

AUSTRALIAN.EXPERIMENTAL.ART.FOUNDATION

— PRESENTS —

Y O U . H A D . T O
B E . T H E R E

PERFORMANCE.PRESENCE/VIDEO.TIME.SYMPOSIUM

NICHOLAS TSOUTAS (NSW) CONVENOR

EDWARD SCHEER (NSW) KEYNOTE

ANNE MARSH (VIC) CLOSING KEYNOTE

CATHERINE BELL (VIC)

JULIE HENDERSON (SA)

SIMONE HINE (VIC)

JESS OLIVIERI (NSW)

BREE RICHARDS (QLD)

DIANA SMITH (NSW)

Artists, scholars and curators will contribute papers and illustrated talks that tease out the critical issues and the material forms of performance art in the last 20 years. The symposium asks speakers to address the issue of 'liveness' in performance and whether or not one *had to be there* to truly appreciate the essence of the performance.

15 MAY 2015 10AM — 5PM

BRADLEY.FORUM.UNISA.CITY.WEST
50-55.NORTHTERRACE.ADELAIDE

SCHEDULE

PERFORMANCE.PRESENCE/VIDEO.TIME.SYMPOSIUM

10:00 **INTRO** / Nicholas Tsoutas — Convenor

10:30 **KEYNOTE** / Edward Scheer

11:30 **MORNING TEA**

11:45 **PANEL 1 FOCUS ON THE MEDIUM** / Performance issues, 'liveness' and the translation into video.
Catherine Bell, Julie Henderson, Jess Olivieri

12:45 **Q+A**

13:00 **'DELEGATED' PERFORMANCE** / Arthur Wicks, *Presence / Absence*

13:30 **LUNCH**

14:30 **PANEL 2 FOCUS ON THE CRITICAL** / Theoretical issues and contexts, curatorial & political questions and technological issues.
Simone Hine, Bree Richards, Dianna Smith

15:30 **Q+A**

15:45 **AFTERNOON TEA**

16:00 **CLOSING KEYNOTE** / Anne Marsh

Australians are contributing significantly to the current renaissance in performance art internationally. After decades of object-based spectacle in the art market and on the biennale circuit, we are now seeing a plethora of ephemeral works that address social issues and re-think participatory practices and the role of the artist.

PP/

PERFORMANCE.PRESENCE accompanies the gallery-based exhibition, bringing together artists across generations with a focus on new works and delegated performances.

/VT

VIDEO.TIME explores various genres in performance art through single and dual-screen video works and installations, including documentation of live events and performance made exclusively for screen.

KEYNOTE / EDWARD SCHEER

TITLE: *Remediate, Re-enact, Recompose*

The promise of late 60s and early 70s performance art in generating work without exchange value was always already broken. The idea that site specificity and authorial embodiment would guarantee the authenticity of a work without objective correlatives beyond, crucially, the documents which guaranteed that they had in fact taken place, neglected the uncanny vitality of these very documents. The requirement of proof would eventually create the circumstances in which these correlatives, like all other documents, would migrate beyond the borders of supplementarity and supercede the act itself, taking the place of the work in the art institutions, like the readymades had done for previous generations of art's 'outsiders'. There is, of course, no outside to the art institution and the pristine space of the museum which at one time hadn't desired too close a connection with the new and messy organic art works couldn't wait to get down and dirty with the new avant-garde in its archival climacteric. One name for this climacteric is 'remediation' and in this paper I will explore the recent journeys of performance art in and out of media and the institution.

BIO / Professor Edward Scheer is Director of Research in the School of the Arts and Media at the University of New South Wales, Australia. He has written essays on art and aesthetics for the AGNSW, *Documenta 13*, the *Biennale of Sydney* and the *Auckland Triennial* as well as *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Monthly*. He is author of *Scenario*, a study of new work from the iCinema Project (UNSW Press/ZKM), *Multimedia Performance* (Palgrave) with Rosie Klich and *The Infinity Machine* (Schwartz City Press) the first comprehensive account of Mike Parr's performance art. He is a member of the Australian Research Council College of Experts. From 2007-11, he was President of PSI (Performance Studies international).

