

Performance

Matters

Archive of performance lectures
Saturday 2nd to Saturday 9th October
10am to 6pm daily (closed Monday)
Whitechapel Gallery

Free, open access, no booking required.

A small sound and video archive hosted by Whitechapel Gallery looking at examples of the performance lecture as a form of artistic and critical expression, and its potential to address a broad range of cultural issues and philosophical ideas.

Works in the archive have been selected through an invitation to *Performing Idea* contributors to suggest performance lectures that they think are crucial to the definition of the form, performance lectures that are vital to the development of their own practice, and performance lectures that they have not witnessed but have longed to see.

John Baldessari
Sings Lewitt (1972, 13 minutes)

In an ironic intersection of two systems — arcane theoretical discourse and popular music — Baldessari sings a tract by Minimalist artist Sol LeWitt. Introducing this performance by noting that "these sentences have been hidden too long in exhibition catalogues," Baldessari sings Lewitt's forty-five-point tract on Conceptual Art to the tunes of *The Star-Spangled Banner* and *Heaven*, among other songs. Baldessari's witty "art aria" functions as a meta-conceptual exercise.

www.baldessari.org/

Jérôme Bel

The Last Performance (2004, 80 minutes)

Hebbel am Ufer Theatre Berlin. Production R.B. Jerome Bel (Paris)

"Invited at the same time by the Hebbel Theater in Berlin, the Tanz-Quartier in Vienna and the Centre National de la Danse in Paris to perform *The last performance* (1998) I decided, instead of presenting the piece, to make a lecture about its issues. I had the feeling that this difficult piece had not been really understood. Maybe the piece was bad. But I believe that the issues of this piece were relevant, which is why I would like to change my medium and to use the tool of the lecture to try to articulate better the stakes of "The last performance". I will re-contextualise the piece in its theoretical level through the texts of Roland Barthes and Peggy Phelan and in my artistic situation at that time." Jerome Bel

www.jeromebel.fr

Mel Brimfield

This Is Performance Art – Performed Sculpture and Dance (2010, 35 minutes)

This Is Performance Art – Performed Sculpture and Dance is the first episode of a multi-part fictional TV series. The notoriously fragmentary and unreliable historical record of live art is squashed, abbreviated and entirely misrepresented by this authoritative 'lecture'. The secondhand anecdotes and mythologies surrounding performers and their performances are expanded, distorted and completely supplanted by new fictions, with archival photographs and footage, and authentic ephemera being appropriated and re-contextualised, or entirely invented at will. Staged documents in the form of photographic works and outlandish commentaries are embedded amidst a barrage of stock footage drawn from wildly divergent populist and marginal cultural sources. The result is a skewed and tangled romp through the already vexed historiography of live art, and the beginnings of a sprawling pseudo-archive.

Co-commissioned by Camden Arts Centre and Yorkshire Sculpture Park, 2010. Mel Brimfield is represented Ceri Hand Gallery.

Tania Bruguera

Tatlin's Whisper #6 (Havana version, 2009, 53 minutes)

Medium: Behavior art

Materials: Stage, podium, microphones, one loudspeaker inside and one loudspeaker outside of the building, two persons dressed on a military outfit, white dove, one minute free of censorship per speaker, 200 disposable cameras with flash.

@Tania Bruguera, 2009

"Tatlin's Whisper #6 (Havana Version) was a participative action at the central courtyard of the Wifredo Lam Center (the institution that organizes the Havana Biennial). A stage with a podium, two microphones, and a huge golden-brown curtain as background were placed at one end. The set was reminiscent of the staple one used by Fidel Castro for his speeches. The microphones were connected to an amplifier with speakers, one of them at the building's entrance, pointing to the street. Two actors, a woman and a man dressed in Cuban military uniforms, stood at each side of the podium. The woman had a white dove in her hands. Admission to this event was free, but, in contrast to The Burden of Guilt's mixed, spontaneous, more grassroots audience, the space was filled with people from the Cuban art world, mainly young artists, and with students, writers, and Cuban and international visitors to the Biennial. Two hundred disposable cameras were handed out to the public by Bruguera to document the event. Then people were summoned to speak their minds on the podium for one minute. In other art contexts this would not have had any special relevance. In Cuba, it was an historic event: for the first time in half a century a free public tribune was allowed for people to express their ideas. Thus, the artwork managed to use art's more permissive field to create a space for freedom in a totalitarian context. The performance was art due to its symbolic structure, and because it was labeled as such and was taking place in an art framework.

