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Unfolding Relations: intersubjectivity choreographed in contemporary art

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Art History, the University of Auckland, 2017.
ABSTRACT

Increasingly, instances of performance art, either live or recorded, involve the choreography or execution of planned movements and actions, as part an encounter between various individuals, in an exhibition context. Although such artworks can have multiple meanings, the ways in which these works help to produce inter-subjectivity, even tacitly or as secondary effects, allow the emergence of subjecthood to arise in ways that are special or depart in some way from the regulatory structures that usually produce subjecthood.

The approach taken by this thesis is to make explicit these tendencies drawn from multi-disciplinary perspectives on how to identify subjectivity and intersubjectivity, and how they are related. The main theorists engaged with are: Helen Reese Leahy, Tony Bennett, Michel Foucault, Louis Althusser, Judith Butler, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, André Lepecki, Amelia Jones, Emmanuel Levinas, Rosi Braidotti, Sara Ahmed and Linda Tuhiwai Smith.

The complex nature of choreographed artworks necessitates an approach that is non-reductionist. The choreographed works discussed in this thesis supplement and further elucidate these theories in specific, multi-sensory, kinaesthetic, somatic, affective, ethical, political and regional ways, they are experiential in the full sense rather than restricted to text-based theories.

The main works consulted are by choreographers: Tino Sehgal; Xavier Le Roy; Mark Harvey; Sean Curham; Boris Charmatz; Joshua Rutter; Alexandra Bachzetsis and val smith; as well as those by contemporary artists: Jordan Wolfson; Pablo Bronstein; Kalisolaite ‘Uhila; Alicia Frankovich; Rebecca Ann Hobbs; Angela Tiatia and Shigeyuki Kihara.
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INTRODUCTION

In a large Berlin studio is a man with a wide stance, his legs slightly bent. He leans forward from his waist, keeping his left arm behind his back and with the first two fingers of his right hand, he makes a vigorous sawing motion across his throat. Within a triennial exhibition, in a large art gallery in Queensland is screened a video in which a young woman lies on her back in the corner of a white room. She looks directly at the camera with a calm yet confronting gaze. Wearing only a black leotard and high-heels, she repeatedly walks her feet up and down the vertical surface of the wall until she can no longer do so. Two young men are filmed dancing with the furniture in a suburban living room in Alabama. One of them slowly and carefully caresses the underside of a plush armchair with his fingers whilst the other lies on the carpet, his body undulates up and down, back and forth, in a rocking motion. In the loading zone of a large art gallery in West Auckland two performers attend to a woman lying on her back upon the bonnet of a car with her eyes closed. They gently place bolsters and blankets on and around her body and quietly inquire as to whether or not she feels comfortable.

Each of the moments just described belong to performances, either live or recorded, which involve the choreography or execution of planned movements and actions as part of an encounter between various individuals. In this thesis I will argue that certain choreographies, such as the ones mentioned above, enable inter-subjective exchanges that bring into fluid contingency subjectivity and art. Whereas philosophical, sociological and psychological theories are rigorous in their analysis of the different aspects on the subject-intersubjectivity relation, it is choreographed works that offer embodied, somatic, kinaesthetic, spatial, affective, artistic, interrogative and experimental dimensions to this discourse, reminding one of the lived, personal and transformative nature of intersubjectivity produced, or indeed choreographed, by these works.

When curator Nicolas Bourriaud first published his reflections on art *Esthétique relationelle* (*Relational Aesthetics*) in 1998 he argued for a paradigm shift in art. Bourriaud proposed that artworks need no longer be understood as mere products of the social relations regulated by political and economic systems, instead artworks can ‘engineer intersubjectivity’ and become these social relations.¹ The choreographed works I examine in this thesis produce complex and special forms of social relations which actually interrogate not only what it means to be a subject, but provide important opportunities to examine and explore processes of intersubjectivity-as-art. Intersubjectivity helps to produce subjecthood and in the other direction, subjects produce

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forms of intersubjectivity. This bi-directional phenomenon has been studied by a number of discipline-based theories that I examine in detail in this thesis. My argument is that these theories not only help to provide a critical framework for understanding the structure, effects and exchanges produced by these choreographed works but, crucially, these works have important contributions to make to the discourse on subjectivity and intersubjectivity, not least by plumbing the depths of this complex and chiasmic relationship. These works do this not by representing intersubjectivity, but by producing it for the duration of the work and, arguably, in ways that can affect new intersubjectivities long after these groups of people, choreographers, performers and audience members have dispersed and gone their separate ways. This thesis attempts to give an account of the unfolding of intersubjectivity into multiple dimensions.

There has been some literature that addresses choreography in relation to performance art in exhibition catalogues such as Move: Choreographing You (2010), Sharon Lockhart | Noa Eshkol (2012) and Show Time: Choreography in Contemporary Art (2012); essays by art historian Jan Verwoert such as ‘Social Choreography’ (2010), curator Catherine Wood’s ‘Boris Charmatz: An Architecture of Attention’ (2014) and ‘People and Things in the Museum’ (2014); as well as more academic publications such as performance and dance theorist André Lepecki’s Exhausting Dance: Performance and the Politics of Movement (2006) DANCE (2012) and Singularities: Dance in the Age of Performance (2016).² My particular approach is unique for the field of art history and performance studies due to: its focus upon the concept of intersubjectivity as part of analysis of choreographic works and in relation to historical works of performance art as well as current arguments from museum studies, philosophy, cultural studies and contemporary art history and theory.

This theoretical framework allows an interpretation of artworks, however the artworks or choreographies discussed also enable an interrogation of such a framework. The artworks examined in this thesis were created by: choreographers presenting work in the contexts of exhibitions; artists whose work utilises choreography or engages with relevant concepts and artists from the history of twentieth-century performance art. The main choreographers who will be looked at include: Tino Sehgal (Germany), Xavier Le Roy (France), Mark Harvey (New Zealand), Adam Linder (US/Germany), Shahryar Nashat (Germany), Dora García (Spain), Sean Curham (New Zealand), Sandra Parker (Australia), Boris Charmatz (France), Joshua Rutter (Germany / New Zealand), val smith (New Zealand) and Alexandra Bachzetsis (Switzerland). The artists covered who have created works that engage with important choreographic concepts

include: Rikrit Tiravanija, Jordan Wolfson, Pablo Bronstein, Tania Bruguera, Bojana Cvejić, Christian Falsnaes, the Bouillon Group, Louise Menzies, Oleg Kulik, Campbell Patterson, Kalisolaite ‘Uhila, Alicia Frankovich, David Rosetsky, Juliet Carpenter & Dan Nash, Anne Imhof, Cameron Jaimie, Rebecca Ann Hobbs, Mark Bradford, Angela Tiatia and Shigeyuki Kihara. More historical works from the history of twentieth-century performance art will be discussed by artists such as: Yoko Ono (b. 1933), Simone Forti (b. 1935), Robert Morris (b. 1931), Oskar Schlemmer (1883-1943), Allan Kaprow (1927-2006), Carolee Schneemann (b. 1939), Bruce Nauman (b. 1941), Jim Allen (b. 1922), Mierle Laderman Ukeles (b. 1939), Joseph Beuys (1921-1986), Hans Haacke (b. 1936), Gilbert and George, Michael Jackson (1958-2009), Dennis Oppenheim (1938-2011), Barry Le Va (b. 1941), Stelarc (b. 1946), Paul McCarthy (b. 1945), Vito Acconci (b. 1940), Bas Jan Ader (1942-1975), Trisha Brown (b. 1936) and Gillian Wearing (b. 1963).

Chapter Summary

Chapter One examines the kinds of places and spaces within which choreographers have recently chosen to present artworks. An historical account is given of museums and the precedent they form for more contemporary art museums, institutions, dealer galleries and exhibition spaces. The kinds of relations created by such institutions with those who visit and perform within them will be explored, as will the way in which this has an impact upon subject-constitution. The chapter surveys a range of performances and choreographies that enact intersubjectivity and explore the complex relationship between subjection and intersubjectivity by artists Wolfson, Bronstein, Bruguera, Harvey, Cvejić and Falsnaes. The concept of choreography will be unravelled in greater detail and a discussion of the kinds of relations created between choreographers, those who perform their works and those who encounter their works will also take place. Choreographers and artists mentioned at this point include the Bouillon Group, Menzies, Linder, Nashat and Garcia. The chapter ends with the proposition of a different kind of space or place which might act as a counter-site, one that challenges prior categories, categorization and containment.

The second chapter examines solo performances by cis-gendered male artists and choreographers as part of a broader argument about artworks as experiments in subjectivity, in preparation for a subsequent discussion of intersubjectivity. An analysis of Le Roy’s Self-Unfinished (1998) includes an appeal to French theorists Gilles Deleuze (1925-1995) and Félix Guattari’s (1930-1992) concept of ‘becoming’ as a process of non-identitarian transformation that conceives of the possibility of experimental practices that might go some way in destabilising authoritarian structures. Le Roy escapes the restrictions of spatio-subjectivisation
via choreographed movements that present effeminisation, becoming-animal or even a body stripped of meaning. Each assumes a subordinate relation to a male majority utilising the minoritarian as an active medium of becoming. The last half of the chapter examines ways in which experimental practices involving particular kinds of transformation might destabilise the authoritarian structures outlined in Chapter One.

Chapter Three examines the reception of performed choreographies, exploring the central concept of intersubjectivity, with a view to a more critical analysis of what types of co-presence might be created by various artworks. The fulcrum for this chapter is Sehgal’s early work *Instead of allowing some thing to rise up to your face dancing bruce and dan and other things* (2000) although work by Curham is also important. The chiasmic relationship between subjectivity and intersubjectivity is explored, particularly the ways in which intersubjectivity helps to produce certain kinds of subjecthood. By examining concepts of intersubjectivity as theorised by philosophers, psychologists, cognitive scientists and theorists, this chapter aims to rehabilitate the status of the spectator or beholder of performance with a view to finding possible ways of conceiving the beholder of a performed choreography. Although cognitive science and phenomenologies of subjectivity and intersubjectivity are primarily aimed at elucidating ordinary, day-to-day examples, I will direct these studies to embodied interactions in choreography and artistic expression.³ Such discipline-based theories help to provide a critical framework for understanding the structure, effects and exchanges produced choreographed works like Sehgal’s *Instead of...*

The fourth and final chapter examines choreographies that might challenge, subvert or even evade the assumed cultural authority which plays a part in the formation of a citizen, subject or identity, particularly by creating spaces where privileged kinds of intersubjectivity are performed such as the art institutions described in Chapter One. Whereas the cultural authority of art institutions and exhibition spaces regulates the performance of subjectivity and intersubjectivity, some of the choreographies discussed in this chapter suggest some freedom from or improvisation within the scripts provided by these prior structures. The core question in this section is: how does posthumanism reconceive intersubjectivity? This chapter examines works in which a choreographer or artist such as Sehgal or Frankovich manipulates a crowd or multitude of performers in order to complicate unitary or machinic concepts of subjectivity and intersubjectivity, and re-imagine relations between subjects, animals, objects and even the planet. This chapter then turns to artworks which involve choreographies that are self-taught

³ By expression what is meant is not an Abstract Expressionist model of art expressing already prior emotional states or personality traits of the artist. Instead through choreographic projects, artists offer a work as a space for fragments of subjectivities to arise and mix unexpectedly, an experiment in which nothing is guaranteed.
from material uploaded to the internet by dancers and choreographers across the globe. Such works by Hobbs, Rutter and Bachzetsis enjoy very complicated relations between those who conceive of choreographed actions and those who perform them so that there is a departure from the authoritative relations between a singular choreographer and his dancers. Lastly, choreographed works will be examined that are performed by those who have historically been ostracised by museums; choreographies that are queer, de-colonizing or counter-hegemonic. Artists such as smith, Tiatia, 'Uhila and Kihara each present their own particular permutations of intersubjectivity.

In the face of the myriad performances realised by choreographers in exhibition contexts over the past decade, I will argue that such choreographies enable intersubjective encounters that bring into fluid contingency, subjectivity and art and in doing so problematize the very structures they take place within. This echoes a point made by Lepecki that those from the discipline of dance studies are in a ‘privileged critical position of analysis and resistance in regards neoliberal rationality, corporeality, and subjectivity.’ Before continuing, the two key concepts of this thesis- choreography and intersubjectivity will be briefly introduced.

**Choreography: a working definition**

Whereas ‘dance’ is a general term often meaning to move rhythmically to music, following a set sequence of steps, *choreography* is a specific neologism created in 1700 at the court of French King Louis XIV. At first *choreography* referred to a form of dance notation invented by Pierre Beauchamps, dance master to the king and printed by Raoul Auger Feuillet. The Greek etymology of the term combines dancing and writing, choreographies were thus notated scores of dances, and choreographers were the people who could read and write the notation. Therefore from the point at which this neologism was first used it was indelibly connected to supreme power, authority, the mechanics of bodies in space as well as reading and writing. However the notion has shifted over time, so that since the early twentieth-century choreography has come to denote the composition of dances, it is the practice of designing or structuring which kinds of actions or sequences of steps and movements are performed. A piece of choreography constitutes a plan or score, typically a set of parameters is set up by one party in order to regulate the movement of others, for a certain period of time. It is this notion of choreography as a

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‘prescription of movement’ or ‘a thought or suggestion as to a possible cause of action’ that is highly relevant for many instances of performance art, particularly those that involve a score.  

Using this definition, the term *choreography* could be applied to *Grapefruit*, Yoko Ono’s 1964 publication of event-scores (Figure 1). Indeed from the 1960s onwards many works of art have invited visitors to an exhibition in order ‘to perform certain movements, effectively creating a choreography for them.’ To widen the scope even further, the term *social choreography* as theorised by Andrew Hewitt refers to the more authoritarian or disciplinary aspects of choreography, as ‘degenerated, artificial or manipulated patterns of behaviour.’ And it is these aspects of choreography that are often utilised by choreographers and performance artists alike. According to such theories, choreography holds a mirror up to the world, with its external powers controlling the physical, psychological and spatial aspects of our actions. ‘It thus became a mirror of socio-political structures and mechanisms of manipulation.’ Here choreography is a structuring force similar to social organisation or the ways in which bodies are constantly managed and directed in day to day life. Lepecki argues that the ‘mere disposition of things in the world already choreographs, predicates or even predicts our simple and daily behaviours.’

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8 Ibid.  
But to return to a broader and more general definition of choreography, one that invokes concepts of subjectivity, Lepecki also argues that the very task of choreography is ‘Rethinking the subject in terms of the body.’ It is important to note that for Lepecki, such a task is not necessarily ‘subservient to the imperative of the kinetic’ or movement, in addition it is a ‘task that is always already in dialogue with critical theory and philosophy.’

Lepecki’s point corresponds with the methodology of this thesis which involves philosophical approaches. Similar to Lepecki, choreographic theorist Petra Sabisch is concerned with a choreographic, philosophical, ‘political, ontological, physiological, and ethical question,’ that of ‘what can a body do?’ Sabisch’s broader concern is with the importance of relations, or ‘the event of qualitative transformations within the relational assemblage of choreography.’ Sabisch prefers to focus upon the question ‘What can choreography do?’ rather than what it is, almost tautologically she argues for: ‘that which choreography actually does as a can-do-determination of what choreography is.’

Further reinforcing the connections between performance art and choreography, theorist Bojana Cvejić argues that choreography is ‘characterized by experiment and by the conceptualization of working methods and of the medium of the dancing body, as well as by a proximity to performance art.’ According to Cvejić, choreography is one ‘method of posing problems, which, in consequence, reinvents choreographic relations between the body, movement, and time in the legacy of the Western art of dance.’ Cvejić summarises the various ways in which the concept of choreography has recently been inflected, reflecting a wider open-endedness or indeterminacy in contemporary art in general. Choreography might be defined as the ‘the organization of movement in time and space.’ It could involve merely the ‘organization of things,’ a ‘thinking about the organization of objects and subjects in time and space on stage.’ Cvejić includes Le Roy’s own definition, which is that choreography is ‘artificially staged action(s) and/or situation(s)’ as well as that of choreographer Jonathan Burrows who posits that ‘Choreography is about making a choice, including the choice to make no choice.’

The originality of this thesis comes from the interplay of three domains: art history, choreography and studies of intersubjectivity. This combined approach which has never been taken before differs from prior discussions by both Lepecki and Sabisch. As part of his major publications and arguments on choreography, rather than intersubjectivity, Lepecki focuses his

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14 Ibid. 8.
attention on the concept of subjectivity and the ways in which instances of performance art might critique hegemonic social and cultural practices or values favoured by neoliberal capitalist economies. And as part of her discussion of examples taken entirely from Western theatrical dance, Sabisch’s description of choreography as a ‘relational assemblage’ focuses on the interplay of relations between bodies as well as relations to objects, music, ‘relations of visibility,’ ‘relations between forces,’ and ‘relations of movement and rest.’

The aim is to do more than analyse instances of performance art in terms of the visual. Instead the thesis uses concepts of choreography that allow an approach encompassing more embodied, somatic, kinaesthetic, spatial and affective dimensions. Together with intersubjectivity, choreography allows a more politicised and critical analysis of performance artworks. Additionally, the fact that this thesis was written in the South Pacific means that it operates in a liminal space, enjoying a position of marginality from which to challenge received narratives from performance art theory.

The term choreography will be elucidated further in Chapter One, however before moving on it is worth noting the thoughts of scholar Jenn Joy. Joy posits the following possibility, that ‘To engage choreographically is to position oneself in relation to another, to participate in a scene of address that anticipates and requires a particular mode of attention, even at times against our will.’ Joy continues to propose that ‘Facing another we encounter precariousness as the condition of address:’

Yet if we engage this tenuous choreography we invent a more sensual counter-address to the legislative acts of consumption, erasure and violence. I imagine the work of the choreographic as one possibility of sensual address—a dialogic opening in which art is not only is looked at but also looks back, igniting a tremulous hesitation in the ways that we experience and respond.

Joy’s proposition of ‘performance as address,’ her emphasis upon choreography as a positioning of oneself in relation to another, a possibility of a sensual address and a dialogic opening that involves art that ‘looks back,’ invokes the concept of intersubjectivity, one that is absolutely central to this thesis.

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15 Sabisch, Choreographing Relations, 7.
17 Ibid.
18 Ibid., 2.
Intersubjectivity in art

Art historian Lucy Lippard described ‘widely differing phenomena’ that made up a ‘chaotic network of ideas in the air, in America and abroad, between 1966 and 1971.’ In a 1967 essay, Lippard together with John Chandler reflected upon ‘a profound dematerialization of art, especially of art as object.’ Crucially, they observed what seemed to be a desire to bring art to ‘an ultimate zero point,’ a ‘break-up since 1958 or so of traditional media’ and an ‘introduction of electronics, light, sound, and, more important, performance attitudes into painting and sculpture.’ In a subsequent publication Lippard observed a ‘de-emphasis’ on material aspects of art such as ‘uniqueness, permanence’ or ‘decorative attractiveness’ and the application by artists of a premise of ‘allowing materials rather than systems to determine the form of their work.’ Lippard argued that this allowing of materials to dictate the form of artworks was then applied to more ephemeral materials such as ‘time itself, space, nonvisual systems, situations, unrecorded experience, unspoken ideas, and so on’ which then ‘led directly to a similar treatment of perception, behaviour, and thought processes per se.’ Lippard described a shift in emphasis from ‘marking an object’ to ‘re-marking upon’ direct experience via the means of overlaying an art context, framework or awareness upon certain forms of behaviour and therefore making art out of ‘unadulterated life situations.’

Contributing to the phenomena observed by Lippard was a particular milieu during the 1960s in New York City, which was also crucial in terms of intersections between choreography, art and the creating of intersubjective encounters as art. In the Spring of 1961, a series of performances were organised by composer La Monte Young at Yoko Ono’s loft space on the fourth floor of a commercial building on Chambers Street in downtown Manhattan. One of these evenings involved what young choreographer Simone Forti would call her dance constructions. The performers included Forti along with dancers Steve Paxton and Yvonne Rainer all of whom had attended choreography workshops held at dancer Merce Cunningham’s studio by musician Robert Dunn where they used John Cage’s scores, indeterminate procedures, and time structures to generate parameters for short dance pieces.

21 Lippard. 5.
22 Ibid., 8.
24 Kotz. 33.
One of the works presented was Forti’s *Huddle*, (Figure 2) for which there were no strict predefined structures. Instead the dancers followed a ‘task line’ so that for each performance they had to tackle anew the task that had been set.25 *Huddle* required around seven people standing very closely and facing each other. They then formed a huddle by bending forwards, knees bent, arms around each other’s shoulders and waists, ‘meshing as a strong structure.’ 26

One person then detaches and slowly climbs the outside of the huddle using the other performers’ bodies as features, steps and holds. She pulls herself up, moves across the top of the huddle and down the other side. She then returns to the mass of the huddle. Then someone else climbs, occasionally two performers climb at once and there is no agreed order. In terms of choreography, *Huddle* was realized via instructions, a task-line, demonstration and copying. Forti notes that ‘the duration should be adequate for the viewers to observe it, walk around it, get a feel of it in its behaviour. Ten minutes is good.’ At the end of this piece each of the performers found six other people from the audience to get more huddles going until six were

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25 Rosenthal. 11.
happening simultaneously. Once audience members were recruited to form huddles, they found themselves physically coming to terms with the brute matter of other bodies. Such intersubjective engagement created novel relations between people. From the outside it was difficult to see individuals, what was apparent were great lumps of amorphous ‘people-ness.’

The next Saturday at the same location, sculptor Robert Morris presented his *Passageway*, a plywood-lined corridor that narrowed slowly to a point, the structure was for Morris ‘a spatial envelope that could mold each participating body to its task.’ Just prior to moving to New York, Forti and Morris had participated in Bay Area choreographer Anna Halprin’s Summer 1960 Dancers Workshop. Art historian Liz Kotz noted that in terms of Forti’s constructions and Morris’ *Passageway*

> While situated in different disciplinary rubrics, these linked projects all explored bodily movement in relation to a physical or architectural structure, in practices that would retrospectively be understood as foundational for minimal music, new dance, and minimal sculpture.

These works occurred at a time when choreographers like Halprin, Forti and Rainer were having an immense impact on artists who had been educated as painters and sculptors. The 1960s was a time when art was becoming *trans-disciplinary*, in 1958 artist and creator of the Happening, Allen Kaprow concluded that ‘Young artists of today need no longer say, ‘I am a painter’ or ‘a poet’ or ‘a dancer’. They are simply ‘artists.’ All of life will be open to them.’ Curator Catherine Wood recently gave an account of the ways in which contemporary art currently enjoys a similar trans-disciplinary environment, one in which experiments with the ‘choreographic’ take place within museums and live bodies are often staged as works of art. Wood also makes the important point that this is not a teleological progression from eliminating objects or material in favour of the social. Instead Wood proposes that such experiments within museums and art institutions enable one to ‘picture ways in which relationships constitute things, and things influence relationships.’

As part of his reflections on art in the 1990s, Bourriaud described artworks like those by Ono and Forti which, rather than repeating the activation of relations such as those between ‘supplier and client,’ instead shared the goal of utilising artworks to produce new types of relationships between people in constructed situations. Crucially such artworks or instances of *relational aesthetics* were presented as ‘time to be lived through’ rather than ‘a space to walk through.’

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27 Kotz. 34-35.
28 Kotz. 35.
29 Allen Kaprow quoted in Rosenthal. 8.
31 Wood. 121.
they were ‘process-related or behavioural’ rather than ‘a set of objects presented.’\textsuperscript{32} The ‘raw matter for an artistic work’ became the social exchanges that took place between people within art gallery or museum spaces.\textsuperscript{33} Inspired by the emergence of collective forms of intelligence and the rise of the internet, the artists discussed by Bourriaud utilised network-like modes of handling artistic work including a ‘relational approach to exhibition-making,’ artists were in search of publics as interlocutors who would take part in production processes so that the significance of an artwork might come from a collaboration between people.\textsuperscript{34}

One example Bourriaud gives is an installation made by Thai-Argentinian artist Rirkrit Tiravanija (b. 1961) for the 1993 Venice Biennale in which participants were presented with the means to rest and cook themselves Chinese soup.\textsuperscript{35} Works by Tiravanija (Figure 3) often demonstrate artistic activity which according to Bourriaud strives to achieve ‘modest connections’ between people, emphasising what is relational, interactive and ‘user-friendly.’ In the face of contemporary behavioural patterns which were increasingly uniform, predictable, and governed by the law of profitability, Bourriaud pointed towards artists that engage with the possibility of generating relationships with the world and utilising artistic practice as ‘a rich loam’ for ‘concrete’ and ‘intentionally fragmentary’ social experiments.\textsuperscript{36}

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\textsuperscript{32} Bourriaud. 107, 15.
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., 37.
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., 82.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., 25.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., 9. Bourriaud’s theory has its detractors, most notably art historian Claire Bishop with her article “The Social Turn: Collaboration and its Discontents” \textit{Artforum}, February 2006.
Bourriaud advocates for art that is social or relational as well as politically aspirational. Describing what he calls art as ‘an angelic programme,’ for Bourriaud, works such as that of Tiravanija ‘produce a specific sociability,’ they can be convivial and therefore might ‘tighten the space of relations’ between people. Importantly such a work represents a social *interstice*, a space in human relations which fits into a greater overall system, yet also suggests possibilities other than those already in effect.\(^{37}\) For Bourriaud, art develops a political project when it makes relational realms an issue. Such art creates free areas, and time spans whose rhythm contrasts with those structuring everyday life, and it encourages an inter-human commerce that differs from the “commodification zones” that are imposed on us.\(^{38}\)

Bourriaud advocates artworks that manifest ‘tiny revolutions,’ ‘hands-on utopias,’ the creation of ‘micro-communities,’ exhibitions that create ‘disconcerting situations’ enabling the occurrence of ‘momentary groupings’ and specific ‘arenas of exchange.’\(^{39}\) Arguing for ‘art as a state of encounter,’ relational aesthetics, as theorised by Bourriaud involved artworks for which being-together was their central theme, their very substrate was formed by intersubjectivity.\(^{40}\) For Bourriaud each artwork functions as a particular invitation to ‘to live in a shared world, and the work of every artist is a bundle of relations with the world, giving rise to other relations, and so on and so forth, ad infinitum.’ Tying into this idea of an artwork as a bundle of relations, and echoing the concept of choreography, Bourriaud introduces the concept of an artwork as a binomial exchange, ‘someone shows something to someone who returns it as he sees fit,’ Thus a transitive ethic (that takes a direct object) is utilised by an artist when she shows us something.\(^{41}\) For an artist to produce an artwork is to ‘invent possible encounters,’ and to receive an artwork is to already create the conditions for an exchange, the way one might return a service in a game of tennis.

