onto the stage, wearing a necklace made of eggs and a white shift dress; she was carrying a small amplifier. She sat down on the stage and proceeded to plug the amplifier into an i-pod that had been inserted into her vagina, in the same way that Schneemann had inserted the scroll. Instead of reading from a personal manuscript as Schneemann did, Raisin proceeded to play the Cindy Lauper hit from 1983: *Girls Just Want to Have Fun*.

As the song played once through, Raisin nibbled at the eggs that lay around her neck until each egg was broken. What at first might have appeared as a symbol of earthly female fertility, soon became warped as the contents of the eggs dripped across her body, revealing that they had been pre-died in multiple intense colours, the result being a messy rainbow spread across Raisin's body as the contents stained her otherwise white dress.

Raisin's new installation *Recall* revisits this original performance through the combination of photographs, objects and video, in an installation that evokes elements of Raisin's previous performance. Just as Raisin extended and updated *Interior Scroll* through *Dear Carolee, Love Cindy, Love Hannah*, *Recall* extends the ideas evoked by Raisin's original performance and sets it within the semi-permanence of installation. A looped video, photographs and remnants, create the impression of Raisin's previous performance while moving beyond it.

In *Recall*, a series of photographs that were taken during *Dear Carolee, Love Cindy, Love Hannah*, are hung adjacently on the wall. These photographs act as documentation of the event, presenting a clear visual account of the work. Performed on a blackened stage, the photographs appear theatrical, in both tone and arrangement. The photographs have an indexical relationship to Raisin's original performance, creating an impression of the event as a singular, suspended moment. The photographs provide an undercurrent that looks back, where much of *Dear Carolee, Love Cindy, Love Hannah* and *Recall* looks forward.

A silent video that documents a re-enactment of *Dear Carolee, Love Cindy, Love Hannah*, made specifically for *Recall*, is projected on the ceiling. Shot in a live theatre, the black background and stage lighting makes the photographed and videoed performance aesthetically synchronous, giving the impression of a single moment recorded via different mediums. However, the video was shot from below through a transparent surface, which was an impossible angle to record during the original performance of *Dear Carolee, Love Cindy, Love Hannah*. This detail reveals that the photographs and video depict two separate events.

Projected on the ceiling, the viewer looks up at the video, assuming the same position in relation to the body as the camera that recorded it. Likewise, the

photographs replicate the line of sight that both the camera and audience members had of the *Dear Carolee, Love Cindy, Love Hannah* performance. The two camera angles split one's experience of the performance between the distinct methods used to record each event, while the continuity of their shared aesthetic brings them together.

A separate audio track plays throughout the space, producing a further oscillation between continuity and discontinuity within the installation. Where the visual component of the video depicts a second performance for the camera made specifically for *Recall*, the audio has been taken directly from the *Dear Carolee, Love Cindy, Love Hannah* performance. The visuals and audio sit awkwardly together, as Raisin is seen mouthing words that are not audible and the music and incidental noises are asynchronous.

Alongside the photographs, video and sound recording, displayed on a circular light box, is the costume that Raisin wore during the performances. Although the dress was worn during both performances, it only bares the marks of the performance recorded in the video. The traces from the live performance were accidentally washed away when laundered in a domestic washing machine. An act that could be understood as another unseen performative event in this string of performances. It seems particularly fitting that the trace of the live performance disappeared, while the trace of the recorded performance remains to be viewed in this installation.

The absence and presence of performance-traces on the costume relates to a longstanding debate in performance art regarding presence. The removal of the performance traces evokes Peggy Phelan's claim that:

“performance cannot be saved , recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations of representations: once it does so it becomes something other than performance”¹.

In contrast, the inclusion of the traces from the performance made exclusively for video suggests that the performance continues through its documentation. This is an idea that has become synonymous with scholars such as Philip Auslander and Amelia Jones. While *Recall* as a whole clearly extends the performance beyond the moment of origin, the costume, as it is displayed here, references this broader debate regarding presence, documentation and performance. Holding both sides of the debate within a single garment, *Recall* demonstrates that the terms of the debate are not mutually exclusive.

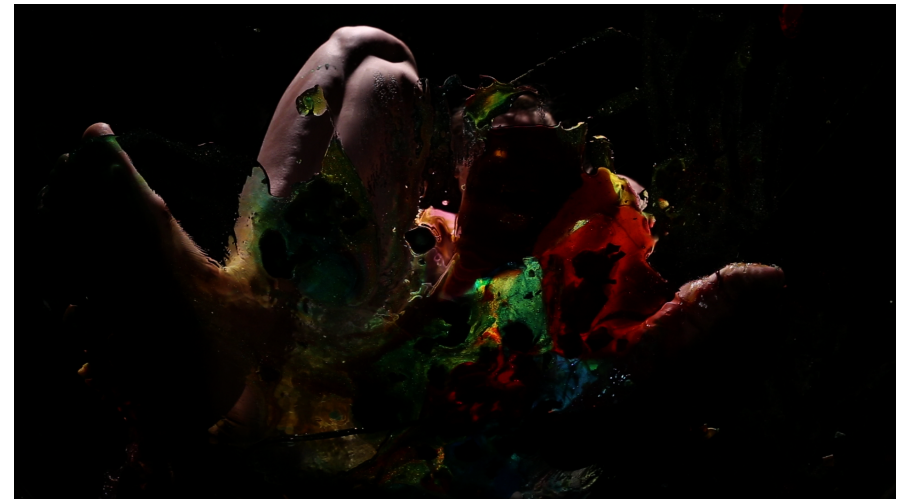
In her much referenced article “‘Presence’ in Absentia’ Amelia Jones has argued that:

“...while the experience of viewing a photograph and reading a text is clearly different from that of sitting in a room watching an artist perform, neither has a privileged relationship to the historical “truth” of the performance”³.

In both *Dear Carolee, Love Cindy, Love Hannah* and *Recall* Raisin clearly follows this line of thinking, while moving beyond it. In *Recall* the singularity of *Dear Carolee, Love Cindy, Love Hannah*, is constantly deferred, shifting between Schneemann’s original performance and Raisin’s second performance for video, exhibited here. Each of these moments layer upon the other creating a palimpsest that contains all of these moments simultaneously.

Recall is an echo of Raisin’s previous performance *Dear Carolee, Love Cindy, Love Hannah*, which itself was an echo of *Interior Scroll*. Each iteration of the performance reverberates in ways that both synthesise and fracture a moment that perpetually slips away just when it seems that it might be pinned down.

Simone Hine



Hannah Raisin, *Recall*, video still, 2016

¹ Peggy Phelan (1993) *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance*, Routledge, New York, p. 146.

² Amelia Jones (1997) “‘Presence’ in Absentia: Experiencing Performance as Documentation”, *Art Journal*, Vol. 56. No. 4. Pp. 11-18.