Simultaneously, it was a radical political action in Cuba."

Extract from *Cuba In Tania Bruguera's Work: The Body Is The Social Body*, Gerardo Mosquera, 2010

www.taniabruquera.com/cms/

William S. Burroughs

Lecture on Public Discourse (1980, audiotape, 90 minutes)

A lecture by William S. Burroughs on public discourse, with an introduction by Allen Ginsberg. Topics included are nuclear weapons,

disarmament, the Equal Rights Amendment, aliens, dreams, function of the artist, mind-altering drugs, reincarnation, space travel, television, and economics. Keywords: beat generation, literature and the state, technology and literature, literature and society, protest literature.

This audio is part of the collection Naropa Poetics Audio Archives. It also belongs to collection: Audio Books & Poetry, [www.archive.org/details/audio_bookspoetryArtist/Composer: Burroughs, William S.; Ginsberg, Allen](http://www.archive.org/details/audio_bookspoetryArtist/Composer:Burroughs,WilliamS.;Ginsberg,Allen).

Date: 1980-08-11. Label / Recorded by: Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics.

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www.archive.org/details/naropa

Marcia Farquhar To The Shelter (2010, 10 minutes)

"On the late-winter afternoon of 13th February, Marcia Farquhar will be leading a short guided procession to the seaside shelter where TS Eliot sat in 1921 looking onto Margate sands. 'I can connect/ nothing with nothing', he wrote. Taking this as its rallying cry, Farquhar's expedition will seek the heart of nothingness and nonsense in Margate's bleak wintry front.

Exploring the physical, historical and social terrain between Dreamland and Wasteland, the tour is one of a series of works in which Farquhar, the consummate visitor, assumes the role of guide and host, often leading bemused locals through landscapes with which they'd previously thought themselves familiar. Here, on the eve of St Valentine's, Farquhar will be remembering Madame Sosostriis, a famous clairvoyant, with a spell of amateur fortune-telling. Belladonnas and drowned sailors may dance to the sound of a pleasantly whining mandolin.

Cups of tea will be served in the Substation before and after the tour, with roasted chestnuts on the beach inbetween.Farquhar herself spent the early years of her life just across the Estuary in the seaside town of Felixstowe, over which sweep the same Russian winter winds. On this occasion, the art gallery will offer some shelter, and the shelter will offer none." Limboarts.com

Commissioned and filmed by Limbo. www.limboarts.co.uk

www.marciafarquhar.com

Goat Island

Lecture in a Stair Shape Diminishing (2001, audiotape, 62 minutes)

"Goat Island's "Lecture in a Stair Shape Diminishing" was written in response to an invitation from the Vienna Festival to present a lecture alongside the premier of *It's an Earthquake in My Heart* in June 2001. It was written by the six members of the group, partly to contextualize the performance, and partly as an artwork in its own right. It was intended that the talk would also reflect the theme of the Vienna Festival into which we had been programmed, which included: "...a story made up of many stories, of voices, sounds, and images... [dealing] with places, biographies, and identities that change, with power and helplessness, zones of transition from biography to politics, from story to history.

As the design of Goat Island's performance spaces presents us with a vessel to fill with our performances, we also found it useful to have a structure which we would fill with words for our lecture. Matthew constructed this design, reproduced below. Structure might be said, in instances such as these, to provide clarity and focus to the creative process. Six alternating voices (A to F) each speak four times in sequence for a duration of diminishing length, determined by numbered sentences, starting at 35 and reducing to 0, at which point the lecture concludes. Each person delivers 61 sentences in total. To ensure that the lecture diminished in length with each section, we decided that the average sentence length would be approximately 17.5 words in each of the 24 sections.