As Bourriaud points out though, ‘transitivity is as old as the hills,’ all art is relational, to varying degrees and ‘the history of art could be read as a history of successive external relational fields.’\(^{42}\) What Bourriaud highlights is artistic practice focused specifically on ‘the sphere of inter-human relations,’ and the invention of models of sociability such as ‘meetings, encounters, events, various types of collaboration between people, games, festivals and places of conviviality.’ Whereas paintings and sculpture exist within a gallery space, generally available

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\(^{37}\) Ibid., 16.

\(^{38}\) Ibid.

\(^{39}\) Ibid., 17, 9.

\(^{40}\) Ibid., 14.

\(^{41}\) Here Bourriaud utilises concepts from Serge Daney, Ibid., 24. This is in contrast with what Bourriaud calls ‘intersubjectivity as inter-servility’ as theorised by Levinas which will be discussed in more detail later on in Chapter Three.

\(^{42}\) Ibid., 28, 15.
to all who wish to view them, Bourriaud explains that contemporary art is ‘often marked by non-availability’ often it can only be encountered at specific points in time, presupposing a contract or agreement with its participants.\textsuperscript{43} The important point is that an audience is summoned by the artist and the work prompts meetings and invites appointments, Bourriaud calls this structure that of the ‘rende\textsuperscript{5}z-vous’ of the artistic arena that helps form its relational dimension. To reiterate, this model implicitly undermines an important assumption about cause and effect, that an artwork causes the effects of social relations. In fact the social relations themselves are both cause and effect, effectively blurring the division between art and life as posited by Lippard’s tradition of dematerialization of art as non-object based art that overlays an art context or framework upon certain forms of behaviour. Relational aesthetics suggests that the dualism of viewer and performance might be dissolved and re-thought during art as a social activity. Similarly the choreographed works described in this thesis produce intersubjectivity-as-art and in doing so often entangle their processes of conception and content with their surrounding environment, performers, participants and holders.

Works like that of Tiravanija can engineer various kinds of intersubjective encounters, acting as a ‘machine provoking and managing individual and group encounters.’ Importantly Bourriaud pronounces an interest in plurality, ways of being together and ‘forms of interaction that go beyond the inevitability of the families, ghettos of technological user-friendliness, and collective institutions on offer.’\textsuperscript{44} The emphasis is on groupings rather than mass, the creation of feedback zones, a community effect, the forming of temporary collectives the artwork produces. Bourriaud stresses the importance of ‘the freeing-up of inter-human communications.’ Crucially Bourriaud concerns himself with artists that consider inter-subjectivity and interaction as a point of departure, outcome and as main informers of their activity.\textsuperscript{45} The space activated by such works is a space of openess, dialogue and what is produced are relational space-time elements, ‘inter-human experiences’ in ‘places where alternative forms of sociability, critical models and moments of constructed conviviality are worked out.’ I will now conduct a thorough examination of the kinds of places in which such sociability might take place and their impact upon subjectivity and intersubjectivity.

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., 29.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., 60-61.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., 44.
1 Museum bodies: self-regulation, order, subjection, instruction and choreo-politics

A metallic marionette of an oversized boy is suspended from heavy chains attached to a large gantry which fills the entire space of the gallery. At the back of the room can be seen the machinery of a movement generator. The boy resembles depictions of the fictional character Huckleberry Finn, with bright red hair, freckles, rosy cheeks and a forced gap-toothed smile. He is not wearing any shoes, his blue trousers appear frayed at the bottom and seem to be held up by a piece of rope. In the course of Coloured Sculpture (2016) this ‘robotic performance’ by Jordan Wolfson, (Figure 4) the boy is violently and repeatedly dragged, spun, jerked, hoisted and dropped from a height onto the floor, the heavy slack of chains falling around and sometimes on top of him making a deafening sound.46 Though he was highly polished and finished to begin with, over the course of the exhibition his paint began to wear away, revealing patches of the grey surface metal below like bruised skin. Suspended from three chains, one at the top of his head, one on his left wrist and one his left leg, the puppet often hangs, gliding across the space before the audience. Sometimes he is still. Equipped with facial recognition technology, the puppet can track the gazes and movements of spectators. At intervals an easy-listening ballad from the 1960s is played at high volume and then abruptly cut off.47 One critic described the programmed series of movements as a ‘punishing cycle,’ a ‘brutal loop’ as part of ‘a very precise choreography.’48

Wolfson’s sculpture involves the presentation of a boyish figure whose programmed actions are mechanically controlled, they are in fact, the mere ‘side effects of violent, larger forces,’ all decided by the artist as master puppeteer.49 As will be explained in my second chapter, the obsession with a device that could imitate human capacities and sometimes even exceed them has been an art historical trope which has its origins in antiquity but is perhaps best known in European thought in Heinrich von Kleist’s essay from the beginning of the nineteenth century.50 One reason for the ubiquity of the device is the way in which it so perfectly illustrates tensions between the autonomy one may or may not enjoy over one’s own movements, how control might be exercised by external forces or mechanisms of manipulation, whether they be another person or an institution and the ways in which intersubjective relations impact upon subjecthood.

47 Rhythm and blues singer Percy Sledge’s “When a Man Loves a Woman” (1966)
49 Ibid.
Figure 4 Jordan Wolfson, *Coloured sculpture*, 2016. Mixed media, overall dimensions vary with each installation.
Taking Wolfson’s puppet as an emblem of subjection and submission, this chapter examines the history and politics of relations created between art museums and visitors, from early nineteenth-century examples, to the modernist ‘white cube’ and its more hybrid twenty-first-century permutations. The ways in which visitors to museums can look, walk and behave have always been manipulated by a combination of architectural devices, regulations, textual and graphic prompts, guidance and example. In the second-half of the twentieth century, artists began to insert their own bodies within exhibition spaces rather than just the objects they had created. This affected how such artistic subjects could be structured by the very spaces they performed within. Continuing on from the implications of performing within exhibition spaces, the impacts of museums as formidable disciplinary structures are still felt in art galleries today. The ways in which strict parameters are put in place by contemporary art museums in order to elicit managed interaction and a display of activity will also be discussed with the aid of examples of choreographed works which produce relations, or processes of intersubjectivity-as-art that actually enable an examination of what it means to be a subject, or subject-to.

Lepecki posited that choreography ‘as a peculiar invention of early modernity’ is similar to the museum in that it was initially formed in order to function as a ‘technology that creates a body disciplined to move according to the commands of writing.’\(^{51}\) Rosenthal concurs with this conception of choreography as a commanding and disciplining force, referring to it as a ‘manipulative strategy.’\(^{52}\) The second half of this chapter addresses such concerns, analysing artworks that manifest various kinds of relations between choreographers, the dancers who perform their works in museums or galleries and the visitors who participate in the works which often correspond to Rosenthal’s thesis of manipulation. Such relations are realised with the aid of scores, instruction or parameters created by one party in order to regulate the movement or actions of another. The focus is upon subjection, submission to control, bodies that are made docile and the intersubjective encounters and spaces that make them so. The final part of this chapter introduces the possibility of a counter-site or heterotopic space, one in which performers as artistic subjects or gallery visitors might deviate from forms of structure and control. Such an exhibition space has the potential to host choreographed works that enact intersubjectivity, producing it for a time in ways that might create new intersubjectivities.

\(^{51}\) Lepecki. 6.

1.1 Museum bodies: self-regulation, an ordering of people and things, always-already subjects

According to Manchester-based museologist Helen Reese Leahy, art museums enjoy a very specific form of cultural authority: even before entering the building, there are certain expectations about what one should do and feel when one visits, and museums themselves take for granted the ‘corporeal techniques, skills and methods’ that visitors bring with them.\(^{53}\) Leahy surmises that a ‘repertoire of bodily practices’ or ‘bodily habits’ has become totally incorporated within the museum audience.’ For Leahy, museum bodies are both real and discursive, actual bodies moving through galleries as well as bodies that are socially inscribed in space and practice.\(^{54}\) The museum has its material and physical dimensions, yet it is also a site of institutional, social and corporeal practices, it is in fact enacted by its visitors.\(^{55}\) Subjects therefore contribute to the production of specific intersubjective relations. As part of an overall argument about ‘museum bodies,’ Leahy investigates how exactly ‘museums and exhibitions have inculcated and accommodated different modalities of looking, walking, hearing, sitting and talking (but less frequently, touching, tasting or smelling)’ since their emergence in the eighteenth century. According to Leahy the visual, ambulatory and performative practices of art spectatorship have been produced by the explicit regulations of institutions, the guidance offered by museum managers and curators, and most interestingly, ‘by the exemplary conduct of more sophisticated and practised visitors.’ Leahy points out that visiting an exhibition or museum involves intersubjectivity, as every visit is populated by ‘a series of transient encounters with other visitors: strangers in public with whom we share the private experience of looking at art.’\(^{56}\)

To briefly examine the precedents of such encounters, Vienna-based architectural theorist Christian Teckert also reflects on the subjectivity of the spectator in relation to the architecture and ideologies of exhibition spaces.\(^{57}\) Teckert’s description of spectators at nineteenth-century exhibitions is important for this section, due to the coercive technologies of behaviour they were prey to. Teckert utilises an argument taken from cultural theorist Tony Bennett that institutions of exhibition, such as museums as well as temporary expositions, formed an exhibitionary complex of disciplinary and power relations.\(^{58}\) The argument is that when museums such as the South Kensington Museum opened their doors in 1857 to the general public, the emphasis


\(^{54}\) Ibid., 9.

\(^{55}\) Ibid., 11, 2.

\(^{56}\) Ibid., 99.


shifted ‘away from organizing spaces of display for the private pleasure of the prince or aristocrat and towards an organization of space and vision that would enable museums to function as organs of public instruction.’ Bennett describes what was actually taking place as the inscription of the public into certain relations of power and knowledge, specifically a tutelary or pedagogic relation between them and the nation-state. Historically, museums played a pivotal role in the formation of the modern state whose endorsement gives them the ability and authority to be perceived as ‘a set of educative and civilizing agencies.’ According to Bennett, the general public became witnesses whose presence was essential to a display of power. The power of the empire or nation-state was therefore manifested by museums ‘precisely in continually displaying its ability to command, order, and control objects and bodies, living and dead.’

For Teckert, following French theorist Michel Foucault (1926-1984), mechanisms of overview, surveillance, observation, discipline and visual control were inscribed into the spatial structures of classical museum architectures of the nineteenth century. The vision of the spectator was organised in relation to the panopticon or rendering of everything as visible to a surveying eye, as well as that of the panorama or spectacular view. Such a ‘technology of vision’ regulated a crowd ‘by rendering it visible to itself, by making the crowd itself the ultimate spectacle.’

Examples Bennett gives of this phenomenon come from the panoramic vantage points provided by temporary exhibitions such as London’s Crystal Palace in the Great Exhibition of 1851 or the Eiffel Tower in the 1889 Paris Exposition. Such architectural features provided viewing positions from which one could ‘see and be seen, to survey and yet always be under surveillance, the object of an unknown but controlling look.’ Teckert adds that panopticism was encouraged by other features such as an extensive use of reflective glass in vitrines, light-filled rooms without internal supports and exhibition zones with paths to create a regulated flow of motion. Each device contributed to a sense of being on display, increasing awareness of one’s visibility and the possibility of being observed, both subject and object of a controlling gaze. Hence the exercise of attending an exhibition became a ‘form of coercion’ as part of ‘schemata and restraint.’ A self-monitoring system of looks made up a regime of self-control and it was by these means that ‘the many headed mob’ could be transformed into an ‘ordered crowd.’ This ties into Lepecki’s argument of choreography as taming, taken from French philosopher Henri

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59 Ibid., 68-69.
60 Ibid., 74, 87-88.
61 Ibid., 73, 66-67.
62 Teckert. 115-117.
63 Ibid., 114-115.
64 Bennett. 63-64.
65 Ibid., 69, 72.
Lefebvre (1901-1991). According to such a theory, societies choreograph agency and subjection, binding movement to politics using the expression generally used with animals, that of *dressage* or taming. It is argued that humans ‘break themselves in like animals. They learn to hold themselves… It bases itself on repetition. One breaks-in another human living being by making them repeat a certain act, a certain gesture or movement.’

66 Lepecki, via Lefebvre argues that there is a link between the ‘normative self-taming of humans and choreographic acts of repetition, where, in the end something becomes natural ‘when it conforms perfectly and without apparent effort to accepted models.’

Relations created by architectural devices such as look outs, reflective glass, light-filled rooms and clearly designated paths helped to produce self-regulation, decorum, subjection and subjecthood. The kinds of movements and behaviours expected of visitors were anticipated by architecture as well as the arrangement of objects in order to reflect very specific ideologies. More specifically, the classic salon-style of hanging paintings above and next to each other in close proximity, in ‘classic atmosphere rooms’ lined with colourful fabrics provided a background for the works on display. As described by Leahy, early exhibitions of the Royal Academy involved paintings hung in a mosaic-like pattern on an angled wall. This meant that most works were viewed from below, rather than eye level and eyes were encouraged to roam vertically as well as horizontally. In such a milieu, social interaction and lively conversation amongst an exclusive selection of viewers were equally licensed so that aesthetic judgements might by freely expressed and discrimination publicly exercised.

For Bennett, institutions such as the British Museum used their authority to create specific relations with visitors by positioning them within certain configurations of imperialist power. Bennett argues that exhibitions located their preferred audiences at the very pinnacle of the exhibitionary order of things they constructed. 68 Within a museum, the whole world was metonymically present as an assemblage of commodities, all of which were subordinate to the dominating gaze of a white, bourgeois, metropolitan and male eye. 69 The order of things, within a taxonomy and developmental framework that ran from past to present, raw to manufactured to fine, primitive to civilised, organised its implied public, ‘the white citizenries of the imperialist powers… conceived as the realization, and therefore just beneficiaries, of the process

67 Leahy. 5.
68 They also installed them at the threshold of greater things to come. It could be argued that biennales and contemporary art gallery still position their viewers at this threshold, and that of contemporaneity.
69 Bennett. 84.
of evolution and identified as a unity in opposition to the primitive otherness of conquered peoples.\footnote{Ibid., 89. This point will be re-visited in Chapter Four as part of a discussion on de-colonising choreographies.}

Just as Teckert argued that the ideology and architecture of any exhibition space has ramifications for the subjectivities of its spectators, US-based theorist Judith Butler (b. 1956) argued that \textit{subjects} are produced and constituted by political systems or certain fields of power.\footnote{Judith Butler. \textit{Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity}. New York, London: Routledge, 1990. Print. 1-2.} Such systems ‘set out in advance the criterion by which subjects themselves are formed, with the result that representation is extended only to what can be acknowledged as a subject.’ Any subjects regulated by such structures are therefore ‘by virtue of being subjected to them, formed, defined, and reproduced in accordance with the requirements of those structures.’ The etymology of the term is \textit{sub-jectus}, designating one who is placed under or beneath, someone who submits or is subordinate.\footnote{Arnaud Tomès. \textit{Le Sujet}. Paris: Ellipses, 2005. Print. 7-9.} Butler adds that such subjects are also ‘invariably produced [and legitimised] through certain exclusionary practices that do not “show” once the juridical structure of politics has been established.’ Even the best of intentions may go

Figure 5 Thomas Struth, ‘\textit{Pergamon Museum 1’ Berlin 2001}, Cat. 8001, (Chromogenic Print, 197.4 x 248.5cm)
awry as art institutions and art history could be considered what Butler refers to as ‘domains of exclusion’ with ‘coercive and regulatory consequences of that construction, even when the construction has been elaborated for emancipatory purposes.’

Tying into Leahy’s thesis of museum bodies; Bennett’s narrative about the exhibitionary complex; and Lefebvre’s concept of taming; for Butler ‘the body’ is ‘a passive medium on which cultural meanings are inscribed,’ it is a ‘mere instrument or medium for which a set of cultural meanings are only externally related.’ Here the body is a ‘construction’ and ‘myriad bodies’ come into being and through assigned attributes such as the marks of gender or designations such as ‘visitor,’ ‘artist,’ or ‘dancer.’ The very boundaries and surfaces of bodies are thereby politically constructed, signified and maintained. A comparable theory of subject construction was also elucidated in an essay first written in 1969 by the French philosopher Louis Althusser (1918-1990). According to Althusser ‘you and I are always already subjects’ this is an ‘ideological effect’ reinforced by a constant practice of the ‘rituals of ideological recognition.’ For Althusser it is the intersubjective structures of an ideology and its apparatuses that constitute ‘concrete individuals as subjects.’

Althusser’s Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA) are described as ‘a certain number of realities which present themselves to the immediate observer in the form of distinct and specialised institutions.’ These institutions may be religious, educational, familial, legal, political, communicative or cultural. In terms of subject construction a good example are schools which teach children ‘the ‘rules’ of good behaviour’ and in doing so ensure their ‘subjection to the ruling ideology’ or adherence to dominant systems of ideas. Althusser also introduces a more practical and physical dimension to subject construction, for him ‘ideology always exists in an apparatus and its practice, or practices. Their existence is material.’ Althusser’s emphasis upon the practical and physical dimensions of subject construction is crucial to performance art which often involves practices, or individuals physically performing acts which might challenge dominant systems of ideas.

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73 Butler, Gender Trouble, 4.
74 Ibid., 8.
75 Ibid., x, 33.
78 Ibid., 160.
79 Ibid., 136.
80 Ibid., 127, 149.
81 Ibid., 156.
Individuals by necessity live in an ideology, or ‘determinate representation of the world,’ one that is distorted by imagined relations of real relations, nevertheless these imaginary relations are still ‘endowed with a material existence.’ The example Althusser gives is of an individual who believes in God and therefore ‘goes to Church to attend mass, kneels, prays, confesses, does penance… and naturally repents and so on.’

…every ‘subject’ endowed with a ‘consciousness’ and believing in the ‘ideas’ that his ‘consciousness’ inspires in him and freely accepts, must ‘act’ according to his ideas,’ must therefore inscribe his own ideas as a free subject in the actions of his material practice.82

According to Althusser, gestures and acts are of paramount importance as these enact or make beliefs material or actual. This recalls Butler’s thesis that gender identity is tenuously constituted in time and instituted through a stylized repetition of acts.83 A subject’s ideas exist in the form of actions, which are inserted into practices, that are governed by rituals, which are inscribed ‘within the material existence of an ideological apparatus.’ In acting, subjects are in fact acted by the systems they participate within.84 This returns to Althusser’s point that ‘you and I are always already subjects, and as such constantly practice the rituals of ideological recognition.’

For Althusser individuals are always already subjects due to the way in which they are intersubjectively interpellated or hailed as such: ‘all ideology hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects, by the functioning of the category of the subject.’85 This recalls Butler’s conception of the subject as produced and constituted by political systems and ‘the body’ as a ‘historical idea’ rather than a ‘natural species.’86 Here ideologies ‘recruit’ subjects or ‘transform’ them by interpellation or hailing. One example Althusser gives of this is the police hailing ‘Hey, you there!’ causing the hailed individual to turn around. By responding to the command, in completing this 180 degree rotation, one becomes a subject, recognising that it is really her who is being addressed and hailed. The subject who performs such interpellations is for Althusser a Subject ‘with a capital S’ an authority who interpellates ordinary subjects.87

82 Ibid. 157.
85 Ibid., 162-164.
87 Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses,” 167. Althusser also notes that ‘God thus defines himself as the Subject par excellence.’
According to Foucault, subjects are part of a process of *subjection*, one that makes bodies *docile* that is, ‘subjected to, used, transformed and improved.’\(^{88}\) Here disciplines, analogous with Althusser’s ISAs and Lefebvre’s taming, involve ‘meticulous control of the operations of the body, which ensured the constant subjection of its forces and imposed upon them a relation of docility-utility.’\(^{89}\) For Foucault any society that is made up of so-called *individuals* ‘is borrowed from the abstract juridical forms of contract and exchange.’\(^{90}\) In consonance with Althusser and Butler, Foucault posits that a subject constituted by power in turn becomes part of the mechanisms of power. Here *subjection* is a process of subject-construction as well as ‘a collection of techniques or flows of power which run through the whole of a particular social body.’\(^{91}\)

Just as Althusser saw ideology manifested as physical gestures, acts, practices and rituals, for Foucault the effects of power are *material* and their site is often the body, power ‘is considered as a set of *relations* of force’ that are ‘local and historically contingent.’\(^{92}\) Each discourse, with its discursive conditions or rules and criteria ‘set up specific places or positions in which subjects can form.’\(^{93}\) In art history such subjects could be artists, or curators, in dance studies they could be dancers or choreographers, in a museum or art gallery they are visitors. According to Foucault, *subjection* is made up of power, discipline and surveillance.\(^{94}\) Power produces reality, individuals and any knowledge that may be gained from them, however it is only productive when it is ‘intelligible in terms of the *techniques* through which it is exercised’ not when it is historically undifferentiated.\(^{95}\) Specificity is important here so that particular relations of force upon particular bodies can be archeologically investigated. Individuals might be carefully fabricated according to ‘a whole technique of forces and bodies’\(^{96}\) with the aid of instruments

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\(^{89}\) Ibid., 194.

\(^{90}\) Ibid., 194.


\(^{92}\) McHoul and Grace. 40.

\(^{93}\) Ibid., 48.

\(^{94}\) ‘It is a mechanism of power which permits time and labour… to be extracted from bodies. It is a type of power which is constantly exercised by means of surveillance… It presupposes a tightly knit grid of material coercions… is ultimately dependent upon the principle… that one must be able simultaneously both to increase the subjected forces and to improve the force and efficacy of that which subjects them.’ Foucault, “Two Lectures. Lecture One: 7 January 1976.” 104.

\(^{95}\) Foucault. 194. McHoul and Grace. 65.

\(^{96}\) Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 217.
and techniques, the operations of disciplinary power used by institutions such as enclosure or physical division and organisation, temporal regulation, as well as bodily articulation or manoeuvres. Individuals can also be fabricated by both art history and dance studies, art schools and dance schools which produce artists, performers, dancers, choreographers, visitors and audience members.

What can be taken from Butler, Althusser and Foucault is that so-called subjects are produced and constituted by fields of power. Although mentioned neither by Althusser nor Foucault, an important field of cultural power is art history. There are requirements and sets of criteria by which one can be acknowledged, produced, legitimised and designated a museum visitor as well as an artist. Such designation of an artistic-subject by an ideology and its apparatuses is what Althusser would call the ‘ideological effect’ of constant practice of rituals of ideological recognition. Foucault describes processes of subjection in which, via meticulous control of operations of bodies, disciplines make them subject-to, that is docile, of use, tamed, transformed and improved. Finally, for Foucault a discipline or discourse, such as we see with art history, sets up ‘given’ places such as the white-cube exhibition space described in the next section, in which such subjects can be formed.

1.2 The twentieth-century exhibition space: the white cube as a mechanism for viewing

The modernist exhibition space as described by art historian Walter Grasskamp is a mode of display which developed in Western Europe at the end of the nineteenth century. Its central components were the hanging of paintings at approximately eye level as well as a monochrome, neutral background. The aim was for such a ‘white cube’ to create a neutral container which might provide immersion into the aura of art and an avoidance of spatial, political or economic contexts. Artist and art-writer Brian O’Doherty has written at length on the ‘ideology of the gallery space’ and contemplated the significance of performers inserting themselves into such a space. According to O’Doherty, the white cube is ‘an evenly lighted “cell,” a space of isolation

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97 Ibid., 141-153
98 In the case of art history and artists exhibiting in the white cube, rituals of ideological recognition would include: exhibition announcements, press releases and advertising, public speeches and introductions, wall texts, labels, public programming, catalogues and critical reviews to name a few.
99 This argument about the way in which observers of art are historically constructed was brought to fruition in Jonathan Crary, Techniques of the Observer: on vision and modernity in the nineteenth century. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1990. Print.
that works by removing ‘all cues that interfere with the fact that it [an entity] is “art.”’

O’Doherty argues that the gallery space is a ‘chamber of aesthetics,’ one that co-opts sanctity, formality and mystique from spaces such as churches, courtrooms and experimental laboratories. The white cube is a ‘sacramental space,’ one in which entities may become art because it is ‘where powerful ideas about art focus on them,’ a certain type of gaze might be employed, so that there is a ‘transposition of perception from life to formal values.’ O’Doherty describes such spaces as ‘Unshadowed, white, clean, artificial – the space is devoted to the technology of esthetics.’