PANEL 1 / FOCUS ON THE MEDIUM: PERFORMANCE ISSUES, 'LIVENESS' AND THE TRANSLATION INTO VIDEO

CATHERINE BELL

TITLE: *"On the Alert": Staging abreactive encounters and coercing self-conscious spectatorship, strategies for promoting "liveness" when private performance rituals are documented on video.*

I am interested in notions of the performing body as mediated presence. I argue that video performance can privilege a participatory space on screen for individual subjectivities to mingle and illuminate the potential for a mediated "liveness" that enhances spectator reception. I will discuss how the installation of my performance videos promotes "liveness" through the inclusion of a material trace in the video installation. This material trace, a costume worn in the performance or props used in the ritual, shown alongside the documented action, is designed to intensify bodily senses and construct a tension between the virtual and the real. I will examine how these performance relics, in conjunction with the installation design, allow the past to be experienced through the present and solicit the viewer into the role of active witness. I argue that these strategies allow the viewer and performer to become drawn together through affective connection, by provoking visceral responses or a corporeal reaction. Theoretical approaches to the abject female performance body, controlling and subverting gendered systems of viewing, the performer as the site of trauma and the concept of wound culture will be analysed in relation to a series of my performance video installations. I will also analyse how performance evolved in my practice as a theatricalisation of process. I investigate how the solitary ritual of labour intensive art making evolves into private performance rituals that intersect with autobiographical and societal events imprinted with trauma.

BIO / Catherine Bell (b. 1969 Sydney, Australia) lives and works in Melbourne, Australia. In her multi-disciplinary practice, she draws extensively on autobiographical experience, often using ritualistic performance as a mode of catharsis to investigate the human condition and render the lived experience visible. As a result, her work is often intensely personal, exploring intimate subject matter such as self-identity, trauma and loss. Catherine has completed a Bachelor of Arts (Art History & English Literature) at the University of Queensland (1989) and a Bachelor of Visual Arts (Sculpture) at Queensland University of Technology (1992), a Masters of Fine Art (Sculpture) at RMIT University (1997) and a Doctor of Philosophy (Fine Art) at Monash University, Melbourne (2008). Catherine is a Senior Lecturer in Visual Arts and National Course Director of the Bachelor of Visual Arts & Design Degree at the Australian Catholic University. She has exhibited extensively in Australia, Asia, Europe and the UK. She has been awarded various scholarships and residencies including a Research Fellowship, Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art, Oxford University (2000-01); an Australian Postgraduate Award Scholarship (2003 - 06), Australia Council for the Arts Residency, New York (2010) and St Vincent's Hospital Residency (2012-13). Catherine is represented by Sutton Gallery, Melbourne, Australia.

**PANEL 1 / FOCUS ON THE MEDIUM: PERFORMANCE ISSUES,
'LIVENESS' AND THE TRANSLATION INTO VIDEO**

JULIE HENDERSON

TITLE: *so far, still there: attention, performance, making*

The time of an artist was a phrase coined by Robert Smithson in the 1960s in relating his valences and perspectives about sustaining an art practice. This presentation will offer an artistic perspective on the time of artistic performance and performative work. In particular it will contextualise work's durational aspects in relation to qualities of attention and significantly take into account artistic intentions and the experiences of the artist and audience/participants.

In my practice performance has always been there conditioned by what I will term "the attention locus" of the work. From theatrical dance performances to live performance art, video work to camera and more recently in performative work, so far it is still there. Recent conversations in art about iterative and operational performative works focus on actualising situations and contexts that problematise or make contingent subject and object ontological oppositions. They do however, as I will posit, sustain the time of the performance artist. Performance can variously offer participatory opportunities and also spectacular viewing or perhaps both aspects within one work. For the artist and the audience there are qualities of attention that sustain the time of the artist and a generative experience of performance modes.

BIO / Adelaide-based artist Julie Henderson initially worked as a classical /contemporary dancer. She received her doctorate in visual art practice in 2011 and she is currently studio head of sculpture and installation and a lecturer in honours and postgraduate studies at the University of South Australia. Her practice is interdisciplinary: an 'ecology' of spatial practices researching relations between the physical sensory world and the people/bodies moving—and moved within it. Performative and experimental in character, her work often involves collaboration and could be seen as a choreographic process akin to jazz improvisation between artist/ audience makers and objects. These sometimes surprising conjunctions renew and mobilise the valency of anachronistic and forgotten things, or allow one to chance upon a new kind of dynamic attention. In 2004-2005 Julie Henderson was a recipient of an Anne & Gordon Samstag Scholarship undertaking studies in Glasgow School of Art and a subsequent residency in Lucerne, Switzerland and exhibiting beyond in Europe. She has exhibited nationally and in Stockholm, Graz (Austria), Shanghai, Baguio City (Philippines), Glasgow and Loughborough in the United Kingdom.