In addition to the sentence structure, each member of Goat Island supplied a directive to be followed by us all:

- (1) Write one to three lines about not being able to move - Lin.
- (2) Compulsion. To complete the experience of looking, create a climate of things - Mark.
- (3) At some point in your piece, stop and observe a moment of silence, directly after which you complete the sentence, "I hear..." - Karen.
- (4) Find a safe part and use it as an anchor - CJ (appropriated from

Brian Eno and Peter Schmidt's Oblique Strategies).

(5) Write three sentences in a row, each sentence beginning with the same word - Bryan.

(6) Share a word at the transitional sentence, and add a change of season - Matthew.

The outcome of this process is multivocal, and perhaps internally contradictory, reflecting the manner of its conception. The structure and directives, outlined above, are secondary to your response to the lecture, and indeed may not be apparent without reading this introduction – however, we hope this information will add to your appreciation of the lecture.”

CJ Mitchell, Goat Island Company Manager, Chicago, March 2001

www.goatlandperformance.org

Raimund Hoghe

Throwing The Body Into The Fight (2000, First version, 75 minutes)

Académie Expérimentale des Théâtres, Paris. Text, Direction, Choreography and Dance: Raimund Hoghe. Artistic Collaboration: Luca Giacomo Schulte

“Pier Paolo Pasolini wrote of throwing the body into the fight. These words inspired me to go on stage. Other inspirations are the reality around me, the time in which I live, my memories of history, people, images, feelings and the power and beauty of music and the confrontation with one's own body which, in my case, does not correspond with conventional ideals of beauty. To see bodies on stage that do not comply with the norm is important - not only with regard to history but also with regard to present developments, which are leading humans to the status of design objects. On the question of success: it is important to be able to work and to go your own way - with or without success. I simply do what I have to do.”

Raimund Hoghe.

www.raimundhoghe.com

Lone Twin

Walk With Me, Walk With Me, Will Somebody Please Walk With Me (2000, 70 minutes)

A performance lecture created to review and present the recurring use of walking as a central theme in Lone Twin's collaborative works. The

work responds to ideas of performance and travel, pedestrian knowledge, subjective-geographies and what can happen when it rains on one's map.

www.lonetwin.com

Selections from Live Culture at Tate Modern (2003)

Live Culture at Tate Modern (2003) was a four-day programme of performances, lectures, screenings and an international symposium bringing together distinguished artists, theorists and curators to consider the shifting nature of Live Art practice in relation to the visual arts, and the expansion of performance art across broader artistic and social arenas, and its role in relation to cultural change.

Marina Abramović

Performing Body

Live Culture Lecture series (2003, Tate Modern, 118 minutes)

For over 20 years Marina Abramovic has collected materials from film, dance, theatre, music, rituals and performance. For her lecture at Live Culture she wound through a personal visual archive of performance related materials focused around the performing body, its mental and physical limits.

Guillermo Gómez-Peña

Lecture

Live Culture Symposium: Performance And The Contemporary (2003, Tate Modern, 60 minutes)

A performance lecture from the two-day Live Culture international symposium exploring performance and place, the body in extremity, activism and global culture

www.pochanostra.com

William Pope.L

Lecture

Live Culture Symposium: Performance And The Contemporary, (2003, Tate Modern, 26 minutes)

A performance lecture from the two-day Live Culture international symposium exploring performance and place, the body in extremity, activism and global culture.

John Waters

This Filthy World (2007, 86 minutes)

"This filthy world... it's a beautiful place, isn't it?" John Waters

The writer-director of cult classics *Multiple Maniacs*, *Pink Flamingos*, *Polyester* and *Hairspray* addresses a live theater audience in a hilarious and completely uncensored one-man-show. Part confession, part Vaudeville act, *This Filthy World* takes on such taboo topics as pedophilia, gay marriage and drug use while Waters waxes rhapsodic on the joys of saying inappropriate things to children. Directed by Jeff Garlin.

www.dreamlandnews.com

Archive presentation

7th October

8.00pm

Whitechapel auditorium

£6/£4

Lois Keidan and Gavin Butt will present and discuss a selection of items from the archive in the Whitechapel Gallery's auditorium. Bookings for this evening event must be made through Whitechapel Gallery. To book go to: www.whitechapelgallery.org