According to O’Doherty’s narrative about art history, a collage attached to the surface of the wall opened up the ‘impure space’ in front of it, the secular world of the spectator’s space, so that ‘pockets of voids’ or gallery spaces could become ‘generative forces.’ Space then became an ‘undifferentiated potency’ in which things could make space happen and the space between the walls then becomes ‘a unit of discourse.’ Such a gallery space becomes an environment as spectators become surrounded. O’Doherty argues that the gallery becomes a ‘transforming force,’ or a ‘chamber of transformation,’ once objects or entities are placed within such a context they can be transformed, ‘the gallery will make it art anyway.’ Importantly, O’Doherty describes the way in which the performance of certain gestures or actions within a gallery space, as a chamber of transformation, might create interruptions or breaks in ‘conventions of ordinary life.’ Gestures that are precise can be briefly interpreted, they can be collaged into a set situation or environment ‘from which they derive energy.’ According to O’Doherty the indeterminacy of a gallery context is ‘favourable ground for the growth of new conventions,’ it creates what Lippard called ‘an art context, framework or awareness’ as it “quotes” whatever is placed within it, de-familiarising content and making it art.

Importantly, for Teckert, such a space encourages a certain kind of spectator as well as ‘the subjective perception of individual artworks.’ Such an idealized viewer was framed and invisibly controlled by a gaze emanating from the white walls of the gallery space. Historical and local context is occluded and the institution with its ideological equipment is made invisible. Such an apparatus also recalls Foucault’s discussion of space in relation to discipline and

102 Ibid., 15.
103 Such as Pablo Picasso’s 1911 synthetic cubist work *Still Life with Chair Caning.*
105 Ibid., 45-16.
106 Ibid., 47.
107 Ibid., 49. O’Doherty writes that ‘occupancy’ of a gallery space as an environment is a large subject, ‘the effect on the spectator who joins them is one of trespass.’
historical processes of rendering bodies docile. Foucault explains that discipline ‘proceeds from the distribution of individuals in space.’ This could involve enclosure, a ‘protected place of disciplinary monotony,’ a place heterogeneous to all others and closed in on itself. This cellular, disciplinary space contrasts with the public space of eighteenth century France which Foucault describes as a lived place of emergence and the spectacle of punishment. The examples Foucault gives are monasteries, secondary schools, army barracks and factories, yet art galleries could also be seen as places of enclosure constructed by the disciplines of art history, curatorial practice and museology. Any functional space for Foucault must code and define a particular place in order to make it useful, the aim for each place is to create maximum advantages and to neutralise any inconveniences. Enclosure functions on a principle of basic location or partitioning so that ‘each individual has his own place. And each place its individual.’ The aim of disciplinary spaces is ‘to establish presences and absences, to know how and where to locate individuals, to set up useful communications, to interrupt others, to be able at each moment to supervise the conduct of each individual, to assess it, to judge it, to calculate its qualities or merits.’ Discipline organizes an analytical space, harking back to O’Doherty, for Foucault ‘disciplinary space is always, basically, cellular.’

By the 1960s artists began to create situations that might draw attention to the space surrounding them in art galleries, making evident the white cube’s mode of construction. One way of evading timelessness and injecting temporality was through an insertion of performing bodies. A performance of Kaprow’s meticulously-scored *18 Happenings in 6 Parts* (Figure 6) took place at the opening of the Reuben Gallery in New York City in October 1959. It included performers and spectators as well as ‘movement, live and recorded sounds, spoken word, smells, electric lights, films, action painting and sculpture.’ Similarly in *Up to and Including her Limits* (1973-1976) Carolee Schneemann inserted her own body into a white-cube like space (Figure 7). Naked and suspended from a harness, she would swing back and forth in order to draw directly onto the walls around her, activating them by rendering them actual supports upon which to create art rather than mere surroundings.

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108 Ibid., 14.
109 Foucault. 141.
110 For a description of the spectacle of the ‘ceremonial of public punishment’ see Michel Foucault, “The spectacle of the scaffold” in *Discipline and Punish*, 41-59.
111 Ibid., 143.
112 Ibid.
Figure 6 Allan Kaprow, *18 Happenings in 6 Parts*, 1959. (Live performance, mixed media, interactive art exhibition.)

Figure 7 Carolee Schneemann, *Up to and Including her Limits*, 1973-1976. (Crayon on paper, rope, harness, and two-channel analogue video with audio transferred to digital video)
Various theorists have ruminated upon the gallery as a space, arena or a kind of stage. Such a space can isolate a single figure, it can be intersubjective, enabling one person to observe another or others and it can be undifferentiated, involving both performers and spectators. In his exploration of paintings by British painter Francis Bacon (1909-1992), Deleuze discusses pictorial space, yet his ideas could also be applied to a space of performance, particularly in relation to a solo performer in a gallery space. On some levels it can be quite rudimentary, a round area in which a figure is placed, ‘a circus ring, a kind of amphitheatre as “place.”’ A space that isolates a figure so that there might be ‘an exploration of the Figure within the place, or upon itself.’ Here space is ‘an operative field,’ a relation of the figure to its isolating place, defining a ‘fact’ or proposition, something that takes place.\textsuperscript{114} Deleuze writes of spaces as ‘fields’ that ‘have a structuring and spatializing function.’\textsuperscript{115} Such a space is quite elemental, recalling the empty space of a stage described by British theatre director Peter Brook:

I can take any empty space and call it a bare stage. A man walks across this empty space whilst someone else is watching him, and this is all that is needed for an act of theatre to be engaged.\textsuperscript{116}

Although the use of terms such as stage and theatre do not quite fit, Brook’s evocation of acts of theatre that rely upon one person observing another within an empty space are close to acts of performance. The exhibition room as a stage-like empty space is often open and undifferentiated, ‘a scene of action’ that is ‘a single, undivided locale without partitions of any kind’ as theorised by French dramatist Antonin Artaud (1896-1948), one shared by performers and spectators simultaneously.

Direct contact will be established between the audience and the show, between actors and audience… the auditorium will be enclosed within four walls stripped of any ornaments… In effect the lack of a stage in the normal sense of the word will permit the action to extend itself to the four corners of the auditorium.\textsuperscript{117}

Many of these elucidations of arena, stage and scene evoke a concept of space theorised by English physicist Issac Newton (1642-1727) as an ‘absolute’ or ‘void space,’ one that exists purely as a frame for motion.\textsuperscript{118} Such a space was certainly invoked in art history by Oskar Schlemmer (1883-1943) in his stage workshop at the Bauhaus art school in Dessau, Germany. In typical Bauhaus fashion Schlemmer approached performance from a very ‘basic and

\textsuperscript{115} Ibid., 8.
elementary standpoint,’ initially addressing fundamentals.\footnote{Oskar Schlemmer, “Theatre” in Schlemmer et al. The Theatre of the Bauhaus: Oskar Schlemmer, Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, Farkas Molnár. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1996. Print. 81.} In examining the most basic elements he began with \textit{space}, and the art of the stage as a \textit{spatial art}. For Schlemmer, performance occurs within an ‘architectonic-spatial organism’ in which ‘all things happening to it and within it exist within a spatially-conditioned relationship.’\footnote{Ibid., 85.} What is important here is the notion of ‘space as space’ signifying nothing more than itself. Schlemmer would go on to write that space is ‘primarily a thing of dimensions and proportion’ and it determines ‘the laws for everything that happens within its limits’ as well as the gestures of figures within that space.\footnote{Oskar Schlemmer ‘The Mathematics of Dance’ in Hans Maria Wingler. The Bauhaus, Weimar, Dessau, Berlin, Chicago. Trans. Wolfgang Jabs and Basil Gilbert. Ed. Joseph Stein. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1978. Print. p. 118.} Schlemmer breaks form down, so that it ‘is manifest in extensions of height, breadth, and depth; as line, as plane and as solid or volume.’\footnote{Oskar Schlemmer, “Man and Art Figure” in Schlemmer et al. 21.} According to Schlemmer, the human figure contrasts with the cubical abstracts of space, he advocates a deference of the human to geometry, in this situation a human figure is affected by abstract space and thereby be ‘recast to fit its mould.’\footnote{Ibid., 23.} For Schlemmer cubic space is made up of an invisible linear network of planimetric and stereometric relationships and this rubric corresponds to the inherent mathematics of the human body, the ‘measure of all things’ (Figure 8).

Figure 8 Oskar Schlemmer, \textit{Figure in Space with Plane Geometry and Spatial Delineations}, 1921.
The disciplinary space of the white cube allows an artistic subject to be created, but returning to its impact upon those who visit it, such a space also presupposes a ‘universal viewing subject’ in possession of a ‘corporeal body’ as espoused in the model of phenomenology or first person experience. This normative phenomenological model has been described by art historian Rosalind Krauss in her examination of ‘the general category of experience that sculpture occupies.’ Krauss gives an account of meaning in which an artwork is coherent and legible due to the way in which it presents to a viewer recognisable features or gestures, ones that relate to her prior experiences. She then goes on to contrast this view with a more phenomenological perspective in which meaning occurs within or is synchronous with experience. According to such a model, there is a lack of premeditation or foreknowledge, one is left intellectually and emotionally dependent on the gestures and movements of figures as they externalize themselves-bodies become a locus for meaning. Krauss’ description here ties into the mirror neuron system as posited by cognitive science. Jonathan Cole and Barbara Montero, a neurophysiologist and philosopher respectively, argue that watching any kind of movement executed by others leads to the activation of brain areas involved in movement and its rehearsal through the mirror neuron system. When confronted with a body, a beholder dissolves her attention into movement, and constructs a relation between intention and action. Due to the way in which the mind builds mental models, scripts or schemata of what will happen next, there is also the possibility of anticipating future movements of a figure or dancer. Such schemata are active whilst engaging in day to day life as well as when viewing performers. The twentieth-century exhibition space of the white cube acts as a neutral container, one that has co-opted sanctity and formality. Constructed by art history, the white cube might be utilised as a chamber of transformation when it hosts performances that can create interruptions in conventions of ordinary life. Such a space encourages the subjective perception of artworks while at the same time its white walls seem to evoke a controlling gaze. Occluding context and making its ideological construction invisible, it is in fact a disciplinary space, one that creates spatial enclosure and partitioning. This cellular space can isolate a single figure as well as enable people to observe each other, if undifferentiated it can be filled with action. The white cube is a spatial environment in which space ‘as space,’ signifies nothing other than itself. It is cubic, made up of a network of stereometric relationships and it presupposes a universal viewing subject. Such a subject, as part

126 Ibid., 27-29.
of a normative, phenomenological model views artworks and performances that are coherent and legible.

1.3 Twenty-first century contemporary art museums and the experience economy

Returning to the twenty-first century, contemporary art museums, galleries and exhibition spaces are still affected by conventions of nineteenth- and twentieth-century exhibitions. What remains includes the perception of galleries as places where one is aware of being seen as well as seeing, and the way in which the white cube creates a context-less zone encouraging and directing visual perception. Leahy points out that more than a mere ‘eye that roams demurely,’ the so-called eye of the practised museum spectator is still embodied within a limited repertoire of actions to reflect and respond to: the conditions of viewing, the spaces of display and the presence of other spectators.\(^{128}\) Poses, gestures, attitudes and postures make up somatic embodiments of the viewing position and signify one’s competence and successful performance of spectatorship.

The empirical performances of individual visitors may conform to, ignore or resist the prescriptive institutional performative. Each of these incorporated responses reveal a degree of ‘habit acquisition’ — in this context, familiarity with the operation of the museum — that provides the visitor with a repertoire of potential appropriate and situated actions.\(^{129}\)

For Leahy, there is a habitus of the practices of a museum spectator; specific bodily techniques are normative and acquired, harking back to Lefebvre’s dressage or taming. All museums have a part to play in structuring particular aspects of propriocepsis or ‘how the body knows its own boundaries and orientation in space.’ To use the terminology of phenomenology, according to Leahy visitors’ performance is a process that occurs ‘at the intertwining of the body and the world or, more specifically, at the intersection of their embodied subjectivity and the materiality of the museum.’\(^{130}\) One example is the acquired habit of conjoined walking and looking, a walking that ‘choreographs visuality within the museum.’\(^{131}\) In terms of corporeal interaction, there are a range of performances, both scripted and improvised that visitors are allowed to enact inside the museum. This subject has been extensively explored by Thomas Struth’s series of museum photographs (Figure 5).

Tying into the importance of a preconceived plan or score for choreography, there are correct and incorrect readings of the institutional script. An early example given by Leahy is that

\(^{128}\) Leahy, 5-6.
\(^{129}\) Ibid., 100.
\(^{130}\) The term subjectivity here is opposed to ‘objectivity.’ The suffix creates an abstract noun from the term subject.
\(^{131}\) Ibid., 15, 75.
provided in a nineteenth century magazine for how one should visit the British Museum which includes the simple rules: do not touch, do not speak loudly and do not be obtrusive.\textsuperscript{132} Art institutions have rules about behaviour, these are often posted by the entranceway or explained by those selling tickets. As pointed out by Leahy, scripts can be encoded in the rhythm of displays that regulates the direction and pace of walking, and in the organisation of pictures on the gallery wall that engenders a specific modality of looking.\textsuperscript{133}

Dance scholar Franziska Bork Petersen and museum professional Minnie Scott have also examined the parameters of exhibition spectatorship, specifically the degree to which it involves choreography.\textsuperscript{134} Placing an emphasis upon the ‘kinaesthetic encounter with an exhibition,’ Bork Petersen and Scott draw attention to the way in which an exhibition visitor’s walk is characterised or determined by pace, order/arrangement/selection/repetition, perspective, conscious embodiment and the way in which each exhibition, with its own aesthetic and didactic ambitions, proposes an approved mode of engagement and a correct way of behaving in relation to these factors. These draw on the social codes of the host venue which in turn call upon what Leahy has described as the internalized conventions of the regular museum- or gallery-goer in relation to such spaces. Forces or modes of control shape or constrain one’s path, range of movement and line of vision. Power is imposed through an exhibition’s control mechanisms. Bork Petersen and Scott describe a toolbox of spatial techniques used in curatorial practice to indicate and enforce the choice of route, proximity to artworks and how to pace oneself. These are: angled walls, attraction techniques, unicursal routes, wall colour, arrows, clustering and sharing or withholding the exhibition’s scale. These are the mechanisms used by curators and exhibition designers to install and connect works in an attempt to support their overall thesis and create a stable display with the requisite degree of control over the visitor’s movement.

London-based artist Pablo Bronstein made explicit the way in which museums control or physically choreograph their visitors in his 2010 installation \textit{Interim Performance} at the Chisenhale Gallery in London (Figure 9). The work involved a maze-like configuration of municipal stacking chairs that snake their way around forming lines of chairs often facing towards each other. The chairs were then animated by the crowd of visitors responding to the choreographic and ‘aggressive’ prompts. Some people sat in rows facing each other, others were frustrated, pacing back and forth when they found they could not get to where they wanted to go. According to the artist ‘Architecture is able to choreograph in an obvious and direct way –

\textsuperscript{132} 1832 ‘The Penny Magazine of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge’ quoted in Ibid., 7-8.
\textsuperscript{133} Ibid., 100.
you can walk through here, but you can’t walk through there.’ Bronstein takes the convention of museums providing chairs as a respite for fatigued bodies and twists it so that it becomes another mechanism for guiding bodies through certain paths, allowing or preventing the flow of motion.

Figure 9 Pablo Bronstein, *Interim Performance*, 2010. (Live performance). Performed at the Chisenhale Gallery.

The way in which the architecture of art museums physically corrals its visitors either through the directions of staff members or maze-like barriers is mirrored in Cuban-based artist Tania Bruguera’s work *Tatlin’s Whisper #5* which was performed in the Tate Modern at an opening event in January, 2008 in a succession of twenty-minute bursts. The performance involved two of London’s Metropolitan police, dressed in uniform and mounted on horses, using crowd control techniques to herd the audience members around the space (Figure 10). Bruguera has described the work as a ‘vignette’ where the audience ‘can have a little piece of experience with power.’ Tying into Bennett’s thesis, the unannounced work occurred on the bridge of the

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136 Bloomberg TateShots: Tania Bruguera: Tatlin’s Whisper #5, 2007, February 1, 2008, Tate, September 20 2016. [http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/bruguera-tatlins-whisper-5-t12989](http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/bruguera-tatlins-whisper-5-t12989) Part of a series which refers to the Russian artist Vladimir Tatlin (1885-1953), known for his unrealised Monument to the Third International (1920) which was designed to serve as a radio broadcast tower, his bombastic message is now a mere whisper. According to art historian Jonah Westerman ‘the whisper warns that art his not immune to the machinations of power.’ Another work by Bruguera at the Tate in 2012 was *Surplus Value* which forced audience members to form a long queue, give information about their identities similar to airport screenings and sometimes be forced to sit a polygraph test before being given admittance to the final installation.
Turbine Hall, a vantage point that affords views of the ground floor below, a place for respite and overview, seeing and being seen.

Bronstein and Bruguera create choreographed works that explore processes of intersubjectivity-as-art and indicate a departure point from exhibition-making as a mere display of objects and similarly Leahy, via Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, describes a shift from an informing to a performing museology. Accordingly, contemporary art museums witnessed a reorientation of museum theory and practice, an interrogation of the often contested formation of museum collections, as well as their assumptions about the transmission of knowledge and cultural value.137 Leahy summarises a crucial ‘shift in attention from the museum as a collection of objects to the museum as a site of social and corporeal practices.’138 A performing museology enables an institution to adopt a more reflexive position in relation to its own operations, functions and processes. The museum is conceived as a technology, a set of skills, techniques and methods all of which might be made visible or explicit to its visitors. However Teckert also points out that even today most contemporary architectural approaches to museum architecture still follow the conventional path of delivering standardized white-cube exhibition spaces, albeit

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137 Leahy, 2-3.
138 Ibid., 3.
sometimes within a larger envelope of either minimalist boxes or sculptural designs that re-appropriate organic forms.\textsuperscript{139}

According to Teckert the initial objective of the Centre Pompidou in Paris, France was to be an architectural ‘anti-model’ to the white cube, providing instead a highly-adaptable architectural framework that would be a ‘laboratory of culture’ that would encourage interaction and the free and improvised play of actions between a network of agents.\textsuperscript{140} However, by 1982, five years after the museum building’s completion, the moveable floors and walls were given up and replaced by a series of white cube cabinets or rooms. Despite this, the museum attracted an unprecedented number of visitors; according to Teckert this was due to the way in which it created ‘a monumental display’ for their movements and actions. As a result the museum produced a spectacular public space as well as a highly marketable image of urban activity and movement. As a crucial symbolic asset to the city of Paris, the Pompidou had an immense economic impact, becoming the prototype for a type of museum building that is most closely associated with the intensified culturalization and economization of contemporary forms of urban life. For Teckert, the new architecture of museums and exhibitions is utilised to reproduce an image of an all-inclusive public sphere. The panopticon is thereby ‘democratized’ and the spectator conceived as a ‘performatively framed subject whose corporeal presence becomes central.’\textsuperscript{141}

The art institution in the twenty-first century has become, for Teckert, ‘a point around which a lifestyle crystallises’ with its promise of intellectualism and cultural distinction. The rooms of the art institution are furnished with a particular aura and what matters is how close one can be to its processes and status, the degree to which one can be engrossed or immersed.\textsuperscript{142} For Teckert the spatial conception of the museum is highly theatrical; each subject must respond with ‘constant efforts to improve her own performance and adjust her pose.’ The imperative for the spectator is to put oneself permanently on display either physically or through images posted on social media: ‘The beholder, who was allowed to enter this stage-set, is now an actor in his own right and, in a neoliberal logic of the public, a performer of his own more or less creative biography.’ The theatricality and self-imaging encouraged by such a milieu again indicates the chiasmic relationship between subjectivity and intersubjectivity. In such a milieu, surveillance,

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\textsuperscript{139} Teckert. 124. For the minimalist box see the New Museum by Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa or SANAA in Brooklyn, New York City, for the sculptural envelope see Frank Gehry’s Guggenheim, Bilbao, Spain.
\textsuperscript{140} The building was finished in 1977 and designed by architects Renzo Piano and Richard Rogers. According to Teckert, the aesthetic and ideological precursor to the Pompidou was the Fun Palace Project in London during the early 1960s, a collaboration between architect Cedric Price, theatre director Joan Littlewood and cyberneticist Gordon Pask. Teckert, 119.
\textsuperscript{141} Ibid., 122-124.
\textsuperscript{142} Leahy. 106.
modes of control, and authoritative relations are seemingly completely internalised by tamed visitors who self-regulate and self-consciously perform doing so.

Leahy poses the question of what might happen when a museum ‘deliberately changes the script and disrupts the repertoire,’ altering the familiar choreography of viewing. Many artworks, exhibitions and initiatives contribute to an unsettling of spectatorship by radical artists who have disrupted visitors’ habits and their expectations of museum comportment by distorting or interrupting their experience of gallery spaces. An example that Leahy gives is the annual commissions given by the Tate Modern in its Turbine Hall since 2000, some of which are discussed in this thesis. According to Leahy, the commissions often interrogate or re-stage the triangular relationship between body, artwork and space. The Turbine Hall works are often monumental in scale, they ‘dramatize visitors’ corporeal interaction’ with an artwork by extending and challenging their repertoires of cultural consumption. For Leahy, participating in such works involves an ‘interplay of mutual self-regard, reflexive panopticism and self-display.’ Each visitor’s performance occurs at the intersection of their embodied subjectivity and the materiality of the museum. For Leahy, the Turbine Hall commissions act as machines that provoke and manage individual and group encounters, often licensing a more relaxed and playful occupation so that, with the blessing of the institution, visitors might temporarily abandon the decorum of the white cube gallery.

As described by Leahy, occasionally visitors to art museums are selectively allowed to deliberately change the script and alter or disrupt the repertoire and familiar choreography of viewing. However in doing so they may in fact be re-perpetuating the ‘experience economy’ of later capitalism and be subject-to even more insidious forms of authority and control. Dance theorist Alexandra Kolb proposes that the aesthetic strategies and implicit political stances of artworks that are participatory, collaborative and immersive might actually be aligned with developments in the modern market economy instead of being ‘liberatory, transgressive and challenging to the societal artistic status quo.’ So in staging such works museums may be still using their authority to engender certain relations with visitors that are not as progressive as first thought. Concentrating upon econo-political implications, Kolb theorises that the trend for performances in the 2000s for turning spectators into active participants, requiring them to move rather than remain seated and to physically interact with performers was part of an overall desire to provide immersive experiences that actively engage participants. Kolb also notes that there

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143 Ibid., 100.
144 Ibid., 106-108.
seems to be little questioning of whether audience members desire or need to interfere actively with a performance, or the requirement of a spectator to eschew his alleged passive role as a mere viewer.

Kolb argues that contemporary performances have direct parallels with the *experience economy* as described in 1999 by businessmen and academics Joseph Pine and James Gilmore.\(^{146}\) According to Pine and Gilmore the outputs of the experience economy are distinguished by direct engagement with *guests* and the provision of differentiated experiences that stimulate multiple senses and in which they may actively immerse themselves. The kinds of experience in this new economy may be manifold however the ‘most exciting and unusual experiences are said to be those that permit immersion, meaning that the guest “goes into” the experience and becomes an active part of it.’ If social interaction, participation, collaboration, co-operation and human contact are central to present-day working practices as well as contemporary choreography, according to Kolb it begs the question of whether these reflect rather than oppose the recent shift towards new forms of producer and consumer culture. In particular there is the integration of the relationship between production and consumption, so that *the consumer intervenes in an active way in the composition of the product*. Thus audience participation could be seen as buying into and proliferating the ideas of activation and formation of creative subjects that are so central to post-industrial conceptions of labour. For Kolb points out that issues of respect, agency, and the need for boundaries in audience participation are vital ones that arise in this context. Immersive works might raise questions about pressure being placed on members of the public to participate, which could be perceived as intrusive or embarrassing, denying their choice and agency and promulgating what Kolb calls a ‘low-level fascism in their treatment of the ‘up for it’ audience.’\(^{147}\)

In relation to Korb’s theory about participatory art being complicit in the experience economy, Auckland-based artist Mark Harvey’s performance *Political Climate Wrestle* (2013, Figure 11) realises relations and enacts forms of intersubjectivity highly affected by neoliberalism.\(^{148}\) The work began with Harvey, dressed in a business shirt, trousers and dress shoes, openly soliciting passers-by, asking them whether they would like to participate in a performance. Individuals were asked whether they would like to discuss the issue of climate change with the artist and also whether they would like to wrestle with him. If they accepted they were required to fill out a legal waiver. Harvey then engaged each participant in discussion and eventually wrestled

\(^{146}\) Ibid., 37-39.
\(^{147}\) Ibid., 45-47.
\(^{148}\) Mark Harvey’s *Political Climate Wrestle* (2012) was performed as part of a collateral event at the 55th Biennale di Venezia.
them. The intersubjective relation set up by this performance was legal, contractual as well as argumentative and physically adversarial. An intimate politics of mobility is activated where the choreographer/performer invites and coerces a participant to perform certain movements. Acts of solicitation, hand-shaking, polite discussion and conversation were followed by an unexpected shift in which participants were forced to engage more athletic relations, physically wrestling with the artist. Such an engagement meant that participants found themselves physically coming to terms with the brute matter of another body. Harvey’s performance is dyadic and direct, as the choreographer/performer manipulated his participants one-on-one.

Figure 11 Mark Harvey, *Political Climate Wrestle*, 2013. (Live performance, 8hr working day).