**PANEL 1 / FOCUS ON THE MEDIUM: PERFORMANCE ISSUES,
'LIVENESS' AND THE TRANSLATION INTO VIDEO**

JESS OLIVIERI

TITLE: *Sex, Lies and Videotape: Performance and the Document*

In the era of neo-liberal capitalism, the art market's intensified power in historicisation and attention to ephemeral art forms—performance art, live art, relational art—and the simultaneous rise of the rhetoric of democracy, this project asks the question: Can the relationship between photography, video and performance be non-hierarchical where one element, for example photography, is not privileged over another, for example the live event?

I will attempt to provide answers to these questions through the framework of Yvonne Rainer's seminal *Trio A*, as well as the young Australian dancer/ choreographer Atlanta Eke and my own practice. The attitude to the documentation of *Trio A* has shifted over the years, as has the thinking around this issue in general. I will track this trajectory through *Trio A*, from the initial resistance of the captured image, to the recognition of the failure of this approach, finally to an acknowledgement that the film of *Trio A* cemented this piece of choreography as one of the most important works of its time. I will argue that we can learn from *Trio A* to think through the complex relationship between live performance, video and photography.

BIO / Jess Olivieri is the co-founder of Parachutes for Ladies, a working model that address modes of collaboration and authorship. Jess' practice investigates the social and cultural factors that influence how we inhabit public space, manifesting in performance, dance, opera, video and sound works. Jess is currently a PhD candidate at Sydney Collage of the Arts investigating the relationship between the live and the document, in her own practice and that of choreographer, dancer and film maker Yvonne Rainer.

Jess often collaborates with sound artist Hayley Forward, showing at Australian Centre for Contemporary Art (ACCA), Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) and the Gallery of Modern Art in Brisbane (GOMA) and has collaborated with a wide range of groups including the Aura Australis Women's Choir for the performance *Hello* at the MCA, the Sydney Chamber Choir for Campbeltown Art Centre and the Brunswick Women's Choir for the Melbourne Art Fair. Jess's work is held in major public and private collections.

SIMON HINE

TITLE: *Timepiece: The Time of Performance and Video.*

The relationship between performance and video has been conceptualised in terms of a lineage from performance art. As such there has been a focus on the relationship between the performance event and documentation. This paper will use a performance and video installation that I constructed at Kings ARI in Melbourne in 2011, titled *Timepiece*, as a site through which to articulate a different relationship between presence and mediation. Instead of drawing a lineage from performance art, this work draws from the history of photographic based mediums, looking specifically at constructed photography. In so doing, the work positions the mediated image as a normative state from which the performance component converges and diverges. Central to *Timepiece* is the juxtaposition of time as it is constructed through moving images, mechanical time and lived time. The construction of time is central to photographic based mediums and it is applied here to live performance.

BIO / Simone Hine is an artist and curator based in Melbourne, Australia. Her practice utilises performance, video and installation. Hine has exhibited in solo exhibitions throughout Australia including the George Paton Gallery (Melbourne), Brisbane Powerhouse, and Institute of Modern Art (Brisbane). Her work has been included in group exhibitions at Careof: Organisation for Contemporary Art, Milan, QUT Art Museum, and the Art Gallery of Queensland, amongst others. Hine was a founding co-director of Beam Contemporary, which, from 2010 to 2014, was an experimental commercial gallery in Melbourne representing young and mid-career artists from the Asia-Pacific region. She is a founding co-director of Screen Space, a not-for-profit gallery that opened in Melbourne in 2010. Hine is currently completing a practice-led PhD in Culture and Communication at the University of Melbourne.

BREE RICHARDS

TITLE: *Liveness and the afternow: performance and its trace in the art museum*

Interest in performance art has undergone a wholesale resurgence in recent years, transitioning from the margins to the centre of contemporary art discourses. Several key museums have established departments, appointed curators, built spaces for presentation, and are now raising questions about how to collect and preserve performance. Alongside this marked increase in the number of works and venues, and in exploring its histories and limits, so too the medium has been embraced by new audiences around the world in ways that would have been unimaginable to pioneering performance artists of the 1970s.

Why have living bodies, both in curatorial vocabularies and in the programming of museums and institutions, increased so dramatically over the past decade? Is it simply that the inclusion of the performative in an artistic project is the one necessary gesture that allows it to affirm about itself: *This is so contemporary?*

As the British curator and writer Adrian Heathfield suggested as long ago as 2004, today we are obsessed with 'immediacy and interactivity' driven to 'bring close all that is now distant to us'.¹ Live art, body art, performance art, all are terms used to describe works that involve the activation of a body or bodies temporally – for an audience who is present at the time or who will engage with the work later, through representational modes such as video. This paper explores the relationship between liveness and its trace, performance and its documents, with particular reference to how the conundrum of presence and absence might productively be considered in the context of the art museum. And furthermore, it aims to consider how a medium that inevitably invites disorder and disruption, might also push the institution to adapt itself and its rules – both practically and conceptually.