A year after Harvey’s performance, over the course of three days, choreographer and theorist Bojana Cvejić presented the choreographic experiment *Spatial Confessions: Moving Part* in the public arena of the Tate Modern Turbine Hall. Bojana Cvejić’s work plays with the way in which visitors to a museum are often asked to fill in a survey about their experience upon leaving the museum building and it also reflects media theorist Geert Lovink’s assertion that almost every aspect of life has been opened up to the logic of the opinion poll. A speaker used a megaphone to instruct and pose questions to members of the public whose responses would divide them up in different ways within the space (Figure 12). The questions asked ranged from political identifications: ‘Form a line according to the degree of capitalism and socialism you live in;’ to

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personal aspirations: ‘If you would like to change your job, form a line from the ramp;’ cultural opinions: ‘If you think art is overrated go to the left border, the others go to the right border;’ and quick judgements: ‘Point to the person you think is the richest in the room;’ or appearance: ordering by eye or skin colour. During the performance individuals would stand alone, in relation to each other, or arranged into groups or even hierarchies. Choreographic instructions and movement patterns were utilised to redistribute the museum visitors who took part. By translating people’s answers into movements and gestures, the work literalised the concept of a social choreography or how bodies and habits are organised in society. Politics and social relations were played out as part of decision-making and interaction. A temporary grouping or form of sociality was formed as the participants worked with each other and in response to the given instructions. By ordering themselves throughout the space, the audience’s opinions could be revealed, or confessed, in spatial terms.

Figure 12 Bojana Cvejić and Christine De Smedt, Spatial Confessions: Moving Part, 2014. (Live performance). Performed as part of BMW Tate Live, Tate Modern, 21, 23 and 24 May 2014.

Instruction, control, orders, organisation and forced interaction directed by an artist, in tandem with the cultural authority of the art museum, were explicitly presented in Danish artist Christian Falsnaes’ work Moving Images (2015).\(^{151}\) The installation involved a darkened room with large, immersive video projections filling two opposing walls (Figure 13). The footage projected,

\(^{151}\) Christian Falsnaes Moving Images (2015) was recently included in the Preis der Nationalgalerie 2015 at the Hamburger Bahnhoh – Museum für Gegenwart in Berlin.
alternated between fast and chaotic montages of images taken from on-line image libraries or Google searches, and performance videos made by the artist filmed in the same room in which the installation takes place. The artist induced exhibition visitors to become participants in an interactively conceived performance by placing within the installation a live performer who forcefully engages visitors in performative actions. She repeats the instructions and questions that are heard in the voice-over of the film. Visitors are gathered, commanded, asked to look at the screens, asked individually to explain how they feel and why. At one point one visitor is singled out and asked to dance for the others. One of the commands heard in the film, spoken by an electronically-generated male voice says: ‘I want you to explain how you feel to the other people in the room.’ During my own encounter with this work, a firm and dominant performer demanded that all those present in the room gather in the centre and answer this question, one by one. The voice-over was played back at a deafening volume, the tone of voice was harsh and domineering and the questions although simple were not necessarily the things one feels like sharing with a group of strangers. However, to participate in this performance meant relinquishing control, ‘playing along’ by submitting to the artist and performer’s authoritative demands. Sometimes very physical commands were issued, at other times participants were asked to perform certain actions, such as forming a line, gathering in a circle or pointing out a certain feature in the filmed performances.

Figure 13 Christian Falsnaes, Moving Images, 2015. (2-channel video installation, one hired instructor, visitors) Performed Hamburger Bahnhof - Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin, 2015.
Falnaes’ *Moving Images* produced uncomfortable and awkward relations which explore what it means to be a subject or subject-to. However for Kolb, in the wake of political and economic establishment forces adopting performance parameters and terminology, participatory performances run the risk of furthering values that coincide with the wishes of current governments and powerful economic interests rather than liberating audiences or offering alternative visions of society. Kolb cautions that ‘what was a provocation in times past might now merely be an adaptation to market forces’ and even a desire to resist the hegemony of traditional performance could ‘potentially morph into a new and different culture of conformism.’ Recalling the value of qualities of reflection and deliberation and practices of contemplation and concentration should not automatically be side-lined in favour of activities that seem to engage people in more immediate ways. Kolb appeals to the proposition that interaction need not be literal or physical, it can also involve viewing or listening. Untangling the liaison between intersubjectivity and subjectivity, spectatorship is not always-already passive, it might also involve active translation and interpretation of the material presented.

To recapitulate, museums use their authority to create specific relations with their visitors. Art museums and exhibitions inculcate and accommodate different modes of looking and walking utilising explicit regulations, guidance of museum managers and curators, as well as the exemplary conduct of practised visitors. Nineteenth-century museums organized space and vision in order to elicit voluntary self-observation and self-regulation. The kinds of movements and behaviours expected of visitors were anticipated by architecture as well as the arrangement of objects in order to reflect very specific ideologies. One’s very position within a museum was also illustrative of one’s place within configurations of imperialist power. During the twentieth century, the authority of the white cube created specific relations with its visitors, employing architecture to frame mechanisms of visual control, directing looks and movement according to a highly controlled script and using apparent neutrality to disguise its specific context and ideological bias. The practised museum spectator is always-already embodied within a limited repertoire of actions that, according to Leahy, reflect and respond to: the conditions of viewing, the spaces of display and the presence of other spectators. Scripts can be encoded in the rhythm of displays that regulates the direction and pace of walking and in the organisation of pictures on the gallery walls that engenders a specific modality of looking. In terms of the kinaesthetic encounter with an exhibition, a visitor is choreographed by mechanisms of control and display chosen by the curator and exhibition designer. One is placed within a performative framework in which one’s corporeal presence is emphasised. Parameters are provided for the interaction and creative play of all its users in order to create a spectacular public space and a highly marketable image of activity and movement. Visitors are encouraged to put themselves on
display, in proximity to the aura of culture provided by the museum. Occasionally they are selectively allowed to deliberately change the script and alter or disrupt the repertoire and familiar choreography of viewing. However, in doing so they may in fact be re-perpetuating the ‘experience economy’ of later capitalism and as a result may not enjoy as much autonomy as previously thought.

1.4 Choreographed bodies: institutions, instruction and choreopolitics

The previous section of this chapter emphasised the limited repertoire of actions available to visitors to art museums and the way in which they, as subjects are prey to authoritative intersubjective relations. Similarly this next section examines the kinds of relations set up between choreographers choosing to create works within art institutions or exhibitions, their dancers, performers, participants as well as those who encounter them. I will begin by giving an account of the specific kinds of relations which can occur between choreographer and dancer. This chapter began with an account of Wolfson’s robotic performance with its cacophony of sound and its disturbing and violent cycle of programmed or choreographed movements. The persona of the puppet or automaton will be reiterated due to its relevance for discussions of choreographic relations. And I will end this section with some examples of artworks that demonstrate the ways in which choreographers create specific authoritative relations with dancers as well as participants.

Choreographers create specific, authoritative relations with the dancers who realise their works through the use of scores and instruction. Even when a choreographer performs their own work, they must still follow their own previously conceived sequence of actions and are likely to follow their own training regime. Generally the process follows the following formula: dancers are selected by a choreographer, they then participate in a rehearsal process where they attend classes and learn the dances they will perform. And finally they perform the given choreography as part of live or recorded performances. Lepecki and dance historian and theorist Mark Franko argue that a central aspect of choreographing bodies is the setting up of certain relations so that there is a subjection or ‘yielding’ to synchronicity, instruction and authority.¹⁵² Once again, the term choreography denotes the composition of dances, it is the practice of designing or structuring which kinds of actions or sequences of steps and movements are performed. A piece of choreography constitutes a plan or score, typically a set of parameters is set up by one party in order to regulate the movement of others for a certain period of time. Choreography is therefore a ‘prescription of movement’ or ‘a thought or suggestion as to a possible cause of

¹⁵² Lepecki, Exhausting Dance. 9.
The question of movement opens up the politics of mobility, how movement can be politically and aesthetically motivated, requiring decisions about ‘who' is able or allowed to move – and under what circumstances, and on what grounds; to decide where one is allowed to move to; to define who are the bodies that can choose full mobility and who are the bodies forced into displacement.\footnote{154} In terms of the written component within the term ‘choreography,’ Lepecki points out that any performance art is directly entangled with language as a force or command. Here language is a ‘general theory of command and obeisance, of disciplining and control, which are precisely the forces that have found, produced, and reproduced the practice and concept of choreography as a system of command.’ One which bodies have to subject themselves into its wills and whims.\footnote{155} This writing of movement fulfills a corporeal need ‘to pedagogically and biologically (re) produce bodies capable of carrying out certain movement imperatives.’ The neologism of choreography was extended by the dance master to Louis XIV as a way of notating ceremonial court dance in which the king’s absolute authority was evoked and enacted and the movements of his dancer-subjects were heavily codified, demonstrating hierarchies and subjugation to order. The dancers in the French corps de ballets are still called sujets or subjects, submitting themselves to imperatives from dieting to gender roles, strict physical discipline as well as the precise enactment of positions, attitudes, steps and gestures. Choreography is first and foremost a structure of command that has to be reckoned with and it requires a series of successful surrenders to its demands.\footnote{156}

Choreography has been described as an ‘apparatus of capture,’ it is a way of making bodies docile or subject-to, with the aid of a score or written instructions. A choreographic score exists as a whole and as singular articulations, each is an organized system holding a conception of movement, a shaping of bodies, as well as a prompting of intersubjective relations and encounters across artistic, social and political spheres.\footnote{157} A score enables a series of encounters between bodies to materialize through and as movement articulations. Thus choreography is always already an intersubjective relation often between a creator of a score and another as subject to the authority of the score. Franko introduced the term choreo-politics, indeed, choreography is all about relations, which, according to Rodolphe Gasché relations are ‘minimal things,’ small and elemental they are ‘the most basic and simple of all philosophical

\footnote{155}Ibid. 
\footnote{156}Ibid. 
problems.’\textsuperscript{158} Lepecki’s thesis that relationship activated by choreography is ‘first and foremost a structure of command that has to be reckoned with’ one that ‘requires a series of successful surrenders to its demands.’\textsuperscript{159} Franko cautions that choreography is a ‘traffic between bodies and ideologies’ and the relations between dancer/performer and choreographer/artist is always a ‘political one.’\textsuperscript{160} Deleuze proposed that microfascisms characterizes many interrelationships and intersubjective relationships, such as those between artist and performer.\textsuperscript{161}

There are many examples of artworks in which the submission to authoritative choreographies or dictates is performed. The way in which religion dictates the repetition of certain gestures and actions as part of worship is subverted in \textit{Religious aerobics} (2010-2013) by the Georgian Bouillon Group. This instructional work, performed both live and installed in a gallery as a video was created by a group from the Caucasus, a place where West Asia meets Eastern Europe, one with a complex mix of cultures, histories and faiths.\textsuperscript{162} \textit{Religious aerobics} is the first instance that will be discussed in this thesis of what in the early 1980s theorist Amy Greenfield has called a ‘filmdance.’ Greenfield’s \textit{filmdance} is ‘the opposite of the documentation of live dance.’\textsuperscript{163} It is in fact a film in which the filmmaker as choreographer uses filmic transformation of the human body in motion, a collaboration between film and dance to create a new kind of dance. Film ‘becomes the context for dance action’ creating a hybrid art form. The work involves a male instructor with a ‘class’ or small group of people behind him (Figure 14). He addresses the camera, beginning with the words ‘Attention. Hello, let’s start to exercise. If you want to achieve the desired result try to repeat all movements.’ The instructor and the class behind him proceed to go through a sequence of actions in three parts, all are performed for eight counts, twice and accompanied by walking on the spot. The actions to be learnt and performed are taken from acts of worship from Christian and Islamic faiths, they include: raising hands and touching thumbs to fingers, making a sign of the cross with fists together, cupping the ears with the hands, covering the face, touching lips with hands and then gesturing away, putting the left palm in the right one and bending forward, bowing with hands resting on thighs, placing the right palm on chest and with the left hand touching the ground, walking in a circle, to the right and to the left, kneeling on one knee then the other, turning to one side, kneeling and then placing one’s head

\textsuperscript{158} Sabisch. 72.
\textsuperscript{159} Allsopp and Lepecki. 1.
and hands on the ground and crossing and uncrossing the feet. At the very end of the piece all of the gestures are performed with an up-beat tempo, the pace is relentless, the actions are difficult to remember and follow. There is a cycle of instruction, demonstration and execution accompanied by encouragement, the reminder to smile and breathe as well as approval. Religious aerobics is a choreographed work that produces relations which explore what it means to be a subject practicing worship, it involves a selection of isolated actions taken from many different faiths. These are combined and repeated until they involve a significant amount of exertion mental concentration. The movements demonstrated and displayed refer to religious practices as well as the mass parades of socialist states and the capitalist idea of exercise for self-improvement.

![Figure 14 Bouillon Group, Religious Aerobics, 2010-2013. (Single-channel HD Video, 9 mins 20 seconds)](image)

In terms of actions that are performed for self-improvement and to demonstrate certain beliefs, another relevant filmdance is Peloha (2009) by Auckland-based artist Louise Menzies. In this 16mm film, projected in a darkened room, a naked figure can be seen executing a series of movements upon the porch of an old colonial homestead (Figure 15). The routine of stretches and bends was choreographed in reference to an exercise manual from the School of Radiant Living founded during the 1930s by English psychologist Herbert Sutcliffe in Havelock North, New Zealand.\textsuperscript{164} The school, known for its public exercise demonstrations, disseminated written material and recorded lectures designed to promote physical, mental and spiritual alignment. A cheerfully-delivered, predominantly Christian outlook combined self-help with exercise and

dietary advice. One of the exercises reads: ‘Turn smartly to the left, shoot out arms side-ways on a level with the shoulders, clenching fists (sniff once); relax fists and bring arms back to shoulders…. Repeat the whole exercise several times, and remember to smile!!’ In each of these two performances there is a play between authoritative relations with a religion or belief-system whose exercises promote self-care, certain choreographed actions must be performed for the sake of self-amelioration.

Other performances have engaged more explicitly with the roles of choreographer and performer and the utilisation of the score. Los Angeles and Berlin-based artist Adam Linder created choreographic service works from 2013-2016. Some Cleaning (Figure 16) is a transaction in which a client may contract a subject, based on an hourly rate, to choreographically clean a given location.165 Such cleaning utilises a variety of movements that might symbolically and experientially address a particular place. There are four choreographic services in total including: Some Proximity, Some Riding, Some Strands of Support. Each of these service works involves conditions of engagement with an institution or client and services of a slightly absurd nature such as cleaning through movement, transforming art criticism into actions, physically

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riding the cadence of a written text or ‘performing hair-care.’ There is an interweaving of the institution in which the work is performed, choreography, labour, profession, expertise, recuperation and the cultural capital of programming.


Linder himself performed in Parade (2014) a film which refers to an earlier ballet from 1917 that demonstrates dancers performing to the dictates of a choreographer and artist, Sharyar Neshat. The work is a series of dances performed by three dancers in a theatrical stage set dominated by grey, faux-marble panels and a green coloured opening. Referring back to the concept of capture, each of the three performers wears a cage-like element of costuming constructed of cane basketry. Linder wears a skeletal frame of cane shaped like men’s underwear and the cages worn by the two female performers are more like vestiges of corsetry. Throughout the duration an authoritative voice over barks commands ‘Again! Again!’ and announces his judgment and approbation ‘Right, right! Good, good, good.’ In the ‘Acrobat’ section Linder appears to rehearse, repeating the same steps over and over as the authoritative voice demands, ‘Again!’ Linder shakes his head, exhales and rubs his back expressing his fatigue and frustration (Figure 17). The voice of the choreographer recites comments, suggestions or platitudes that are

166 Parade (1917) had a scenario by Jean Cocteau. It was performed by Serge Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes with set and costumes by Pablo Picasso, music by Erik Satie and choreography by Léonide Massine. Ironically Linder himself actually choreographed this contemporary version of the ballet. Jörg Heiser, “Perfect Pretence.” Frieze 166. October (2014) Print. 214.
meant to encourage the dancer, but are in face so ambiguous as to be meaningless ‘Yeah, it’s definitely a trade-off. Right, right. Stability will come in ebbs and flows, okay, but keep focused on the incentives.’ *Parade* presents aspects of polished performance as well as moments of what appears to be a rehearsal process as a dancer practices the same movements over and over again before a choreographer until he expresses his satisfaction.

Figure 17 Adam Linder in Shahryar Nashat, *Parade*, 2014. (Single-channel HD Video, colour, Dolby digital, 38 mins).

*The Sinthome Score* (2013) by Barcelona-based artist Dora Garcia combines the language of psychoanalysis with pedestrian forms of dance from the 1960s. A live act for two characters, a reader and a mover, they dance to each other, not paying any attention to the audience (Figure 18). The idea is that the performance is a kind of play, their rhythms of reading aloud and moving adjusting gradually until they go together in harmony, synchronized. The provocation for the work was a sentence Garcia read whilst part of a psychoanalytic reading group: ‘The Unconscious is the body pierced by language.’ Taken from a seminar by psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan ‘Joyce Le Sinthome Seminar XXIII Jacques Lacan,’ Garcia described the seminar as ‘beautiful enough to be read aloud and arcane enough to create a secret community.’ Another sentence from the same text includes the term *condensation*, describing something surprising that serves more than the body. In terms of movement, Garcia looked towards a type of contemporary dance that anyone can do, in particular the non-virtuosic work of choreographers like Yvonne Rainer during the 1960s and more recent works by Jonathan Burrows. Garcia made drawings of various positions that would form a book or score. The idea was that anyone could pick up the book/score and play, there was no need for training and all renditions would be equally good. A small circle of chairs was formed in the performance space, creating a physical limit, a part of the room.

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Returning to Wolfson’s performing puppet, the intersubjective relationship between choreographer and dancer is often described as manipulative and compared to that of puppeteer and marionette. The word for ‘hand’ is still hidden within the Latin etymology of the word ‘manipulate’ alluding to the way in which a puppet is subject-to or controlled by the puppeteer. Conceptions of choreography as manipulation, analogous to the puppeteer relation, correspond with Leahy’s thesis of museum bodies in which visitors bring within them very particular habits which are then encouraged by architecture, signage, guidance and display. Yet choreographer William Forsythe proposes that choreography could be instead an ‘enabling practice,’ one that instead might ‘promote the dancer’s autonomy.’ The question remains of how, within a larger choreo-political formation, one might mobilize one’s own agency and ‘move otherwise.’ Similarly theorist Bruno Latour recounted that domination cannot be simply transported through strings to the puppet without translation, sometimes marionettes suggest that the puppeteers do things they would never have thought possible by themselves. Puppets cannot control their handlers, but they might encourage an uncertainty about action. A good puppeteer will multiply the amount of strings and accept surprises about acting, handling

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169 Mark Franko ‘Dance and the political: States of exception’ in Franco and Nordera. 16.
170 Lepecki, *Exhausting Dance.* 18
and manipulating. Even though marionettes are bound to the puppeteer, emancipation is not just about cutting all the strings: ‘The only way to liberate the puppets is for the puppeteer to be a good puppeteer.’\textsuperscript{171} Dance critic Laurent Goumarre extends this identification of the dancer with the marionette, adding that the character of Pinocchio is a puppet who is disobedient, one who opens the door and dashes out into the street before he is even finished.\textsuperscript{172}

Generally, choreographers create specific, authoritative relations with the dancers who realise their works through the use of scores and instruction. An initial process of selection decides who is able or allowed to move, often based on what kinds of bodies are desired. A subsequent training regime or rehearsal process is a further way to control or discipline those who move. The intersubjective and choreo-political relations are between choreographer and dancer, one who has created a score and those who follow it and are subject-to. Choreography is a traffic between bodies and ideologies, a way of making bodies docile subjects who yield to authority, instruction and often synchronicity. The circumstances of movement are prescribed, what is executed or performed is a given choreography, a previously decided sequence of actions. A plan, set of parameters or score is set up by one party in order to regulate the movement of others for a period of time. Choreography is a structure of command, an authoritative relationship that requires a successful surrender to its demands. Such intersubjective structures involve the suggestion of or instruction for the performance of particular movements by one party, and can be perpetuated by religious, pseudo-spiritual, fiduciary, psych-analytic as well as aesthetic parties.

1.5 A relational body: heterotopia and matrixial spaces

Keeping in mind Forsythe’s proposition of choreography as an enabling practice, one that might promote a dancer’s autonomy; Latour’s narrative about marionettes somehow suggesting movement to their puppeteers and Goumarre’s provocation of Pinocchio as a disobedient puppet who runs into the street; there is the prospect of problematizing and undermining the operations of choreography and institutional spaces of subjection. Therefore the final part of this chapter evokes the ways in which performers as artistic subjects or gallery visitors might deviate from such forms of structure, control and subjection. The provocation is the choreographed works might enact intersubjectivity in ways that can affect new intersubjectivities. This idea of physical deviation recalls Foucault’s concept of space as a ‘counter-site’ or heterotopia rather than a space made into a place via partitioning, one in which individuals are distributed, enclosed and

\textsuperscript{171} Latour. 215.
\textsuperscript{172} Laurent Goumarre, “Disobedience and DIY” in Solomon. 275-277.
managed.\textsuperscript{173} A so-called ‘space of change’ as well as opening up and proliferation also anticipates arguments made by New Zealand-based choreographer and educator Carol Brown regarding space that is \textit{matrixial}, a set of relations produced by bodies, spaces and built environments. Equally useful is a concept of \textit{phase space} in which interaction can alter its very field or situation.

There is the possibility that a new kind of relational or heterotopic space might subvert the given power of museological space within unexpected processes. Foucault explains that certain sites have ‘the curious property of being in relation with all the other sites, but in such a way as to suspect, neutralise, or invert the set of relations that they happen to designate, mirror or reflect.’\textsuperscript{174} Foucault conceives of \textit{heterotopia} as a way of transcending categories of space, problematizing containment, placing or what he refers to as \textit{emplacement}. Instead he points out the importance and predominance of ‘simultaneity,’ the dispersed, a ‘network that connects points and intersects with its own skein. Rather than space there is extension so that ‘the site is defined by relations of proximity between points or elements, problematizes site, space taking form as the relations among sites.’ Heterotopias could be sites which present society as ‘upside down,’ such ‘fundamentally unreal spaces’ as are ‘heterotopias.’ Heterotopias have a function in relation to all the space that remains, they either create a space of illusion, or a space that is other.\textsuperscript{175} They can take on varied forms, they are ‘different spaces,’ or ‘other places.’ One type of heterotopia described by Foucault are heterotopias of deviation, ‘those in which individuals whose behaviour is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed.’ In many ways this is fitting for a description of art galleries in which artists perform, as they often exhibit forms of behaviour which could be perceived as deviant to societal norms.

Whereas Artaud, Brook and Deleuze in his writings on Bacon describe a space that is somewhat elemental, O’Doherty, Bennett, Leahy and Foucault support Brown’s thesis that ‘space has a history.’ Echoing Brook, central to the way in which performance or dance takes place is ‘being present within the space and time of a shared experience.’\textsuperscript{176} And harking back to O’Doherty, such a performance is in some ways determined by the historical conception of the space it takes place within. According to Brown the white cube of the gallery space brings with it ‘received conventions and habits of viewing.’\textsuperscript{177} There is an emphasis upon the visual, rather than the kinaesthetic or proprioceptive senses and the gallery brings with it modernist ideas about

\textsuperscript{174} Ibid., 23.
\textsuperscript{175} Ibid., 22-26.
\textsuperscript{177} Choreographer Siobhan Davies quoted in Brown. 65.
oppositions between absence and presence as well as space as something which is bare, empty universal and homogenous. Brown elucidates that in the first half of the twentieth century, modern dancers, particularly in Central Europe rediscovered space as *raum* or the material of choreography, so that it became tangible, ‘a dynamic field of forces acting on and through the body.’\(^{178}\) Space was conceived as a pre-requisite for movement and yet movement was also a visible aspect of space. In sympathy with developments in architecture, *Raumempfindung* or ‘felt’ volume in space was conceived. Such space was a ‘pliable, abstract volume’ which could be measured and divided with the aid of academic rules.\(^{179}\) Brown goes on to argue that in the twenty-first century ‘space is fractured,’ for the kinds of world embodied by performers and dancers is ‘an effect of the ways in which we understand the spaces and times in which we live.’ According to Brown the ubiquity of the digital, surveillance, armed conflict and relativity have meant that ‘the limits of the kinesphere are radically reconfigured.’\(^{180}\)

Rather than a ‘three-dimensional container, a passive receptacle or void, whose form is given by its content’ space is proposed as ‘a moment of becoming, of opening up and proliferation, a passage from one space to another, a space of change, which changes with time.’\(^{181}\) Hence a performer is thereby ‘a conduit between spaces,’ so that space is transformed according to a dancer’s relations with it. According to Brown’s proposition of *matrixial spaces*, choreography takes place

As an emergent matrix of relationships shaped by states of flux between the body and the built, performers and audience, corporeality and virtuality, ephemerality and the seemingly permanent.\(^{182}\)

If bodies can be untethered from anthropocentric points of view, the biases of Euclidean geometry and modernist conceptions of space, Brown argues what can then be explored is a continuum through enfolding inside and outside, interior and exterior so that performers might ‘embody, incorporate and extrude spaces,’ assimilating places as given via somatic awareness and going on to generate a sense of place by manipulating space.\(^{183}\) In articulating or disarticulating space, making it affective vectors or fields, a set of *matrixial* relationships between bodies, spaces and architectural can be produced. According to Brown space is an agent within any performance ‘a discontinuous, plurality of spaces containing multiple dimensions.’ Thus space is not prior to an act, it can in fact be constituted by acts, such *matrixial fields* could

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\(^{178}\) Brown, “Making Space, Speaking Spaces,” 58.

\(^{179}\) In terms of art history this recalls the Minimalist sculpture of artists like Donald Judd, for example his brass floor work *Untitled*, 1968.

\(^{180}\) Ibid., 61.

\(^{181}\) E. Grosz quoted by Brown. 61.

\(^{182}\) Brown, 58.

\(^{183}\) Ibid., 59.
be a ‘transgressive threshold of co-emergence for the dancing subject and the unfolding spaces within choreography as encounter.’

Yet it is also heterotopic, a counter-site, in some ways it presents or re-presents other kinds of relations and places. The gallery space of performance is different or other, it deviates in relation to norms, several spaces might be presented within one; fleeting, transitory precarious temporal spaces or heterochronies might be activated. Such a space might also be conceived as a matrixial field, a series of relationships between bodies, interiors, exteriors, architecture and audience. The prior, so-called ‘objective,’ Newtonian conception of space is transformed into a subjective space of possibilities, a topological space where space is consciously stylised and performed, it is made qualitative rather than quantitative. Such a space contests the male, abstract space of the temple, natural quantitative space that just is. If there is a mutually reinforcing relationship between a figure and ground, or performer and the white cube, what happens when the coherence of such a performer is questioned? Perhaps then such a masculine, Newtonian space can be complexified and begin to challenge prior categories, a previously cis-gendered space might be challenged, opened up and become heterotopic.

Similar to Brown’s thesis of matrixial space is the concept of phase space, one in which ‘the activities of a system change the very nature of the space itself’ and ‘the interactions of actual agents serve to change the virtual field.’ Space becomes something that is affective, rather than something that is extended or quantitative, something into which bodies are inserted. Instead each space is something unique created when bodies come together in a particular way for a specific purpose, perhaps inflected in a certain way by a performance or choreography, it is subjectivised or more importantly inter-subjectivised as a meeting of subjectivities, making it qualitative and intensive with the possibility to be creative, open-ended and un-predictable. Perhaps such a space could be considered to be more of a topological site. Such a site might be activated by the presentation of a relational body, one that can manifest the political potential of choreography and performance. This chapter therefore ends with the prospect of choreographies that might work against normative phenomenology by deconstructing, re-coding, and making a-signifying recognisable movements from ordinary experience. Tying into Brown’s matrixial space as well as Leahy’s thesis of museum bodies, is a space as a vector of movement, sensory experience and embodiment. The quality of space can be charged with what takes place within it, particularly if what takes place are asignifying, fragmentary or strangely syntactical.

movement percepts. Hence the problem space of the white cube is challenged, complicated even undermined by what Deleuze and Guattari would call processes of deterritorialisation or molecularisation.

1.6 Conclusion

In summary, Wolfson’s metallic marionette can be interpreted as an illustration of the way in which one might be controlled by external forces, such as another person or an institution. An examination of the politics of the relations created between museums and visitors, from early nineteenth-century examples, to the modernist ‘white cube’ and its more hybrid twenty-first century permutations is in fact a study of subjection, how intersubjectivity helps to produce subjecthood, or various ways of managing bodies and making them docile. As part of her thesis of museum bodies which examines some aspects of the chiasmic relationship between intersubjectivity and subjectivity, Leahy argues that art museums enjoy a specific cultural authority and it is with this that they enforce a restricted repertoire of certain bodily practices or habits. Museums and exhibitions inculcate and accommodate different modes of looking and walking utilising explicit regulations, guidance of museum managers and curators, as well as the exemplary conduct of practised visitors. Nineteenth-century museums organized space and vision in order to elicit voluntary self-observation and self-regulation. The kinds of movements and behaviours expected of visitors were anticipated by architecture as well as the arrangement of objects in order to reflect very specific ideologies. One’s very position within a museum was also illustrative of one’s place within configurations of imperialist power. Leahy’s museum bodies together with Bennett’s exhibitionary complex and Teckert’s narrative about the way subjectivity is shaped via particular instances of spectatorship reflects a broader argument taken from Butler, Althusser and Foucault, that so-called subjects are produced and constituted by fields of power. During the twentieth century, the white cube also used its authority to create specific relations with its visitors by using architecture to frame mechanisms of visual control, directing looks and movement according to a highly controlled script and using apparent neutrality to disguise its specific context and ideological bias.

The impacts of museums as formidable disciplinary structures are still felt in any art gallery today, strict parameters are put in place by contemporary art museums in order to elicit managed interaction and a display of activity and engagement. The ways in which one is able to engage with art or look, walk, think and rest are manipulated within the space of the art museum by architecture, display, instruction and example as well as by parameters, scores and instruction

185 By a-signifying what is meant is a questioning of the importance of a straightforward or unproblematic relation with meaning or signification.

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created by either artists, choreographers or curators. Regulation, indeed self-regulation seems to be an inevitable reality of the museum, one is choreographed by one party or another. Lepecki posits choreography as a similar kind of manipulation, it functions as a technology that creates a body disciplined to move according to the commands of writing. In short, choreography involves instructions or parameters created by one party in order to regulate the movements of another, a definition that looks remarkably like what regularly occurs in art institutions. The works mentioned by artists like the Bouillon Group, Menzies, Linder, Neshat and Garcia all manifested individuals like Wolfson’s puppet, who are entangled within complex relations with various authorities that dictated their movements, whether they be religious, salutary, professional, psychoanalytic or choreographic.

The last part of this chapter examined the possibility of problematizing and undermining the operations of choreography and institutional spaces of subjection and the ways in which performers as artistic subjects or gallery visitors might deviate from such forms of structure and control. Foucault’s concept of the heterotopia or space as a counter-site is important due to the way in which it posits a space of change for opening up, proliferation and the challenging of containment. This ties into Brown’s thesis of matrixial space, or space as a set of relations produces by bodies, spaces and built environments as well as concepts of phase space in which interaction can alter the field or situation it takes place within. The idea of heterotopia sets up a space for illusion, a space that is other, different, spaces as ‘other places.’ Via Brown, space is proposed as passage, a moment for becoming, opening up and proliferation. A space in which performances and choreographies as intersubjective encounters might alter or affect the very space they take place within.
2 Self Unfinished: Choreography as a technique for subject constitution

‘Self Unfinished’ (1998) begins with Xavier Le Roy (b. 1963) entering from the left. On his way across the space from left to right he turns on a small portable stereo, though neither music nor sound can be heard. He wears sneakers without socks and a lavender coloured button-down shirt which is not tucked into a pair of black dress pants. He sits upon a chair in front of a small table or desk, the only furniture in the performance space. Le Roy sits at the desk with the palm of his hands flat upon its surface. From this position, the choreographer proceeds to perform actions that enact a series of transformations from human, to android, to mere mass, to shape, to quadruped, to frog, to a headless biped, to woman, to a fleshy creature, to insect and back to himself again.

Although Self-Unfinished was originally created for an event about performance and theory, it has since been reiterated on multiple occasions in art galleries, recently at the Centre Pompidou in Paris, the Museum of Modern Art in New York City as well as the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston. According to dance scholar Noémie Solomon, Le Roy is one choreographer of many who choose to operate at the threshold of dance and in doing so encourage debate about the disciplinary borders of dance and interrogate the role and function of the dancing subject across culture. By performing his work within the context of art institutions, Le Roy inserts his work into a received narrative about U.S. based and Western European art history. According to performance theorist Rebecca Schneider, solo performance, a uniquely twentieth century term, could indicate a broad shift toward American-centred modernism. In fact, Le Roy’s Self Unfinished can be read as part of an art historical narrative involving cis-gendered male artists attempting to enact or perform transformations, or to create some sort of transformation of subjectivities, as isolated figures within a room or enclosed space.

The previous chapter examined: the history and politics of the relations created between art institutions and their visitors; their subjection and manipulation by architecture, regulation and example; choreographic relations as those realised with the aid of a preconceived plan or score that is used so that one party obeys the dictates of another; and the way in which artistic subjects are structured specifically by the white cube with its accompanying conceptions of space as

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186 Created in collaboration with Laurent Golding. This account is of the 2003 version performed in Ponderwil, Berlin. MCB-DV-1154, Mediathek für Tanz und Theater, Mime Centrum, Berlin.
188 Noémie Solomon “Introduction.” In Solomon. 12.
This chapter focuses exclusively on a very specific kind of artistic subject, excavating how *Self-Unfinished* as well as performances by Vito Acconci, Joseph Beuys, Oleg Kulik, Barry Le Va, Paul McCarthy, Bruce Nauman, and Dennis Oppenheim allow a consideration of artworks as experiments in subjectivity. Each allows subjectivity to unfold, be transformed, problematized or even dissolved. Sometimes easily recognisable forms and associations of subjectivity are appropriated and sometimes they are disguised. The following chapter makes these different ways of experimenting with subjectivity explicit so that it might be a heuristic device by which to unravel the intricacies of various artworks. In some of the works a discovery of subjectivity might not have been the explicit intention, it might be produced on the fly or as a by-product but this in no way suggests that this kind of subjectivity is a casual afterthought but something illuminating that emerges unexpectedly. The value of this chapter is that it examines artworks that either implicitly or explicitly deal with subjectivity as well as those that seem to waver between these two poles in their very execution.

This chapter is divided into two main parts, the first examines subject constitution in relation to masculinity, choreography, spatiality and the machinic. It argues that choreographed works such as *Self-Unfinished* produce relations which probe what it means to be a subject. I will begin with theories about the constitution of masculine and artistic subjects as theorised by art historian Amelia Jones, Lepecki and UK-based theorist Sara Ahmed in relation to Le Roy as well as works by twentieth century US-based performance artists such as Bruce Nauman and those by recent and contemporary Australasian artists like Jim Allen, Bruce Barber, Peter Roche and Mike Parr. I will then briefly return to the white cube gallery and the way this art-historical entity inhabited by Le Roy is also implicated in the production of subjectivity in a process of spatio-subjectivisation. Developing further analysis of *Self-Unfinished*, the way in which Le Roy remains still or moves like a robot in order to challenge the onus of productivity and efficacy on performers within the white cube will be examined. This analysis, together with various theories of artistic labour by curator Helen Molesworth and the modern impetus for movement by Lepecki will also discuss performances by Gilbert and George, Michael Jackson, le Va and Oppenheim.

The second part of this chapter examines ways in which experimental practices might destabilise authoritarian structures, examining the way in which Le Roy uses his body to perform choreographed actions to undermine the mutually reinforcing relationship between subject and white cube. Le Roy’s actions are specifically analysed in relation to the concept of ‘becoming’ from French philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. This concept of becoming as ‘a process of non-identitarian transformation’ is crucial due to the way in which it conceives of
experimental practices that might destabilise authoritarian structures.\textsuperscript{190} By developing the concept of becoming in relation to Le Roy’s performance, as well as additional examples by recent artists such as Acconci and McCarthy, I will look at ways in which performance artists momentarily display a female body image in the hope of momentarily undermining the privileges associated with their own gender positions. Following on from this, Le Roy’s work together with instances by Oleg Kulik and Joseph Beuys will be examined in terms of the way in which these artists exhibit animal-like behaviour or use action to create the illusion of becoming various types of animals in order to problematize their subjectivities.

\section*{2.1 A man at a desk in the empty room: subject constitution, masculinity and choreography}

Le Roy positions himself within an empty room, seated in front of a desk. In fact, throughout \textit{Self-Unfinished} he returns to his desk again and again (Figure 19). It becomes a location at which Le Roy ends one sequence and begins another, it acts as a punctuation mark, a place to pause between actions.\textsuperscript{191} This repeated, choreographed action signals the constitution of a very particular subject, one that is loaded in both art and dance history, that of the solo, male performer and choreographer. Such a personage has been theorised in great detail by art historian Amelia Jones as part of her thesis of the ‘Pollockian Performative’ and by Lepecki within his description of a solipsistic, masculine choreographer. Also of relevance to Le Roy’s act of sitting at a desk and the way in which it can be interpreted as signalling an enactment of subject constitution. Indeed solo performances as ‘chamber pieces’ that involve men in rooms performing certain actions or labouring to their own ends are endemic to late twentieth century performance art. Le Roy’s sedentary behaviour can be interpreted with the aid of Ahmed’s discussion of whiteness, gender, phenomenology and orientation.

Le Roy’s placement of himself at a desk could signify that he intends to conduct some sort of bureaucratic labour before his audience. It is worth noting that O’Doherty has described the labour of a solo performing artist as often futile, marked by \textit{pathos}, failure and inadequacy:

\begin{quote}
There is something infinitely pathetic about the single figure in the gallery, testing limits, ritualizing its assaults on its body, gathering scanty information on the flesh it cannot shake off. In these extreme cases art becomes the life of the body.\textsuperscript{192}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{190} The phrase ‘process of non-identitarian transformation’ used to describe \textit{becoming} comes from Cvejić. 24.

\textsuperscript{191} In the iteration described by André Lepecki, performed at the Kitchen, New York in 2003 Le Roy sat at his desk greeting audience members as they entered the performance space. Lepecki, \textit{Exhausting Dance}. 41.

\textsuperscript{192} O’Doherty. 64.
Aside from the possibility of pathos, Le Roy’s presentation of himself as a labouring, solo, male performer could also be read as a riff, response, interrogation, extension and exaggeration of the idea or myth of a singular, unitary, male artist as genius. Although Amelia Jones has written extensively on subjectivity in relation to self-imaging technologies and performance art, it is her early discussion on male performance artists and their relationship to the figure of US painter Jackson Pollock (1912-1956) that is most relevant here. The point of departure for Jones’ thesis on the ‘Pollockian Performative’ is a selection of photographs (Figure 20) and filmed footage taken around 1950 by Hans Namuth (1915-1990) of Pollock ‘standing above or within his huge canvases, overtly and theatrically performing the act of painting.’ For Jones, the images enabled an artistic subject to be conceived and perceived as self-consciously enacting or performing his role, so that the relationship between himself and his work would be forever

194 I have chosen to utilise Jones’ earlier conception of masculinity rather that her recent arguments about: the ways in which identity and identification might affect the interpretation and valorisation of visual culture (Amelia Jones. *Seeing Differently: A history and theory of identification and the visual arts.* London and New York: Routledge, 2012. Print. ); or her examination of the ways in which technologies of visual representation are utilised in an attempt to capture or confirm the so-called self (Amelia Jones. *Self image: technology, representation and the contemporary subject.* New York: Routledge, 2006. Print. ).
altered by the presence of others as photographer, viewer or audience member. In 1952 Harold Rosenberg, whilst writing on Pollock proposed painting as an event, a ‘mythic’ as well as physical ‘act of performance’ that took place within the arena of the canvas’ which had everything to do with the angst-ridden and expressive body of the artist.

Aside from highlighting the ‘performative dimension’ of Pollock’s process, the article originally accompanying Namuth’s photographs in 1951 also stressed Pollock’s ‘uniqueness’ and ‘genius.’ Rosenberg played his part in constructing Pollock as a ‘labouring, existentialist hero’ and in his 1958 essay ‘The Legacy of Jackson Pollock,’ Kaprow echoed these claims by describing Pollock’s ‘ritual’ statement, celebrating his performativity and aligning him with ‘modernist conceptions of the artist as heroic and individual.’ Indeed the Pollock evoked by Namuth’s photographs and films operates within a mode of exaggeration, the artist’s masculinity is ‘hyperbolic’ perhaps even a ‘masquerade’ with the dynamism, speed and energy

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196 Ibid. 197 Ibid., 55, 71, 74. The underlining is my own, for emphasis. These two concepts, act and arena are crucial as they refer back to Artaud’s arena and performance as action. 198 Robert Goodnough, Arts News, 1951 quoted in Jones. 53. 199 Jones. 56, 55. According to Jones, this visual and intellectual construction of Pollock by Namuth, Rosenberg and Kaprow reiterates the way in which, throughout art history, a central concern in the representation of invariably masculine artists is the ‘blatant signalling of creativity’ as his key attribute. Jones goes on to describe Pollock’s portrayal and self-performance as a macho worker-artist displaying normative masculinity as drawing its power from specific tropes of American manhood codified in the post-World War II period as specifically different to effete, Europeanized aesthetes and conformist, middle-class subject dominated by women. Jones. 77, 81.
with which he paints. Namuth’s images, together with Rosenberg’s commentary throw into relief ‘the heroized action painting artist figure epitomized by Pollock.’

For Jones, artistic subjecthood is indebted to intersubjective relations, any act of performance is ‘contingent on the act of reception,’ therefore if Pollock as a persona is performative, he must be open to, even dependent upon ‘intersubjective engagement.’ Pollock is also discursively shaped and defined by art history, the milieu in which he functions. Crucial for Jones’s larger argument about artistic subjectivity, Pollock’s performativity is what makes him postmodern, a subject that is ‘fragmented, centred, and intersubjectively defined’ one that acknowledges the incertitude of his future status as an art historical figure. According to Jones, the ‘postmodern performative’ involves a mode of consciously performing ‘the modernist artistic subject.’ In doing so, Pollock is framed by Jones as an ‘originary trope’ for her ‘performative subject of postmodernism.’ Hallmarks of such a subjectivity are: an enactment of subjectivity that is fundamentally contingent and particular, modes of exaggeration, self-conscious performance of intersubjective contexts such as art-making as well as an openness to otherness or alterity. Another aspect of the postmodern performative is an enacting of a consciousness of the self as particularized which might enable a dismantling of the ‘universality’ presumed to be expressed through the privileged body/self of Pollock.

Paradoxically, for Jones, Pollock is postmodern due to the way in which he self-consciously performs himself as a quintessential modernist subject. It could also be argued that in repeatedly performing Pollock adheres to or is obedient to the previously conceived role or score, that of the labouring, heroic, mystical, male action-painter. For Jones, a postmodern, performative artistic subject is generally assumed to be masculine, and ‘implicitly aligned in Western culture with whiteness, heterosexuality, and an ambivalent antibourgeois positionality.’ Jones sees this ‘Pollockian model of artistic genius’ as dominant throughout art history and such normative masculinity became a legacy to be grappled with, mimicked, parodied and assaulted. What is subsequently constructed is an art historical narrative involving interrogations of the aggressive masculinism of Pollock with the whiteness, heterosexuality and class implications attached to his privileged subject position.

200 Ibid., 77, 80.
201 Ibid., 92.
202 Ibid., 57, 83.
203 Ibid.
204 Ibid., 66, 68. For Jones, artists who engaged in body-based performances in the 1960s and 1970s created what she calls body art, a correlative practice of this post-modern performative.
205 Ibid., 86.
206 Ibid., 94.
207 Ibid., 88, 92.
Whereas during the 1970s performance artists like Vito Acconci and Paul McCarthy explicitly reacted to the persona of Pollock, many other male solo performers can also be interpreted in relation to Jones’ thesis. Thus there is the possibility of reading Le Roy’s *Self-Unfinished* as a presentation of a non-normative artistic body operating in a mode of hyperbolic, exaggerated masculinity and masquerade. Le Roy presents once again an expressive body within an arena, someone self-consciously and overtly enacting or performing the role of artist as unique genius, as labouring existentialist hero, so that he is contingent upon acts of reception. By performing his own choreographed solo, Le Roy blatantly signals his creativity, referencing Jones’ trope of a postmodern, self-conscious and particularized self that might dismantle the universality of the privileged body of Pollock.

Echoing Jones’ thesis on the impact of a model of artistic genius that is assumed to be masculine, white and heterosexual, Sara Ahmed contributes an argument about how the very positioning of oneself behind a desk, such as that by Le Roy, already indicates similar privileges. Ahmed utilises a thesis of German phenomenologist Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) which argues ‘orientations are about how we begin, how we proceed from ‘here.’ According to Husserl, a starting point for orientation in space ‘is the point from which the world unfolds: the ‘here’ of the body, and the ‘where’ of its dwelling. Given this, orientations are about the intimacy of bodies and their dwelling places.’ Ahmed asks ‘If orientations are about how we begin from ‘here,’ then they involve unfolding. At what point does the world unfold?’ Crucially the point at which the world unfolds for Husserl is the writing-table, which is in his study, the room in which he writes ‘I can let my attention wander from the writing-table I have just seen or observed.’ According to Ahmed ‘the fact that Husserl faces the writing table is a sign of his occupation,’ the writing table, or desk provides ‘the right kind of horizontal surface for the philosopher.’ Ahmed continues:

> Tables and chairs, things nearest to hand for the sedentary philosopher, who comes to occupy chairs of philosophy, are the furniture of that “room of one’s own” from which the real world is observed.\(^{209}\)

For Ahmed such signs indicate that philosophy is a gendered form of occupation, ‘doing philosophy’ has historically been a masculine form of work. Tables and chairs are ‘near to hand’ as the furniture that makes up the very ‘place’ of philosophy. For Ahmed the very orientation of philosophy is composed of a table and chair as they demonstrate what is near or in proximity to the body of a philosopher, the objects or furniture one comes into contact with are shaped by what one does. Importantly the very possibility of such an orientation towards a writing-table


and chair is more likely for a privileged subject who is masculine and white. Therefore Le Roy’s positioning of himself at the beginning of his performance, the point at which it unfolds, as seated before a desk could be read as a starting point for a privileged, white, cis-gendered male artist with an orientation towards philosophy.210

Lepecki uses the term idiotic to describe Le Roy’s positioning of himself alone and in front of a desk, appealing to the etymological sense from the Greek idiotes meaning an ‘isolated, self-contained one,’ a private, separate individual removed from social responsibility.211 Self-Unfinished presents what Lepecki refers to as ‘the solitary male dancer,’ a solipsistic figure that for him lingers or ‘haunts’ the site of dance. Lepecki describes performers evoking such a figure as:

men moving alone in explicitly enclosed and empty spaces – empty chambers, empty studios, empty rooms, sombre voids where haunted solitude, concentration of will and precision in execution all fuse to created what can only be described as solipsistic excess.212

Indeed the trope of the solitary, masculine figure in ‘studious privacy,’ within a chamber, whether it be the studio or an exhibition space, striving to undergo some sort of transformation, testing limits or gathering scant information is prevalent throughout performance art. According to Schneider, the twentieth century was ‘uniquely hospitable to, and enamoured of, solo performance.’213 In the latter half of the century ‘the single body increasingly performed in a piece authored and/or choreographed and/or staged and/or deigned by that single body.’214 US-based body art practices from the 1960s onwards as well as European and Australasian reactions to such practices, all yield examples of such ‘chamber pieces’ involving men in rooms performing certain actions or labouring, to their own ends.

Examples include the experimental activities Nauman conducted in his sublet studio in Mill Valley in the winter of 1967-1968 such as Walking in an Exaggerated Manner around the Perimeter of a Square (Figure 21) and Dance or Exercise on the Perimeter of a Square.215 Both works involve the artist walking or stepping upon and around a masking-tape square on the floor

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210 For a more detailed examination of how disciplines and spaces are masculinist or concerned only with the position of men see Gillian Rose. “Women and Everyday Spaces.” In Gillian Rose. Feminism & Geography: The Limits of Geographical Knowledge. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993. Print. 17-40. It is important to note here the point made by Judith Butler, in her interview with Sara Ahmed that although the term queer can indicate those whose gender and sexuality are ‘unfixed,’ some people understand themselves as wanting or requiring an unequivocal gender designation, to be categorized within a binary system rather than existing ‘beyond all categories.’ Sara Ahmed. "Interview with Judith Butler." Sexualities 0.0 (2016) Print. 9.

211 Lepecki. 33.

212 Ibid., 19.

213 Schneider. 27.

214 Ibid., 32.

of his studio with a metronome used to provide regulation of his movements. Very similar and applicable to Le Roy is Lepecki’s reading of such performances by Nauman as the artist locking himself in the ‘cranial space’ of his empty studio, as a ‘space of thought moving’ for a series of ‘self-contained, cloistered, choreographic solipsistic explorations – under the excuse of philosophy.’

Later examples that also involve artists pacing, walking, mapping or measuring the available space of a room include those by New Zealanders from the 1970s onwards. Jim Allen paced and read poetry amongst running chainsaws in *Poetry for Chainsaws* at the Experimental Art Foundation, Adelaide in 1976 (Figure 22). Bruce Barber negotiated an obstacle course in Kerikeri Memorial Hall under conditions of sensory deprivation in *Bucket Action* (1973). Peter Roche executed extreme vocalisations whilst pacing in his performance *Get the Fuck Out Got to Get Out* at Elam Art School, Auckland in 1979. Similarly Australian artist Mike Parr frequently isolates himself alone in a room for prolonged periods of time in works such as *Aussie, Aussie, Aussie, Oi, Oi, Oi, [Un]Australian* (2003).

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216 Lepecki. 30.
Continuing on from Lepecki’s mention of chambers is his proposition of performance and
choreography of *solipsistic masculinity*, one that is crucial in reading Le Roy’s performance.
For Lepecki, artists like Nauman evoke the *choreographic* in their works as a ‘vigorous,
methodical, monomaniacal execution of a set of previously established steps.’
Elaborating, he describes such performances as a probe of what can be produced ‘physically, subjectively,
temporally, politically, formally’ whenever one decides to follow a prescribed program strictly
and methodically to its ultimate consequences. Lepecki summarises with the aid of dance
historian Janet Kraynak that Nauman’s works in particular ‘*essentially constitute the display of*
*a set of instructions*’ depicting a body as well as a ‘choreographic score’ or a ‘language of
movement.’ Importantly, Lepecki interprets instances of performance art as choreography,
the inverse of interpreting Le Roy’s choreography through the lens of performance art history.