1. Adrian Heathfield. 'Alive', *Live Art and Performance*, London, Tate Publishing, 2004, p.7.

BIO / Bree Richards was recently appointed as the Nick Waterlow OAM Curatorial Fellow at the Biennale of Sydney. Before joining the Biennale, she held the position of Associate Curator, Contemporary Australian Art, at the Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, where she contributed to a range of exhibition and publishing projects. Most recently, Bree curated *Trace: Performance and Its Documents, Everyday Magic and Embodied Acts*, a program of performative works commissioned for *Contemporary Australia: Women*. Prior to this she worked in a variety of roles at cultural institutions such as the National Museum of Australia; the National Gallery of Australia; and the Canberra Museum and Gallery. As a writer, Bree has contributed texts to numerous exhibition catalogues, magazines and artists' projects. She has a particular interest in interdisciplinary projects spanning performance and the visual arts, and in 2013 undertook a writing residency with *Performa Magazine*, New York.

DIANNA SMITH

TITLE: *The sea monsters of the past and the flying saucers of yesterday:
A brief history of performance art with Mel Brimfield*

In 1961 Allan Kaprow wrote, "To the extent that a Happening is not a commodity but a brief event... it may become a state of mind." He continued, "Who will have been there at that event? It may become like the sea monsters of the past or the flying saucers of yesterday."¹ Kaprow's predictions take form in the work of British artist Mel Brimfield and her faux documentary *This is Performance Art* (2010-2011), which fictionalises the art archive to construct a radically different history of performance. Archival footage of iconic performances is spliced with scenes from popular films such as *Footloose* (1984), while pioneering feminist performance artist Carolee Schneemann shares a double bill with British television entertainer Debbie McGee, and Yoko Ono's well known *Cut Piece* (1964) is turned into a burlesque act. Through this alternative, comic vision, Brimfield confuses the boundaries of authentic and inauthentic narratives, and critiques the way in which live art has been historicised and institutionalised. Through a close reading of Brimfield's work, this paper will examine the complex relationship between 'event' and 'object' and the slippages, inconsistencies and ambiguities of performance art history.

1. Alan Kaprow, 'The Happenings Are Dead: Long Live the Happenings (1966)', in *Alan Kaprow: Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*, ed. by Jeff Kelley (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003), (p. 62).

BIO / Diana Smith is a Sydney based artist, writer and researcher. She is a founding member of performance and video art collective Brown Council, runs the ongoing lecture series *Cinemia*, and recently launched the feminist pedagogy project *Sunday School* with artist Kelly Doley. Diana's writing has appeared in a range of art magazines and journals including *Artlink*, *Performance Paradigm*, *Realtime*, *Runway* and *Un Magazine*. She recently produced an online archive of video interviews with Australian performance artists in collaboration with publisher *Das Platforms*. Diana is currently completing her PhD at the University of New South Wales, Art and Design where she also works as a researcher and lecturer.

TITLE: *Performance art and its relations*

The relationship between performance art and its documentation is problematic. On one hand it seems logical to simply argue that a live event cannot be re-mediated. In 1993 I argued that: "Performance art is a visual art practice which is located in a specific time and place and involves the presence of the artist before his/her audience". Although this is still true for much performance art, it is also evident that mechanical means of reproducing and re-presenting ephemeral events are extremely important historically. Current scholarship in performance art history is divided between those who believe that it is necessary to have actually seen the performance event and those who believe that the event can be interpreted and critiqued from surviving documents. Current practice where artists are making performances exclusively for the screen or works that are made to exist primarily as documents confound these positions. Does this work reinstate an object-based practice in the museum? Have performance and its traces in the historical archive gained acknowledgement because of the desire for the real manifested in the current experience economy? How is this desire for the real connected to the concept of the original? In this paper I hope to tease out some of these issues and reflect on the issues raised throughout the symposium.

BIO / Professor Anne Marsh is Professorial Research Fellow at the Victorian College of the Arts, University of Melbourne. Her books include: *Performance Ritual Document* (Macmillan, 2014), *LOOK: Contemporary Australian Photography*, since 1980 (Macmillan, 2010), *Pat Brassington: This is Not a Photograph* (Quintus/University of Tasmania, 2006), *The Darkroom: Photography and the Theatre of Desire* (Macmillan, 2003) and *Body and Self: Performance Art in Australia 1969-1992* (Oxford University Press, 1993). Anne has published widely in journals and magazines, and has been Melbourne contributing editor for *Eyeline Contemporary Visual Arts* since 1997.

THANKS

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