Nauman as well as Allen, Barber and Roche, perform various acts of pacing within a room or
chamber. Nauman himself reflected that when working in his studio he in fact spent most of his
time pacing around and drinking coffee, coming to the conclusion that he may as well film
himself doing just that. According to Lepecki the way in which Nauman’s pacing is
controlled, mapped out, measured or ‘chronometric’ and repeated means that it is ‘formalised,’

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217 Lepecki. 23.
218 Ibid., 24.
219 Coosje van Bruggen quoted in Lepecki, 29.
making it in fact a ‘choreographic exercise.’ Lepecki posits the choreographic chamber as ‘an accumulator of subjectivity,’ begging the question of what kind of subjectivity it might accumulate.

A crucial aspect of Lepecki’s description is choreography as a ‘problem of obedience,’ its capacity to make visible and present prior forces and voices of command, even though in this case of performance artists it is generally the command of the artist himself. In the case of Nauman, the title of each of his pieces acts as a statement-instruction, he must then ‘do’ or ‘perform’ what the title enunciates so that it gains according to Lepecki an ‘authorial authority, defining a narrow space for behaviour and being.’ Following Lepecki’s argument, above all, Nauman compulsively and thoroughly submits himself, he follows and perfectly executes ‘a choreographic demand as an inescapable program.’ For Lepecki, such ‘maniacal abiding with law’ and solipsism saturates ‘masculine subjectivity to the point of absurdity.’ Crucially, such a solipsism is in fact methodological, so that it is intensified to enable ‘the creation of careful and systematic experimentation.’

2.2 A chamber for transformation: always-already subjects and spatio-subjectivisation

Importantly, the singular, unitary male artistic genius described above is enacted with the help of a particular kind of place, that of the white cube, art gallery space as described in my first chapter. I would argue that a process of spatio-subjectivisation manifests a mutually-reinforcing relationship between the figure as a privileged, white, cis-gendered male artist or an isolated, solipsistic choreographer abiding his own instruction with an aim to experimentation and the ground that is specifically the white cube art gallery space. A particular subject is realised with the aid of a particular space. Although Jones enthuses that a performative, artistic subject of postmodernism enacts a subjectivity that is fundamentally contingent, open, self-conscious and particular, as mentioned earlier, what can be taken from Butler, Althusser and Foucault is that so-called subjects are produced and constituted by fields of power. Art history as an important field of cultural power reinforces requirements and sets of criteria by which one can be designated an artist, it is a set of intersubjective relations that produce artistic subjecehood. Such designation of an artistic-subject by an ideology and its apparatuses is what Althusser would

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220 Lepecki. 29, 31.
221 Ibid., 30
222 Ibid., 33.
223 Ibid., 38.
call the ‘ideological effect’ of constant practice of rituals of ideological recognition. Practices such as performances make the ideology of art history as performances studies material, practical and physical. It is by performing gestures and acts that one can make a belief that one is a performer/artist material and actual. Re-iterating points discussed in the previous chapter, for Foucault a discipline such as art history sets up ‘given’ places such as the contemporary art museum as a collection of white cubes in which such subjects can form.

Self-Unfinished is performed before white walls and with a white floor, activating what Sabisch has described as a ‘white cube stage, highly and permanently lit with an equal distribution of luminosity from above.’ To return to artistic subjects performing within white cube galleries, it is important to note that performing before an audience in an art gallery, letting an artwork unfold before beholders is different to the private production of artworks in the studio and subsequent presentation of objects within an exhibition space. These spaces of production and presentation are combined, begging the question of what the impact might be of conflating the space of the artist’s studio with the gallery space via performance. I will argue that artists performing within gallery spaces bring with them from the studio various conceptions of space such as: the mysterious masculine space of production; a liminal site set apart for philosophical exploration, a social gathering-place of manufacture or a monastic space of absolutes and elimination.

Art historian Mary Bergstein argued that in the twentieth century, photographs of artists’ studios such as those by American documentary photographer Alexander Lieberman of Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) presented a highly gendered, in fact masculine space, one in which creative processes and acts took place. The so-called ‘mystique of the artist’s atelier’ saw masculinity as a dominating force, one equated with production. Spaces or workshops for the production of art objects often bore witness to an ‘anxious, antagonistic masculinity’ in the ‘throes of tormented creativity.’ Such a studio environment is where the drama of ‘activated intellect’ and ‘kinaesthetic thinking’ took place. This conception of studio as a mysterious and masculine space is extended by O’Doherty in his description of the studio of painter Mark Rothko (1903-1970) ‘the studio of monastic bareness.’ which involves an ‘aesthetics of elimination,’ and these so-called ‘studios of elimination,’ according to Doherty might have ‘a yearning for some

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224 In the case of art history and artists exhibiting in the white cube rituals of ideological recognition would include: exhibition announcements, press releases and advertising, public speeches and introductions, wall texts, labels, public programming, catalogues and critical reviews to name a few.

225 Sabisch. 168.

absolute.'227 Such a *studio povera* is bare, functional and puritanical and it is such a space that recalls that of the dancer’s studio or a rehearsal space.

Phillip Zarilli posits a studio space for performance as a *metaphysical studio*, a *critical space* or ‘site for philosophical exploration’ in which to practice ‘philosophy in the flesh.’ The studio is ‘a place of propositions, not givens.’228 Zarilli’s studio is a liminal place dedicated or set apart, a place of possibility, play and the subjunctive mood. It can introduce ‘possibilities of fact,’ it can involve pretending or make-believe, a paradoxical ‘acceptance of what empirically is not.’229 Relevant to Le Roy is the activity of masking, disguise or illusion as it involves a performer in ‘transformation,’ someone who asks himself ‘am I this or am I not this?’ Zarilli’s *metaphysical studio* also evokes the dance studio as defined by Lepecki, one that allows a removal from the social field and confinement to privacy, as well as a haunting by the imagined presence of prior practitioners and masters. Such a ‘solitary chamber’ is described by Lepecki as a solipsistic space of non-relation, a place that acts as an ‘accumulator of subjectivity.’ The studio as a private place for reading, writing or philosophizing is likened by Lepecki to a grave.230 O’Doherty together with Daniel Buren, a visual artist who repudiates the studio, both studio and gallery are ‘frames, envelopes and limits,’ yet there is a possibility that these boundaries, limitations and oppositions might be eroded when an artist performs within a gallery space as it then becomes simultaneously a site of production or generation as well as display or exposition.231

In terms of the dancer’s studio, or rehearsal space, it is important to note that Le Roy as a choreographer and a dancer has his own rehearsal and composition techniques which take place before he presents his work in public. His choreographic practice is informed by the somatic practices of yoga, osteopathy and Alexander Technique. Le Roy took classes in Cunningham dance technique, one based on the principles of Merce Cunningham (1919-2009) who was active in the US from the early 1950s. This technique stresses a multi-directional way of dancing that also required great strength and flexibility. Contact improvisation is another dance practice Le Roy engaged with, one that dates back to Steve Paxton. Crucially in 1996 Le Roy joined a company that worked on the recreation of Yvonne Rainer’s 1970 piece *Continuous Project – Altered Daily* which had a lasting effect on his own choreographies.232

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227 Brian O’Doherty. “Studio and Cube.” In Hoffmann. 35.
229 Deleuze. 83.
230 Lepecki. 30.
The question here is what kind of the role the studio plays, is it inside or outside of art? This is comparable to a theory of the frame or *parergon* of French philosopher Jacques Derrida (1930-2004). Derrida teased out the possible significance of ‘a frame framing a painting,’ positing such a device as ‘the *parergon*: neither work (*ergon*) nor outside the work [*hor d’oeuvre*], neither inside nor outside, neither above nor below it, it disconcerts any opposition but does not remain indeterminate and it *gives rise* to the work.\(^{233}\) What is pointed out is the indeterminability of the frame, the ambiguity about the visible or invisible limits of painting and therefore an artwork, an interrogation of the ways in which art is or is not separate from the ‘from the outside, from the wall on which the painting is hung… from the whole field’ or world.\(^{234}\) Importantly a frame framing a painting is not quite an artwork and not quite *not* an artwork, like the artist’s studio it becomes transparent, invisible, or is not normally visible:

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\text{the \textit{parergon} is a form which has at its traditional determination not that it stands out but that it disappears, buries itself, effaces itself, melts away at the moment it deploys its greatest energy… it is a figure which comes away of its own accord [s’enlève d’elle-même].}
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Just as it is difficult to disentangle an artistic subject from the institutional and intersubjective space he performs in, one that simultaneously enables him to exist, it is hard to separate the prior activities of the studio from the artwork as a performance. O’Doherty and Buren highlight the problematic passage between studio and white cube but many artworks have activated these physical and cultural frameworks and thresholds explicitly such as Mierle Laderman Ukeles’ acts of washing the entrance-way of the Wadsworth Athenaeum in Hartford Connecticut in 1973 (Figure 23). A similar function was performed by Joseph Beuys, an artist whose work will be discussed later on in this chapter with his performance within a closed Dusseldorf gallery, *How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare* in 1965.\(^{235}\) The so-called neutrality, transparency or ‘innocence’ of the space of the white cube, with its accompanying presumption of a universal viewing subject as espoused in the phenomenological model was deflated and challenged by US-based conceptual artists Michael Asher and Hans Haacke. In the early 1970s Asher highlighted the institutional frame and its machinations by removing gallery walls, revealing the offices and storage facilities normally hidden behind them. Whereas Haacke’s *Condensation*…

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\(^{235}\) From a museological perspective this site of production and display recalls that of the ‘laboratorium’ posited by Hans Ulrich Obrist and Barbara Vanderlinden as part of a 1999 exhibition which included work by Le Roy. For Ulrich and Vanderlinden the interdisciplinary project, inspired by scientific laboratories and experimentation, involved a probing of the limits and possibilities of places where knowledge and culture are made, “Working places” where participants might communicate their findings on a “work in progress.” One of the central questions was whether what happens within a scientific laboratory or artistic studio can indeed be made public. Hans Ulrich Obrist and Barbara Vanderlinden. “LABORATORIUM.” In Obrist and Vanderlinden. 17-23.
*Cube* (1963-1965) highlighted the very atmosphere or humidity of an art gallery by allowing a simple, geometric, transparent, Perspex cube to be invaded by the moisture created by the visitors' bodies.236


236 Kwon. 35.
It has been argued that the space of *Self Unfinished* recalls the dance floor as an empty square on a white background as depicted by Raoul-Augé Feuillet in his manual *Chorégraphie* (1700). Yet I would also argue that Le Roy’s choreography in the late 1990s is still engaging with modernist conceptions of space as are the performances discussed from the second half of the twentieth century. In summary, the gallery space into which Le Roy enters at the beginning of his performance is affected by traditions of space formerly applied to artists’ studios. Such a space is loaded with values, it is a mysterious and masculine space of production, a liminal site that has been set apart for philosophical exploration, a social place for gathering and manufacture as well as a monastic space that strives towards absolutes and elimination. Within such a space there may be openness and indeterminacy, creative energies, an anxious and antagonistic masculinity as well as obsession, virility and kinaesthetic thinking. It may be a space of isolation that enables observation, one that is undifferentiated, involving performer and spectators simultaneously. In some sense this space is a cell, a chamber of aesthetics or transformation, it involves the space of spectators, with an undifferentiated potency, one that consists of pockets of voids or even generative forces. However, the art gallery as a white cube is a very specific unit of discourse, one that has been constructed in art history over time, yet it is also an intersubjective environment, one that is occupied by performers as well as spectators creating interruptions or breaks in everyday life. Such a space, constructed by disciplines of art history, curatorial practice and museology studies is unique, it encloses those within it and partitions them within rooms. Most importantly, via a process of spatio-subjectivisation, the white cube sets up criteria for the formation of very specific kinds of artistic and viewing subjects.

### 2.3 Voicing machinic sounds: becoming robot-like, body as object or mass

After Le Roy has sat still at the desk for a spell he starts to move in slow isolated movements, making a ‘vvvvvr’ sound with his mouth in varying pitches corresponding to the movements of various body parts, as if his body were a robotic machine. He moves his head from side to side, he lifts and lowers his elbows, he elevates his body out of the chair. Each movement uses only one articulation of his body at a time, he stands up, moves away from the table and proceeds to walk, in increments to the left of the space. He continues to match his movements with sound effects that are produced in a ventriloquist manner so that one cannot even see his mouth move. It creates the impression that his body is a hydraulic machine. Lepecki describes these actions

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237 Lepecki. 29.
as ‘a humorous rendition of a robotic being, voicing machinic sounds.’

His body is held very stiffly and kept straight as he exaggerates lifting each foot up and stepping forwards, shifting his weight from one to the other. In this part of his performance Le Roy performs a very different kind of pacing around a room.

If *Self-Unfinished* is divided into four parts and an interlude, each with its own energy and dynamics, the first part of this choreography involves mechanical movement, or ‘a man who moves like a robot.’

In light of the previous arguments I have made about subjection, Le Roy’s moving and walking in a robotic fashion could be read as performing a body that is passive, managed, regulated, made docile and machine-like, one that adheres to rules, codes or prior instructions, one that is very similar to Wolfson’s metallic puppet. In fact Le Roy creates relations which explore what it means to be a subject, utilising the choreographed actions of moving like a robot as well as lying still to challenge the onus of productivity and efficacy on performers within the white cube. Men moving like robots has been a popular trope throughout twentieth century performance art, reflecting concerns and awareness of the increasing role mechanisation was playing in daily life particularly in Western Europe in response to the Great War and the Second Industrial Revolution.

The idea of the performing automata as a kind of marionette brought with it explorations of decision-making, authorship and the subordinate role of performing bodies, concerns directly related to choreography.

A particularly relevant later precedent for Le Roy’s machine-like movement was *Singing Sculpture* performed from 1969 by British artists Gilbert and George who used costume, make-up, props, movement and music to create the impression that they were mechanical beings. In this work, (Figure 24) whilst lip-syncing to an Edwardian music-hall song, both artists stood on a table, performing a choreography in which they both moved in an identical and robot-like manner, continuously re-playing their record, exchanging a glove and walking stick, moving rigidly from side to side.

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238 Lepecki. 41.
239 Sabisch. 172.
241 The figure of automata is inspired partially by doll-like mechanical daughter of professor Spalanzani in *Der Sandmann* by E.T.A Hoffman (1776-1822), more important is the figure of the marionette as explicated by Heinrich von Kleist (1777-1811) in his *Über das Marionettentheater*. Von Kleist. 83-85.
Both artists wore button-up suits with their hands and faces painted with variegated bronze powder on Vaseline so that they appeared metallic. Singing Sculpture presents uniformity, conformity, appearing ‘altogether respectable, clean and tidy,’ there is an immobility and rigidity of bodies acting in a mechanical fashion, or imitating mechanical forms and processes. In 1970 at the Nigel Greenwood gallery in London, Gilbert and George performed this six minute work continually for seven hours a day, five days in a row. The sameness, repetition and sheer duration of the performance also makes the artists as sculpture seem mechanical as well as almost superhuman. Gilbert & George reflected, ‘we had the whole thing under control… we had become untouchable, with our metal heads. Like robots.’ What the Singing Sculpture and Self-Unfinished have in common is an attempt to move in a robotic

fashion before an audience with the aid of stagey or illusionistic devices: make-up, props, a device playing music (the old gramophone or a small stereo) and even sound effects.

One way of reading artists modifying their behaviour and acting like robots is that they are making their bodies docile, ‘draining themselves of creative power and submitting themselves to cognition and rational awareness as hollow men, without human qualities of sexuality, creativity or imagination.’ This reading is very much in line with processes of subjection and the always-already subject as described above. Yet there are other possible readings. Gilbert and George’s long working days performing as a singing sculpture as well as Le Roy’s motivation of himself in the manner of a robot, together with his presentation of himself as a worker, before a desk recalls a narrative from Helen Molesworth about performance art and labour.

With his button-down shirt and black trousers Le Roy performs himself as a ‘worker-professional’ within a kind of office space, one in which he seems about to conduct some sort of bureaucratic labour before his audience. He sets himself up in particular relations that indicate ways in which he is subject-to. Molesworth argued that in the United States during the 1960s many artists were preoccupied by a ‘concern with the problematic of artistic labour.’

Molesworth’s recounts how after World War II the United States saw ‘the status of labour and the production of goods in the culture at large’ change profoundly ‘as the American industrial economy, based in manufacturing, shifted to a post-industrial economy rooted in managerial and service labour.’ The resulting changes altered the conditions of labour for artists who could explore various ways of producing art other than offering ‘a discrete object produced by hand’ so that: ‘Art could thus be made with unskilled manual labour, with highly regimented managerial labour, or with labour that resonated with ideas borrowed from the service economy.’ Emphasis was placed upon the artist’s work or labour whether mental or manual, and once labour was manipulated via acts of performance, the necessity for the ‘efficiency and rationality of assembly-line labour’ could be questioned and the focus shift to process, contingency, indeterminacy and even failure. According to Molesworth the early twenty-first century has been marked by similar radical transformations of the global labour force. ‘As commodities are now almost exclusively produced in developing and non-Western nations, the labour of developed nations has increasingly become the management of information and the production of experience.’

244 Jahn, The Art of Gilbert & George, 8.
246 Ibid., 25.
247 Ibid., 18.
248 Ibid., 18-19.
Additionally, the kind of labour which Le Roy prepares himself to perform for his audience involves human contact and interaction pointing to the ways in which subjectivity produces forms of intersubjectivity. As defined by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri labour that is immaterial, even affective, ‘focused on the creation and manipulation of affect.’ This concept of labour that is affective, corporeal yet still immaterial produces intangible products such as ‘a feeling of ease, well-being, satisfaction, excitement, or passion.’ This concept of affective labour also recalls Artaud’s proposition of performer as a heart athlete or ‘crude empiricist,’ someone who is in possession of an ‘affective organism’ or ‘musculature.’ This is similar to Deleuze’s description of Bacon’s painted figure that ‘is the sensible form related to a sensation,’ which ‘acts immediately upon the nervous system, which is of the flesh.’ It is equivocal as to whether this optimistic conception of affective labour combining ideas from Artaud and Deleuze is achieved by performance artists such as Le Roy, however what matters is that the labour he is preparing himself to perform before an audience in an art institution involves the prior assignation of a task that is in this case a choreography, as well as labour that might be affective but is probably also futile.

Related to this discussion of futility, a more recent precedent for moving like a robot can be found in the history of popular dance with its instances of robot-dancing performed by breakdancers in urban centres of the United States of America during the 1980s and most famously executed by singer and dancer Michael Jackson (1958-2009) in music videos as well as live performances (Figure 25). Tying into Molesworth’s arguments, performance theorist Judith Hamera argues that robot-dancing, such as that executed by Jackson had an allegorical relationship to the assembly-line, reiterating the changing political economy of American work.

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250 Hardt and Negri, *Empire,* 293.
252 The robot-dancing of Michael Jackson performed early on during performances of Jackson Five’s ‘Dancing Machine’ (1973) along with his: sharp hip thrusts, dimestops or complete pauses as transitions between moves, mechanical tapping of his feet and crouches in which his legs are turned in at impossible right angles has been linked by Hamera with a concept of ‘precarious excellence’ as well the changing political economy of American work. In terms of socioeconomic landscape Jackson was from the steel-mill town of Gary, Indiana in America’s industrial heartland. Jackson often spoke of how he could not control his own labour, his childhood was a non-stop regimen of rehearsals and performances. Even his family was a site of industrial production, a factory turning out professional entertainers who were signed to the self-consciously Fordist studios of Motown records. He would go on to explain how his virtuosity and exceptional skill were the product of rehearsals that would go on for days. Judith Hamera. “The Labors of Michael Jackson: Virtuosity, Deindustrialization, and Dancing Work.” *PMLA* 127.4 (2012) Print. 753-756.
After walking like a robot comes the second part of *Self-Unfinished* in which Le Roy goes from an animate mechanical being to an inanimate object. Le Roy moves gradually backwards until he reaches the back wall of the performance space. He then slowly side-steps along, looking towards the audience. For a moment he stands with his back against the wall, completely still. He then walks backwards slowly, diagonally across the space in an exaggerated manner back to the table and chair. He sits down, then stands. He travels around the table, backwards to the left side of the back wall, he crouches, then lies down, his face towards the wall, his arms and body extended along it so that his toes touch the wall. Fifteen minutes into his performance, he remains completely still.

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253 Choreographer Yvonne Rainer utilised objects as part of her choreographies, for example in *Room Service* (1963), *Parts of Some Sextets* (1965) and *The Mind is a Muscle* (1968) mattresses, car tyres, chairs, ladders were used by dancers. Stephanie Rosenthal, “Choreographing You: Choreographies in the Visual Arts” in Rosenthal. 11.
Le Roy’s positioning of himself resting on the side of his body, stretched along the wall and facing the wall highlights the object-ness of his body (Figure 26). Sabisch refers to this as a presentation of ‘a body as a landscape,’ Le Roy places himself against the architecture, against the walls of the gallery, obdurate and still.\(^{254}\) This is a position Le Roy returns to again and again throughout this performance, this act of stillness, of facing away from the audience and towards the architecture acts as a resting place. In making his body object-like Le Roy again harks back to Gilbert and George with their attempt to be ‘subject, object and intent’ by standing ‘on a table as one and the same sculpture.’\(^{255}\) Just as was the case with performing as though a robot, there are many instances of performance artists throughout the twentieth century presenting their bodies as mass, a physical solid or object. Many of these performances were exhibited as photographic documentation, as was the case with Oppenheim and Acconci. Both artists presented their bodies outdoors, Oppenheim’s as an element of engineering, prey to collapse and forces such as stress and gravity, Acconci’s as a simple element of extension.\(^{256}\) However

\(^{254}\) Sabisch. 173. Sabisch reflects: ‘a human body lying on the floor, facing the back wall. Far away from the audience, this back forms a silhouette on the horizon. It is a still, suspended movement that persists horizontally, as if the horizon were looking back to the audience through this body, reflecting something strangely human in that specific line in the landscape that is the body.’ Ibid., 178. Le Roy’s acts of making himself object-like also recall Acconci’s *Trademarks* (1970) in which the artist repeatedly bit himself in an attempt to make himself an object rather than a subject.

\(^{255}\) Jonquet, 66-67.

\(^{256}\) In photographs of his *Parallel Stress* performances in 1970, Oppenheim suspended his body between a wall and a collapsed concrete pier in an industrial space between the Brooklyn and Manhattan bridges. Oppenheim repeated
another US-based artist, Barry Le Va enacted the mass or brute matter of his body via actions within a gallery space. Le Va presents his body as a mass in relation to speed, velocity and sudden encounters with a solid obstruction, in this case the gallery wall. In his *Velocity Piece No. 2* (Figure 27) Le Va embarked on the somewhat unproductive task of running back and forth between two walls that are fifteen metres apart in the La Jolla Museum. Demonstrating exertion, Le Va impacted violently against each wall before then hurling himself back into the gallery space and continuing to run back and forth. Although for Le Va what mattered was his exertion, the expending of energy and exhaustion, this performance can also be seen as a presentation and enactment of the brute matter of a body as well as the ways in which it might engage with an architecturally constructed environment of the art gallery and its walls. Like Le Va, Le Roy presents his body simply as a mass or in this case a shape, a plank-like length that stretches along the gallery wall hiding the artist’s face from view so that he can only be visually perceived as a body, still. Another example of a performance artist presenting his body as mere mass which is ordinarily prey to the forces of gravity is that of Australian artist Stelarc. This was highlighted in his suspension performances which took place over 25 years, in particular his *Rock Suspension* (1980) where his naked body, suspended from hooks embedded in his flesh was suspended in the midst of suspended rocks within a white-cube gallery setting (Figure 28).\(^{257}\) Stelarc rendered his own body as sculpture, still as the rocks, or slightly swaying audience members could wander around him like a statue. *Rock Suspension* also manifests a sort of puppetry of the artist which subverts or problematizes spatio-subjectivisation by making space a problem, making the white cube explicit as a visible support rather than covert, gaining strength and power from the way in which it is generally invisible and normal.

Assembling all of these threads together, in moving like a robot Le Roy renders his movements schematic, isolated, rigid, slow, and jerky. He also makes himself appear as if he were a robot or automaton tying into a greater twentieth century art historical narrative of male performers utilising performance to address their concerns regarding technology, decision-making, conformity and control. There is generally something comical or ridiculous about a human being pretending to be a machine and in doing so performers like Le Roy undermine the efficiency and rationality of assembly-line labour and instead emphasise contingency, indeterminacy and failure.

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\(^{257}\) On a related note, Stelarc has also created performances such as *Third Hand* (1980-1988), *Exoskeleton* (1997) and *Ear on Arm* (2007) that work directly with electronic components and robotic body parts in his literal exploration of prosthetics and bodily extension.

Le Roy’s slowness, together with his machine-like motivation and assuming of a position of stillness tie into a greater argument from Lepecki that contemporary choreographies which present exhaustion, immobility or ‘still-acts’ in fact criticise an ‘agenda of mobility’ which dominates the political ontology of dance as well as late capitalist modernity. The actions by Le Roy discussed in this section all involve what Lepecki refers to as a choreographic strategy that involves a purposeful interruption of flow or continuum of movement, a ‘deflation of movement.’ According to Lepecki, the ‘kinetic project of modernity’ is ‘aligned with the production and display of a body and a subjectivity fit to perform this unstoppable motility.’ If dance and modernity both champion a ‘kinetic mode of being in the world,’ then instances of performed, choreographed or danced stillness, still-acts or movement that has been slowed down become, for Lepecki, ‘particularly powerful propositions for other modes of rethinking action and mobility.’ Crucially for Lepecki, still-acts, such as those of Le Roy might interrogate ‘economies of time’ and in doing so reveal the possibility of agency, of moving differently ‘within controlling regimes of capital, subjectivity, labour and mobility.’

The relationship between artistic subjectivity and intersubjectivity is complex, artists performing within white cubes are expected to be avant-garde, exhibitionist, productive, and efficacious, choreographic strategies employed by Le Roy such as making movement schematic and machine-like as well as the utilisation of still-acts all contribute to an interrogation the expectations of such artists or performers, in particular their propensity to successful or efficacious actions. Lepecki’s argument is extended by Sabisch who posits that beneath any exhaustion of mobility is ‘the proliferation of different dynamics of change, each implementing a specific regime of intensity and duration.’ In walking backwards, walking in slow motion, in travelling across the space in non-habitual ways Le Roy challenges kineticism and the way in which a dancer is supposed to be what Lepecki calls a ‘being-towards movement.’ Instead his many ‘stillnesses, repetitions, reiterations, humorous images and unnameable forms’ unleash a pack of affects and precepts.

For Sabisch, Le Roy’s choreography demonstrates a withdrawal of coded dance movements, creating instead ‘a particular mode of exposure through movement-percepts that are continuously maintained throughout the performance.’ Therefore when Le Roy repeatedly lies along the wall and is still he is both object and subject, passive and active, absent and

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258 Lepecki quoted in Sabisch. 161.
259 Lepecki, 1-3.
260 Still-act, a coin termed by anthropologist Nadia Seremetakis involves moments when a subject interrupts historical flow and practices historical interrogation. Lepecki. 7, 15.
261 Sabisch. 162.
262 Lepecki. 43.
263 Ibid., 162.
present. The artist is absent in that his face is hidden, he cannot see his audience and he is still and object-like, merging himself with the architecture, he is passive in that he does not move. Yet at the same time he is performing, active and present, according to Sabisch he still continuously maintains movement-percepts, even if they are still-acts. Le Roy’s exhaustion of mobility, his becoming-robot and positioning of himself as object-like, or body-as-landscape chart a line of flight from subjection or the always-already subject as mentioned earlier, to what Sabisch refers to as a ‘proliferation of a different dynamics of change.’ Via choreography Le Roy presents himself as machinic and object-like and goes on evade such fixity. According to Lepecki, within his performance Le Roy ‘drops the notion of the subject’ as well as the potential to be fixed within the categories of ‘masculinity and femininity, human and animal, object and subject, passive and active, mechanical and organic, absence and presence.’ In *Self-Unfinished*, according to Lepecki, Le Roy replaces categories and binary oppositions with ‘a series of pure becomings.’

### 2.4 A verb with a consistency all its own: bodymades and becoming

Continuing on, Lepecki argues that in *Self-Unfinished* Le Roy presents a radical use of ‘choreographic’ and ‘intensely formless solipsism.’ Rather than a self as an always-already subject, ‘proper home of the individuated subject’ and a condition for a disciplined and choreographic body, Le Roy’s ‘self’ is radically incomplete and open, it is unfinished ‘because it can never be completed.’ In the next half of this chapter it will be argued that Le Roy displaces the concept of the individual and in doing so presents the possibility of evading the assignation of subjectivity ‘within the economies of law, naming and signification.’ Instead Le Roy presents a ‘relational body’ one that manifests the political potential for choreography and performance, pointing to the ways in which subjecthood has implications for intersubjectivity.

Choreographies such as *Self-Unfinished* work against normative phenomenology because they deconstruct, re-code, molecularise and make asignifying recognisable movements from ordinary experience such as walking across a space, dressing, engaging with a table and chair, or undressing. Tying into Brown’s *matrixial space* is a space as a vector of movement, sensory experience and embodiment, the quality of space is charged with what takes place within it, particular if what takes place are asignifying, fragmentary or strangely syntactical movement percepts. Hence the space of the white cube becomes a problem space because of the
‘molecularisation’ or breaking down of bodily actions that are disjunctive with, rather than expressive of the white cube space and spatio-subjectivisation is deliberately made to fail.

Figure 29 Xavier Le Roy, *Self Unfinished*, 1998.

After lying still against the back wall for a time Le Roy moves, stands up, walks backwards again across the space. He sits down at the desk once more. He then stands up and walks backwards across the room. He then takes off the dress shirt he has been wearing over his head, as he does so simultaneously he pulls up over his torso a black tube of fabric. He pulls his shirt and the tube right over his head and removes his shirt so that the upper half of his body, torso, arms, neck and head are contained within the tube of fabric. Le Roy bends over so that his hands touch the floor, he is bent in half, his feet and hands placed on the ground. He removes his sneakers by pulling each one off one by one by peeling the heel back with his toes, then kicking them off. He proceeds to walk backwards, bent over double on his feet and hands, what can be seen are his bare feet, his black trousers, his stomach, the black tube of fabric and his hands behaving like feet (Figure 29). According to Sabisch this is the third part of *Self-Unfinished* ‘a duet of one body becoming two.’

Le Roy behaves as a quadruped and looks oddly un-human. He walks slowly backwards to the table, he crawls beneath it then makes his way to the back

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266 Sabisch. 172-173.
wall. Twenty-one minutes into the performance Le Roy executes a kind of handstand so that he is walking on his hands, the front of his body rests on the wall and he splays his legs like a frog, and bends them with his feet turned out so that they are perpendicular to his legs. In this position he walks on his hands along the wall, with his legs raised creating the impression that his arms have become his legs clothed in a long black skirt and that he is a headless body with raised arms (Figure 30). He makes his way along the wall, then slowly collapses in a heap. He returns to the wall and facing it lies still. Le Roy then wriggles his way forward and crawls backwards, the upper half of his body still encased in the black tube. He walks, then stands up, pulling the black tube of fabric down from over his head.

Figure 30 Xavier Le Roy, *Self Unfinished*, 1998.

It is in this part of *Self-Unfinished* that Le Roy appears to transform himself. He masks half of his body in black fabric, he bends over, walks on all fours and travels across the stage upside on his hands. I will argue that such transformations of a body involve a refusal to be docile and a challenge to processes of subjection. Sabisch and Lepecki also make strong claims about *Self-Unfinished*, each arguing that Le Roy drops the notion of the subject, evades categorises, presents the proliferation of different dynamics of change and enacts a series of pure becomings. This is quite a claim, however it does reflect Le Roy’s own statement about the intentions of the work: ‘I was afraid, but I took the risk of being too egocentric, hoping that I could provoke some
The remainder of this chapter will examine in more detail exactly how Le Roy uses his body to perform choreographed and deterritorialising actions to undermine the mutually reinforcing relationship between figure and ground, or subject and the white cube.

O’Doherty’s proposition of the white cube as a chamber for transformation has already been described as a place in which the performance of certain gestures might create interruptions or breaks in conventions of ordinary life. Additionally, various aspects of different studios were introduced which might be co-opted into utilising the white cube gallery as a space for performance. These included Zarilli’s metaphysical studio, as a place of propositions and possibilities, one in which to practice philosophy in the flesh. Echoing this concern with modalities and practical philosophy, this section focuses on the transformation of a body in relation to a larger ontological argument about how the always-already subject is part of a greater system of organisation and how this may be evaded via acts of transformation and the creation of bodymades or executing choreographed movements or still-acts that are unreadable or body stripped of meaning.

Firstly it is important to situate becoming, the concept mentioned by Sabisch and Lepecki, as part of a larger ontological argument. Deleuze and Guattari posit that in order to protect ourselves from the surrounding chaos of an undifferentiated world, we habitually erect ‘umbrellas’ that are well-ordered, fixed opinions or ideas ‘linked together according to a minimum of constant rules.’ For Deleuze and Guattari, art, like philosophy and science, triumphs through the series of ‘crises or shocks’ it creates, that is art exists on the side of chaos to combat received opinions, to create problems and challenge categories:

People are constantly putting up an umbrella that shelters them and on the underside of which they draw a firmament and write their conventions and opinions. But poets, artists, make a slit in the umbrella, they tear open the firmament itself, to let in a bit of free and windy chaos and to frame in a sudden light a vision that appears through the rent.

However, to examine the way in which the firmament is currently drawn and organised, it is upon this layer of organisational strata, according to Butler, that the concept of the subject has been inscribed by dominant ‘Western’ and ‘humanist conceptions’ which ‘tend to assume a substantive person who is the bearer of various essential and nonessential attributes.’ Such

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270 Butler. 10.
conceptions of the subject are frequently attributed by Butler to what the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) called the metaphysics of substance.271

Philosophical ontologies have been trapped within certain illusions of “Being” and “Substance” that are fostered by the belief that the grammatical formulation of subject and predicate reflects the prior ontological reality of substance and attribute. 272

Butler begins to elaborate a tension between identities as normative ideals, for example ‘the presumption that identities are self-identical, persisting through time as the same, unified and internally coherent’ rather than identity as a ‘descriptive feature of experience.’273 Yet for Butler ‘the “coherence” and “continuity” of “the person” are not logical or analytic features of personhood, but rather, socially instituted and maintained norms of intelligibility.’ So-called metaphysics of substance create psychological categories such as the subject which ‘derive from the illusion of substantial identity’ so that any critique of this metaphysics is ‘a critique of “the very notion of the psychological person as a substantive thing.”’ 274 Identity is, according to Nietzsche and Butler, merely ‘an effect of discursive practices’ recalling Althusser’s theory that subjects are created or actualised through practices, acts or gestures. Butler’s thesis provides an example of the way in which philosophy can lend itself to artistic discourse, according to her argument subjects are performative. Actions do not necessarily express a fixed, prior and enclosed subject expressing herself in a performance, there is a scission between essence and action, which performance art is able to experiment with and open up so that what is pre-existing comes undone rather than just reinstated. Like the grammatical structure of subject and predicate, the white cube is another layer of strata, an organisational structure, which is enforced by a space into which one is placed.

But there is no such substratum; there is no “being” behind doing, effecting, becoming; “the doer” is merely a fiction added to the deed – the deed is everything. 275

Nietzsche’s emphasis upon ‘the deed’ shifts attention from what Haar refers to as the ‘grammatical formulation’ of subject and predicate, of substance and attribute as described in language towards ‘doing’ and ‘becoming.’ Nietzsche’s words encourage a shift away from always-already subjects who are hailed, constituted, produced, designated, selected and regulated by fields of power or institutions such as the white cube, reinforcing their subjection

271 Ibid.
272 Michel Haar quoted in Butler. 20.
273 Butler. 16-17.
274 Ibid., 18, 20.
to ideological state apparatuses via physical acts, gestures and practices and made docile by surveillance, enclosure, organisation and manoeuvres. Rather than this *always-already subject* Nietzsche indicates the importance of active verbs in the present continuous, stressing the importance of doing and becoming.

Whereas the concept of ‘subject’ belongs to the constructed firmament, or structured plane of organisation, according to Deleuze and Guattari, becoming, or ‘ceasing to be subjects and becoming events’ manifests the *plane of consistency*, the free and windy chaos, a level of strata or flow before organisational structure, a ‘composition’ of ‘speeds and slowness, movements and rest,’ a ‘plane of proliferation, peopling, contagion.’ The concept of *becoming* is central to ‘the movements of deterritorialisation’ that ‘unravel’ the plane of organisation, creating ‘lines of flight that draw it [the plane of consistency] and cause it to rise to the surface.’ Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of becoming is integral to an understanding of Le Roy’s *Self-Unfinished* due to the way in which the work presents not a representation of subjectivity but rather a moving in and out of it. It is *becoming* according to Deleuze and Guattari, together with their concept of *body without organs* that allows experimentation with the full ontological status of subjectivity. Indeed, for Deleuze and Guattari, art has no other aim but ‘to unleash these becoming.’ They stress that all becomings are ‘molecular’ that is they dissolve prior ‘molar’ structures, de-stratify and undermine the plane of organisation.

Starting from the forms one has, the subject one is, the organs one has, or the functions one fulfils, becoming is to extract particles between which one establishes the relations of movement and rest, speed and slowness that are *closest* to what one is becoming, and through which one becomes… Becoming is to emit particles that take on certain relations of movement and rest because they enter a particular zone of proximity. Or, it is to emit particles that enter that zone because they take on those relations…

Thus becoming involves the activation of closeness, particular zones of proximity and the confusion of boundaries, it is an appeal to indetermination or uncertainty, that which is indiscernible or might be shared. What might ensue is a subsequent withdrawal of recognition. For Deleuze and Guattari all becomings rush towards *becoming-imperceptible*, a

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277 Ibid., 300.
278 Ibid., 300-301.
279 Ibid., 308-309, 321.
being ‘like everybody else,’ ‘becoming everybody and everything’ that brings into play ‘the cosmos with its molecular components.’ Becoming-imperceptible involves what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as the ‘three virtues: imperceptibility, indiscernibility and impersonality. Imperceptibility and impersonality or desubjectification involve the plane of consistency. But indiscernibility relates more to proximity, something occurring ‘at the level of relationships.’

In the section of Self-Unfinished just described, Le Roy makes himself indeterminate when he folds himself in half, a figure made up of feet, a black shape and hands. Interrogating what Nietzsche via Butler described as the illusion of substantive identity as an effect of discursive practices, Deleuze and Guattari point out that becoming ‘is in the in-between.’

If becoming is a block… it is because it constitutes a zone of proximity and indiscernibility, a no-man’s land, a non-localizable relation sweeping up the two distant or contiguous points, carrying one into the proximity of the other…

It is fruitful to negatively define becoming. It is neither resemblance, imitation or identification, nor a correspondence between relations. It is a ‘verb with a consistency all its own; it does not reduce to, or lead back to, “appearing,” “being,” “equalling,” or “producing.”’ Becoming produces nothing other than itself, the block of becoming. Becoming is an involving that forms ‘a block that runs its own line “between the terms in play and beneath assignable relations.’ Thus a becoming ‘lacks a subject distinct from itself’ and ‘has no term, since its term exists only as taken up in another becoming of which it is the subject, and which coexists, forms a block with the first.’ Becoming ‘concerns alliance’ or symbioses ‘becoming communicative or contagious.’

Becoming involves being aware of one’s existence as well as knowing ‘that one is no longer a definite being distinguished from other beings.’ The notion of ceasing to be subjects and instead ‘becoming events’ ties into Foucault’s notion of subjectification as a ‘specific or collective individuation relating to an event’ as well as the haecceity. According to Deleuze and Guattari a haecceity is ‘a mode of individuation very different to that of a person, subject, thing or substance.’ Examples of such ‘perfect individualities’ are a particular winter, one ‘five in the evening,’ or an ‘intensity of white.’ What it emphasises are spatiotemporal relations and

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280 Ibid., 258
281 Ibid., 323-324.
282 Ibid., 262-263.
283 Ibid., 263-264.
285 Deleuze and Guattari. 287.
determinations as dimensions of multiplicities rather than predicates of a thing. This *haecceity* evokes the plane of consistency which ‘contains only haecceities, along intersecting lines.’ In emphasising *becoming* Deleuze posits individuated fields rather than subjects as ‘persons’ or ‘identities’ that are fixed within a structured and stratified *plane of organization*. This ceasing to be subjects and becoming events opens up the de-stratifying plane of consistency, one of ‘proliferation, peopling and contagion.’ Via proximity, becoming which might be unleashed by art, confuses boundaries, involving multiple terms and appealing to indetermination, uncertainty and becoming-imperceptible.

The *body without organs* (BwO) also enjoys a unique relationship with the plane of consistency. Deleuze and Guattari state that it is inevitable that one is ‘nailed down’ as a subject, but that it is possible to dismantle the self, to ‘disarticulate’, to ‘unhook ourselves from the points of subjectification,’ ceasing to be an ‘organism.’\(^{286}\) The subject is thus replaced by ‘Flows of intensity, their fluids, their fibres, their continuums and conjunctions of affects, the wind, fine segmentation’ and ‘microperceptions.’ Like becoming, this involves

Opening the body to connections that presuppose an entire assemblage, circuits, conjunctions, levels and thresholds, passages and distributions of intensity, and territories and deterritorializations measured with the craft of the surveyor.\(^{287}\)

Here the BwO is a kind of call to arms, a re-imagining, an appeal to radically re-conceptualise concepts of the body. Above all BwO is a ‘practice, or ‘set of practices’ that involves ‘biological’ and ‘political experimentation.’\(^{288}\) It is a ‘connection of desires,’ a ‘conjunction of flows,’ a ‘continuum of intensities.’\(^{289}\) The notion of desire or an independent and individual transformation is crucial as ‘The BwO is the *field of immanence* of desire, the *plane of consistency* specific to desire.’\(^{290}\) Deleuze and Guattari explain that the BwO swings between the surfaces that stratify it or submit it to judgment and the plane of consistency that sets it free, unfurling and opening itself to experimentation.

This is how it should be done: Lodge yourself on a stratum, experiment with the opportunities it offers, find an advantageous place on it, find potential movements of deterritorialisation, possible lines of flight, experience them, produce flow conjunctions here and there, try out

\(^{286}\) Ibid., 177, 179.
\(^{287}\) Ibid.
\(^{288}\) Ibid., 166
\(^{289}\) Ibid., 179.
\(^{290}\) Ibid., 170.
continuums of intensities segment by segment, have a small plot of new
land at all times…  

Lepecki posits that Le Roy’s *Self-Unfinished* as an example of such experimentation, and it is
this that makes him within his performance ‘ontologically unfinishable.’ Lepecki’s thoughts
are part of a larger argument about bodies as sites of resistance, or as places with the power of
*ex-scription*. Philosopher Boyan Manchev argues that dance is one form of experimental
practice that might express the transformability of both body and subject. Manchev stresses the
importance of the ways in which a body such as Le Roy’s might rebel against preconceived
ideas about its functionality, to show a dysfunctional and disorganised body. Manchev posits a
suspension of a body’s organic functionality which might erase all of the ‘systems of
identification and aesthetics, social, political and biological codes’ attributed to it.

Returning to the hierarchical structures mentioned earlier, despite the fact that Le Roy enjoys a
certain amount of authority as an artist, performer and choreographer within the white cube, an
art-historical field of power that makes up the plane of organisation, there is the possibility that
from within this very plane of organisation, enjoying its very privileges and authority he can
create movement-percepts via a choreography of bodily transformation that might undermine or
unravel that very organisational structure and create a destratification. This ties into Deleuze
and Guattari’s arguments that the artist, via a series of ‘crises or shocks’ challenges prior
organisational structures and received opinions in order to activate the plane of consistency, or
‘tear open the firmament itself, to let in a bit of free and windy chaos.’

The main way in which Le Roy creates a problematic encounter, one that disrupts prior forms
of organisation and ontological structures is through acts of bodily transformation, the way in
which he manipulates representations of his body or the way in which it is outwardly expressed.

For Manchev, the body is a space where things become possible such as metamorphosis or

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291 Ibid., 176, 178.
292 Lepecki, 40.
293 Boyan Manchev, quoted in Boyan Manchev, Xavier Le Roy, Franz Anton Cramer “Dance, the Metamorphosis
of the Body.” In Solomon, 117.
294 Manchev, “Dance, the Metamorphosis of the Body,” 121-122. Importantly, Le Roy himself reflects that ‘on the
one hand, there is the impossibility of fixation, and, on the other, the fact that without fixation we can neither
understand or move forward. Xavier Le Roy, quoted in Boyan Manchev, Xavier Le Roy, Franz Anton Cramer
“Dance, the Metamorphosis of the Body.” In Solomon, 126. Indeed Deleuze and Guattari stress that the creation
of BwO is delicate and must be approached with caution. It is easy to botch it, it can be terrifying and dangerous,
even fatal. Deleuze and Guattari, 169. Foucault questions how far the line of the body can be unfolded ‘without
falling into a breathless void, into death.’ How can it be unfolded ‘without losing touch with it, to produce an inside
co-present with the outside, corresponding to the outside.’ He adds it is a matter of ‘practices’ or make existing into
a ‘way’ or ‘art.’ Perhaps this ‘endurable zone’ which is utilised as a place to pause, breathe, confront things and
reflect might be the space of the art gallery. Deleuze and Guattari also note that one needs to know when and how
to keep ‘enough of the organism’ there is also ‘a necessity for a minimum of strata, a minimum of forms and
transformation. However much a body is fixed in actuality, via action it can perform acts of defiance, it can assume other forms of life and attempt to experience what is not its own. This will be elaborated further in the next two sections. The molecular parts of Le Roy’s Self-Unfinished could be understood as movement-percepts or fragments of schemata that are recognisably masculine or feminine learned actions or ones that are inhuman. Recognisable masculine learned actions include the way in which Le Roy removes his shirt by tugging it over his head. Inhuman actions or movement-percepts could include the way in which he moves across the stage step by step on all fours or the way in which he feels his way across the back wall on his hands, his head and torso covered in black fabric, his legs splayed out like arms. Philosopher Boyan Manchev has described Le Roy’s headless figure as ‘a morphologically primitive form, with undifferentiated organs, a torso or trunk and tentacles waving as if dying.’

What is emphasised is a process of metamorphosis, for Manchev, Le Roy presents research into ‘the conditions of life that exist in the metamorphosis, the passage of the forces, the traffic of intensities, forces and rhythms: it’s the body as the open and not as figure, even if the figure is that of a monster.’ Crucial to a discussion of transformation as well as an application of Deleuze and Guattari’s concepts of becoming and body without organs in relation to Le Roy’s Self-Unfinished, are arguments from Sabisch. According to Sabisch, Le Roy engages with a performative technique and concept of contemporary choreography known as retenu which gives an account of the ways in which movement-percepts are a-representational or a-signifying so that there is a destratifying operation involving the transformation of movements as well as body-images. In terms of the technical term Sabisch has crafted, the French word retenu from the verb ‘retenir,’ to retain or continue to hold, can function both as an adjective and a noun, it encompasses the dimensions of a quality as well as an activity. Sabisch summarises that the retenu gives rise to a ‘new image of movement’ with various characteristics the most important of which are: the presentation of ‘the duration of movement-percepts’ rather than movement; a performance space as a frame or container within which one can reflect on perception; and the making transparent of ways of articulating movement-percepts in time. Sabisch’s term is made up of two procedures, retenu both focusses attention on perception of movements and creates an awareness of time via the retention it activates. More importantly a choreographic retenu might continuously hold particular attention ‘towards the transformative potential of movements and

295 Manchev, “Dance, the Metamorphosis of the Body,” 121.
297 Manchev. 125-126.
298 Ibid., 153.
299 Ibid., 165-166.
their respective impact on perception and sensation.’ For Sabisch the attention created by the *retenu* draws on the transformation of movements as well as body images.

From a theoretical perspective Sabisch describes the choreographic *retenu* as a ‘kinetic choreography of time,’ or ‘a specific movement-percept that constitutes time as continuous transformation.’ For Sabisch, Le Roy’s *Self-Unfinished* utilises the *retenu* ‘as the construction of movement-percepts through the duration of kinetic processes’ and the taking up of the qualitative dimension of time ‘in the strategic construction of movements as continuous transformations.’

A pertinent aspect of Sabisch’s argument is her proposition that *Self-Unfinished* establishes ‘an image of movement as transformation.’ Sabisch argues that in order for a transformation of movement to be made visible, a movement must ‘have been voided of any self-expressive attitude and also of the mere display of the dancer’s virtuosity.’ Such body images are produced through Le Roy’s movements, yet they also become indiscernible from the body that performs them, a ‘body in constant morphogenesis.’

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Figure 31 Martha Graham, *Lamentation*, 1930. (Live performance, solo work).

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300 Ibid., 151-152.
301 Ibid., 150.
302 Ibid., 153.
In the sequence described at the start of this section, Le Roy uses costume as a tool or prosthetic for transformation. The simple black tube of fabric allows him to mask certain parts of his body, making them invisible to the audience and highlighting other parts. Le Roy’s use of fabric in order to alter the appearance of his body and dilate and augment his movement recalls a similar use of fabric in earlier works by US-based choreographers such as Martha Graham’s *Lamentation* (1930, Figure 31) and Katherine Litz’ *The Glyph* (1977). The remaining visible body parts, in Le Roy’s case, feet, hands, trousers and encased upper body are then utilised as parts or particles, ones that can enact relations of movement and stillness as well as speed and slowness.

This fabric-masking technique also points to the influence of Le Roy’s collaborator, French video artist Laurent Goldring and his technique of producing what he calls *bodymades* via performers and video monitors. According to Sabisch *bodymades* are images of bodies freed from pictorial and functional reduction, each pushed ‘to a zero degree point where it becomes an effective critique of representation.’ Goldring has described his process as one that is ‘asignifying,’ the aim for a *bodymade* is to make a body ‘unreadable’ via images that seize upon moments of transmission, or the ways in which a body might communicate certain signs (Figure 32). Goldring presents the body as ‘a certain number of organs:’

There remains the skin, members, debris that move around on both the inside and the outside, that migrate and rearrange themselves, or in other words, that assume different shapes.

Recalling precisely the concept of degree zero point, for Goldring attempts to produce a body ‘shorn of connotation’ and meaning. Rid of all signs and themes what remains is a body as well as a ‘portrait of a body’ for Goldring the more a body is transformed, the more it begins to exist in its particularity: ‘Each body generates its own bodymade, which is like its signature.’ Similarly Le Roy has reflected that an alternative to the anatomical body image must exist.

In a prior work, *Narcisse Flip* (1997) one which fed into *Self-Unfinished*, Le Roy reflected that he was interested in constructing situations where movement could be perceived and described in opposite senses and never characterising an identifiable body. What he aimed to create was therefore ‘zones of undecidability’ in order to temporarily affirm non-identity and desubjectivisation via acts of defiguration. Such temporary enactment of de-subjectivisation

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304 Goldring quoted in Sabisch, 169.

305 Le Roy quoted in Lepecki, 43.

306 Le Roy quoted in Cvejić, 16.
and de-figuration interrogate the relationship between a unitary subject and a body. Thus another destratifying operation has taken place, there is a problematizing of a simple comprehension of a single human body. Lepecki summarises that in *Self Unfinished* Le Roy challenges and undermines *individuation* or the dominance of the individual body by making himself appear formless, solipsistic and relational.307

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Many of the actions Le Roy performs are indeed de-familiarising, he takes everyday actions such as walking and simply inverts them, so that he walks in slow-motion, he walks backwards or he walks on his hands. As mentioned earlier, he performs before an audience then lies down against a wall, facing away from them and remaining still. Throughout this piece he often appears to be quasi-human or even in-human, permuting his body in ways so that he cannot easily be read or perceived as an upright human being. As part of the ‘duet of one body becoming two’ Sabisch describes this section as a duet with each party as one part of Le Roy’s body, the trousers and the dress. Tying into Lepecki’s thesis about Le Roy challenging individuation, for Sabisch this duet ‘literally unfinishes the self’ from subjective confines and unlocks the wholeness of the *one* body, not through cell division but through difference in shape and movement.308 This splitting evokes the notion of the *dividual* or fractal self, a body ‘perpetually in the process of being made and unmade, for ever unfinished, eternally changing.’ 309 This

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307 Lepecki. 44.
308 Sabisch. 175.
splitting has been explored in performances before such as in Acconci’s *Overtaking Piece* and his *Relationship Studies* both from 1970.\(^{310}\) Thus becoming is made manifest in Le Roy’s choreography via destratifying operations of transformation. There is the transformation of one body into two, a biped into a quadruped, and a man into a walking, headless figure and as mentioned earlier that of a man into a robot and a man into an object.

### 2.5 The long black dress: becoming-woman, becoming-minoritarian

Twenty-five minutes into his performance Le Roy sits down at the desk once more. He stands and walks backwards quickly across the space, he faces the wall. Then lies down. He then stands up, walks backwards and sits at the table. He then stands up and walks backwards again whilst removing his trousers. He pulls the black tube of fabric down until it becomes a black dress. Le Roy returns to the table. He pulls the dress up so that his legs are exposed, and he goes under the table, he sits cross-legged under the table, facing the back wall, he holds his feet.

Sabisch argues that Le Roy’s performance ‘shows a body that constantly turns out to be another body, a series of bodies and body images –all of which move according to different dynamics.’\(^{311}\) This section will briefly address the ways in which Le Roy momentarily shows a female body or body image moving to a different dynamic, this will be discussed in relation to Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of *becoming-woman*. As mentioned in the previous section, becoming involves an appeal to a plane of proliferation, a level of strata that exists prior to organisational structures such as sexual difference. Beginning with the form, subject and function he might be said to fulfil, Le Roy starts as a male choreographer, dancer, performer. It is from here that he must extract particles between which he establishes the relations of movement and rest, speed and slowness that are closest to what he is becoming. If becoming is an *involving* that forms a block or runs its own line between the terms in play (masculine/feminine) and beneath assignable relations, Le Roy enters into a particular zone of proximity with the recognisably female as performance artists McCarthy and Acconci have done before him.

Le Roy’s presentation of himself clothed in the black tube of fabric so that it appears to be a dress enables him to present a body image that can be read as a female body, evoking Deleuze and Guattari’s thesis on *becoming-woman*. According to this thesis ‘all becoming is a becoming-minoritarian,’ where minoritarian involves that which is in a subordinate relation to a majority.

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\(^{310}\) Vito Acconci *Overtaking Piece* 1970 (performance, recorded tape, body, running) thirty minutes, Grammercy Arts Theatre, New York City and Vito Acconci *Relationship Studies* December, 1970. \(^{311}\) Sabisch. 171.
as a state or standard of white-man and adult-male. It takes a minority to serve as ‘the active medium of becoming, hence ‘women, children, but also animals, plants, and molecules are minoritarian.’ Relevant to Le Roy here is his donning of a dress as ‘it is perhaps the special situation of women in relation to the man-standard that accounts for the fact that becomings, being minoritarian, always pass through a becoming-woman.\footnote{Deleuze and Guattari. 320-321.} Although Deleuze and Guattari advocate for all becoming-minoritarian passing through the alterity that is becoming-woman, in this case Le Roy steers away from a hierarchy or linear timeline of becomings, with his becoming-woman occurring part way through his performance.\footnote{It is also worth noting that with his use of fabric Le Roy evokes not just any woman, but the influential American choreographer Martha Graham (\footnote{Yilmaz Dziewior, ed. Paul McCarthy, Videos 1970-1997. Hamburg, Koln: Kunstverein in Hamburg, Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther Konig, 2003. Print. 100. This performance followed Tubbing which was performed in the hotel bathroom.\footnote{Paul McCarthy, “Barbarian God: West Coast Performance” (artist talk presented as part of the exhibition Existenz Palast- Theo Altenberg, Volksbühne am Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz, Berlin, September 6, 2015).}}).

For Deleuze and Guattari ‘the subject in becoming is always “man,” and it is only when he enters a becoming-minoritarian that he can break in some way from his major identity. So becoming-woman implies the movement of a term (the subject) withdrawn from the majority as well as a movement by which a term, medium or agent rises up from the minority so that there is a block of becoming or alliance between them. The subject is a deterritorialised variable of the majority and a deviation from this majority is caused by ‘a little detail’ that starts to swell and carry you off.’ For Le Roy this ‘little detail’ is the unrolling of a tube of fabric to make a dress. As mentioned earlier, becoming is a process of non-identitarian transformation, and acts of bio-political experimentation such as Le Roy’s are not just political or identitarian posturing. The very concept of such experimentation means allowing oneself to become, moving into or entering into becoming, gestures, rhythms and sensations that are non-habitual, unexpected and perhaps even astonishing when witnessed.

Le Roy’s presentation of himself in a long black dress like tube of fabric ties into a precedent of cis-gendered male artists transforming themselves or becoming woman whilst isolated within a room or chamber. In his 1975 performance Sailor’s Meat, Paul McCarthy wore women’s lingerie and a silvery blond wig, his face heavily made up with blue eyeshadow, eyeliner, lipstick and tinted foundation.\footnote{Paul McCarthy, “Barbarian God: West Coast Performance” (artist talk presented as part of the exhibition Existenz Palast- Theo Altenberg, Volksbühne am Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz, Berlin, September 6, 2015).} Throughout the performance, originally seen only by audience members via a monitor linked to a video camera, McCarthy executes a series of actions upon a bed in an abandoned hotel room (Figure 33).\footnote{Paul McCarthy, “Barbarian God: West Coast Performance” (artist talk presented as part of the exhibition Existenz Palast- Theo Altenberg, Volksbühne am Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz, Berlin, September 6, 2015).}
Sailor’s Meat had no script, instead McCarthy used objects as triggers to perform certain actions, in this case the scantily clad artist performs a series of sexual manoeuvres, sounds and acts upon himself in conjunction with meat, ketchup, dressings and bandages, mayonnaise and a hollow, dildo like appendage. McCarthy’s actions range from slow rocking and auto-erotic caresses to suggestively, repeatedly and violently thrusting a mayonnaise covered sausage into his own mouth. In the case of Sailor’s Meat McCarthy used make-up, costume and props to become-woman as well as perpetuate upon himself the violent sexual acts so often perpetuated by men in reality in general and pornography and Hollywood cinema in particular.
Similar to McCarthy, Acconci used the medium of film and video in the early 1970s to perform feminizing acts upon himself, particularly in the works *Conversions* (1970) and *Openings* (1970, Figure 34). These works often involved body hair removal as well as hiding his penis between and behind his thighs. Acconci’s *Conversions* involved photographs of the artist ‘Putting a match to my breasts; burning off the hair. Pulling at my breasts (trying to develop female breasts). Extending the sex-change (removing my penis, hiding it between my legs).’

In his notes Acconci seems to evoke becoming, he writes ‘Pulling – performance as shifting a boundary (going from one region into another).’ In his fifteen minute Super 8 film *Openings*, Acconci pulls hairs out from his stomach, as it becomes smooth and hairless it can be read as more feminine. Again Acconci’s notes seem to discuss becoming: ‘I’ve deprived my body of hair – my deprived body can be used as a new body… my drive against my body results in a drift into another form.’ Acconci speaks of his removal of body hair as a ‘cleansing, opening up new ground: a way to get through to some hidden region.’ Acconci, like McCarthy and Le Roy all use performance to enact instances of becoming-woman that momentarily undermine the constitution of a subject that is the privileged, labouring, singular, unitary, male artist as genius.

What is presented is an-other body, a series of body images that exist between the terms at play, in this case masculine and feminine. Each artist performs an effeminisation in order to assume a subordinate relation to a male majority utilising the minoritarian feminine as an active medium of becoming. There is a break, if only for a moment from a major identity, a withdrawal from the majority, a deviation triggered by a little detail. To evade discipline and the majority for even a moment is significant for Foucault notes that each little moment of discipline is meaningful, in ‘a political anatomy of detail… every detail is important since, in the sight of God, no immensity is greater than a detail’ so that there is the ‘great tradition of the eminence of detail.’

Jones makes some important points within her interpretation of Acconci’s performances, the first is that there is a fragility to the plane of organisation or system by which masculinity ensures its privilege so that any process or performance of effeminisation can render a subject equivocal. According to Jones masculinity is an ‘exchangeable attribute,’ a mere corporal style, one that ‘crafts a body’ which might then enjoy the status of majority as well as accrue the cultural privilege of genius. For Jones, artists like Acconci, McCarthy and Le Roy demonstrate

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316 Acconci, et al. 210-211.
317 Foucault. 139.
318 Jones. 108.
that masculinity cannot be taken for granted, it is an ‘exchangeable attribute’ assigned ‘through the interpretive relation.’

Secondly, there is something paradoxical about male artists self-consciously performing their masculinity. Even though, harking back to Lepecki’s idiot, artists might seek to oppose or ironicise the normative, ‘coherent male artistic subject’, they still enjoy the opportunity and visibility in order to publicly do so. For Jones they are simultaneously ‘self-exposing’ and ‘self-confirming.’

Even though the performance of pathetic masculinity, blatantly and deliberately fails ‘to attain the seemingly self-evident authenticity of Pollock-like modernist figure of genius,’ there is still a flirtation with such coherence. This so-called norm is often merely confirmed through its performative reiterations, so that it still maintains its ‘legitimising aspects.’

Thirdly, Jones argues that any male performer incorporating the otherness or alterity of the feminine in fact makes himself more coherent. For Jones an ambivalence towards masculinity is ‘radical and de-stabilising’ while at the same time it reaffirms its privileges. In its struggle for legitimacy, a male body is in fact always-already legitimate. At the same time it is precarious, sexual difference must be continually re-staged in performance for example, yet it is also always-already a ‘failed staging of plenitude.’

Utilising Jones’ argument, performers like Le Roy, Acconci and McCarthy enact instances of becoming-woman via performance to incorporate the otherness that is femininity. Jones argues that what is performed is the very dynamic of the failure of normative masculinity to exclude otherness from itself,’ a failed coherence and a ‘dependence on otherness’ to ‘sustain its mythical claim of coherent plenitude and empowerment.’ To summarise, becoming-woman, as performed by Le Roy as well as McCarthy and Acconci before him, implies a withdrawal of the artist from his majority together with a rising up to prominence of minority that is femininity, momentarily creating an alliance between the two.

2.6 A fleshy mass: becoming-animal, becoming-molecular and ostentation

Le Roy sits cross-legged under the table, he holds his feet and faces the back wall. Still holding his feet he lets himself slowly fall to the left, he rolls over onto his back, his legs still crossed,
his hands still holding onto his feet. He continues to roll in the same direction. Lying on his back, his head towards the back wall, the lower half of his body facing the audience, his legs still crossed, his feet in his hands, Le Roy makes shapes with his crossed legs and extended arms, the ‘criss-crossed connections between hand-foot and hand-foot are played out in sometimes isomorphic, sometimes rather anamorphic movements.’ Half an hour into his performance, Le Roy then rolls his body around backwards until he is balancing on his head and upper back, his legs flung over backwards towards the wall. This creates another intriguing figure, in this position all that can really be seen is his black, clothed torso with his arms extended to the side, as his head, and legs are hidden behind the mass of his body. Le Roy then wriggles from side to side as he removes the black dress over his head. He then removes his underwear so that he is naked. He bends his elbows so all that can be seen is the fleshy mass of his torso and his upper arms extending outwards, resting on the ground. According to Lepecki Le Roy’s arms ‘are reorganized as flimsy organs of balance and spatial location – his body becomes a nonrecognizable figure,’ the person sitting beside him remarked that Le Roy looks like an ‘uncooked processed chicken.’ The fifth and final part of the performance has been described by Sabisch as ‘the animal dynamics of a mobile bare torso that moves upside down.’ Le Roy exhales loudly. He bends to the right, then to the left, he raises his elbows until they are firmly at his sides (Figure 35). He brings his linked arms upwards, then separates them, making fists. He then drops one arm, then the other. Lifting his arms from his shoulders, he bends them at the elbow, the extends them fully until all that can be seen are two long arms extended outwards and his naked torso in the middle.

Le Roy then bends his body slightly to the right, slowly turns and proceeds to move downstage, diagonally, still folded over in half. He appears as a strange lump of flesh, motivating itself through the space, Lepecki describes Le Roy as ‘naked, upside down, on his shoulders, head hidden, a formless mass of impossible description, already mutating at every passing moment…’ At one point he raises his arms towards the ceiling, making fists with his hands so that he almost looks like a giant slug or snail with eyes on long stalks. Le Roy continues moving until he gets right under the table. Forty minutes in, he rotates his body around and sits under the table in a frog-like position. He then violently kicks upwards so that the lid of the table

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326 Sabisch. 176.
327 Lepecki. 41.
328 Sabisch. 173.
329 Ibid.
pops off its frame and falls to the ground. The philosopher’s table dismantled, Le Roy then
crawls, spider-like to the back wall.  

Figure 35 Xavier Le Roy, Self Unfinished, 1998.

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He makes playful movements with his limbs, then moves quickly, diagonally, downstage left. On his knees, he bends over so that his head is on the ground, his arms stretched before him. Le Roy moves to the back wall, with frog-like movements. He probes space with his leg, lying on his back he extends his legs to the wall so that they are apart and bent. He collapses, then tries again. Le Roy lies down towards the wall, stretched out as long as he possibly can. He then becomes a frog again. Sitting with his back to the wall, his legs bent and apart on either side, his upper body and head are flopped forwards. Then he places his feet on the ground and slowly stands, stretching his legs until he is upright, naked, clearly and merely human, forty five minutes into his performance.

In this section I argue that in *Self-Unfinished* Le Roy produces instances of what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as *becoming-animal*, a process that has precedents in dance as well as art history. What matters is that via means that are sometimes theatrical or illusory, Le Roy demonstrates his ability to appear to transform himself and create relations which actually question what it means to be a human subject. According to Lepecki, the fact that Le Roy’s face is hidden in the section just described, together with the ‘involutions and contortions of his naked body’ produce what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as *becoming-animal*. Lepecki argues that these instances of *becoming-animal*, together with Le Roy’s cross-gendered use of his clothes mean that his ‘masculine body as a privileged presence in the solitary space of choreography’ dissolves, ‘vanishes’ or ceases to be visible, if only momentarily.\(^{331}\) In the section just discussed, the artist toys with movement-percepts, he plays with the geometric shapes he can make with his legs so that they might a-signify or become parts or particles of signs that might signify something other than a coherent body and subject. This is also achieved through the way in which Le Roy experiments with ways in which he can mask and isolate various parts of his body. He makes himself appear as an ambiguous figure, through his contortions, still-acts and the way in which he traverses space in an unexpected way. Sabisch has described this section as the emergence of ‘an infinite series of body images’ each of which can be interpreted in many different ways.\(^{332}\) According to Manchev bodily transformations make bodies and subjects to impossible to be grasped or fixed: ‘the incompletion of the self results not only in its entire elimination but also in the disappearance of all human, as well as animal, morphology.’\(^{333}\)

Returning to Deleuze and Guattari’s becoming-minoritarian via ‘women, children, but also animals, plants, and molecules,’ in this section of *Self-Unfinished* Le Roy makes himself appear

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331 Lepecki. 41.
332 Ibid., 177.
partial, as well as slug or snail-like, moving like a spider or frog and appearing as a fleshy indiscernible form. Lepecki writes of the way in which in this performance Le Roy spends a great deal of time naked and propped ‘on his shoulders, head hidden between his legs, buttocks up, moving pathetically inefficiently, becoming formless.’\textsuperscript{334} Lepecki’s use of the term ‘formless’ is highly debateable, the point is not that Le Roy lacks a form, but that he lacks a recognisable form, he renders himself un-readable, un-recognisable or indeterminable. Lepecki’s point is that Le Roy challenges the dominant assumption that as a performer/dancer he manifests ‘presence, masculinity, verticality, proper name, frontality, faciality and efficient motility.’\textsuperscript{335}

It is important to note that there are many precedents in art history for becoming-animal via performance, including works by Joseph Beuys and Oleg Kulik. There are also precedents in dance studies particularly in butoh, a form of dance theatre born in Japan out of the turmoil of the post-World War II era, partially a response to the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and partially as a response to encroaching Western materialism.\textsuperscript{336} Le Roy himself undertook informal, amateur research into the butoh dance form, as recounted in his lecture-performance \textit{Product of Other Circumstances} (2009). However what is most important about butoh in terms of becoming-animal in his \textit{Self-Unfinished} is its emphasis on shape-shifting or metamorphosis. Butoh emphasises \textit{a body that becomes} and it involves a cultivation of the in-between and passage. The dancing of animal essences is quite common in Butoh and metamorphosis takes place within a watery, subtle body that is ready to dissolve and go under. As a discipline critical of Western materialism in general and the mind/body dualism in particular, transformations according to Butoh require an elastic body/mind that is willing to risk and learn. A transformation such as \textit{becoming-animal} requires the study of various forms and images, in order to physically transform, one must let go of one’s material sense of self in order to take upon the psychological shapes, physical forms, affect and appearance of something else. Within Butoh, any becoming or transformation involves a performer’s ability to cross over from image to image, shifting shapes and bodily forms while remaining conscious and open to the elements, places and people that surround her. When one is \textit{being becoming}, one performs changing states in relation to others and the outside world, the very horizons of being are transitive and nothing is settled or fixed. Crucially, within butoh the body is relational rather than representational, metamorphosis or embodying otherness is the very core of such practice.\textsuperscript{337} Butoh practitioner

\textsuperscript{334} Lepecki. 41.
\textsuperscript{335} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{337} Fraleigh, 48.
Sondra Fraleigh writes of an experiential somaticity that is body sensibility and capacity widely cast to incorporate varied materials and images. Any metamorphosis requires a butoh dancer to have a capacity for relational embodiment as well as embodiment that is empathic and somatic or experienced by the self in relation to others and the environment.

Beuys’ one week performance Coyote: I Like America and America Likes Me (Figure 36) was performed on the occasion of the opening of the René Block Gallery, New York in May 1974. Beuys flew to America and arrived blindfolded. At the airport he was wrapped from head to toe in felt, a material he frequently used in his practice which acted as ‘both insulator and warmth preserver.’ The artist was then loaded into an ambulance and driven straight to the gallery. For a week Beuys and a coyote or small prairie wolf named Little John inhabited the gallery space together. Straw had been brought with the animal and a heavy chain-link barrier separated the artist and coyote from a space for spectators. The artist had brought with him felt, a walking stick, gloves, a flashlight and piles of the Wall Street Journal newspaper which were refreshed each day. Beuys never took his eyes off the coyote. Caroline Tisdall, and art critic and friend of Beuys noted that he:

Had also brought a repertoire of movements with him… the man [Beuys] carried out his sequence of movements, a choreography directed towards the coyote, the timing and the mood regulated by the animal. Generally the sequence lasted about an hour and a quarter, sometimes much longer. In all it was repeated well over thirty times, but the mood and the tone were never the same.

Beuys’ sequence of movements involved walking along a length of felt, pulling on his gloves, wrapping himself in felt so that it concealed his body up until his hat. He would then hold his walking stick so it too emerged from the top of the felt. Beuys would bend over and follow the coyote until he fell over and lay prone, wrapped in felt on the ground. Eventually he would suddenly spring up, cast off the felt and strike three notes on a triangle that hung from his waist. Then the sound of turbine machines was played from a tape-recorder in the gallery. When this sound ended Beuys relaxed, removed his gloves and tossed them to the coyote. He then attempted to tidy up the newspapers into two separate piles, sometimes have a chat to audience members and drink a refreshment. He then went to have a cigarette in the pile of straw where often, Little John would join him. He then sorted out the felt and began the sequence again. At the end of the performance he was carried back into the ambulance, again wrapped in felt in order to journey back to Europe.

339 Tisdall, Joseph Beuys: Coyote, 7.
It is relevant to note that Beuys’ choreography was in this case addressed to an animal. Where Beuys engaged in an intense performance with a coyote, Kulik as part of his Zoophrenia programme has attempted to transform himself into a whole host of animals the most crucial of which was his first ‘dog performance,’ The Mad Dog or Last Taboo Guarded by Alone Cerberus with the poet Alexander Brener at the entrance to the M. Guelman Gallery on Jakimanka Street, Moscow, 23 November 1994 (Figure 37). In this performance Kulik, naked, stood on all fours wearing a leash. An account follows:

Naked in the frost, losing his bearings, Kulik barked, rushed on a chain, pushed spectators off their feet and bit them. His throat hoarse with barking, unaware of cold and danger, Kulik rushed into the thick of the traffic and managed to stop it.340

Kulik was to repeat his ‘dog performances’ many times in a host of different venues including galleries and museums. His I Bite America and America Bites Me as part of the Deitch Projects in New York in 1997 directly responded to Beuys’ earlier work. He has also performed with cows, a goat named Charles and beside a caged orangutan as well as attempting to: fly like a bird, swim with live carps for half an hour and fight with a fighting cock. He has covered himself with reflective plates like an armadillo, spent time with pigeons and even performed with a black

dog. Kulik’s experimental performances of becoming-animal ally the artist with a whole host of different creatures so that the artist might become, if only for the duration of the performance, in close proximity to them.

For Lepecki, Le Roy presents a body that is not merely a ‘stable, fleshy host for a subject,’ it is instead a ‘dynamic power, an ongoing experiment ready to achieve unforeseeable planes of immanence and consistency.’ This body as a dynamic power, or body-without-organs is described by Le Roy as a representation of a body which is different ‘from the envelope of the body,’ it is instead a kind of traffic which results in the body passing through various representations. An experiment such as Self-Unfinished is made up of molecularising particles of signs or movement percepts that either come together to form a body or move away from it. Animal becomings involve a rapid dissolving into serial forms, such forms can be shared and exchanged by many, so that the jumble of parts of subjectivities can be delayed by rhythms of intersubjective exchange. Le Roy’s becomings are ‘molecular’ in that they confuse prior categories or ‘molar structures’ and in doing so undermine the plane of organisation. Beginning with his own form, subject and function, via performance Le Roy takes on certain relations of movement and rest in order to enter into a particular zone of proximity with a range of different

341 Lepecki. 41–42.
creatures and entities. Le Roy uses his choreography to share something indiscernible, to confuse where boundaries lie, he becomes many different things, exploring his proximities and zones of indiscernibility, bringing into play molecular components and in doing so, deterritorialising.

Sabisch summarises Le Roy’s choreography as one that demonstrates ‘the power of the body as a profusion of images’ a power created through the dynamics of the various movements ‘combined with the specific duration of their percepts.’ Le Roy’s body images within this performance have been interpreted as chicken, insect, watering can, insect, martian, caterpillar, pupae, millipede, spider and snail. What is crucial is the stillness and extended durations, Le Roy’s body images constantly and silently mutate, evading coagulation or fixity. Sabisch summarises that the flow or continuity of the performance along with its constant variation and dynamics communicated via a durational process created an excess of images that nonetheless constantly disrupted any hope of representation. On the one hand becoming-animal is a route through or away from subjectivity, on the other hand it is inters-subjective as it can create a provisional alliance between a human and an actual animal as is the case with Beuys and Little John.

Yet there is an important difference between Le Roy’s instances of becoming-animal and those of Beuys and Kulik. It is important to note that Le Roy creates the illusion of transformation, whereas artists like Beuys and Kulik appear to enact more shamanistic and realised transformations particularly in relation to becoming-dog. This begs the question of what the difference is between appearing to transform oneself and believing one actually does transform. In relation to dance history it is important to note that previous ‘postmodern’ choreographers in the latter half of the twentieth century such as Yvonne Rainer rejected the use of theatre and the theatrical within dance, in her 1965 ‘No manifesto’ Rainer wrote ‘‘No to spectacle no to virtuosity no to transformations and magic.’ However in Self-Unfinished Le Roy deliberately and playfully uses theatrical conventions, or the theatrical dispositive in order to draw attention to the ways such apparatus function, for Sabisch the ways it oscillates between contamination and articulation.

343 Sabisch. 183.
344 Sabisch. 177-178.
345 Sabisch. 178.
346 Sabisch, 159.
Such a concept of wilful theatricality ties back into becoming-woman as Jones connects Fried’s dismissal of theatricality as an ‘infectious,’ ‘corrupting’ and ‘perverting’ force that ‘served to negate and degenerate art’ to a quotation from Nietzsche which argues that theatricality is not only antipathetic to art, it is also associated with femininity: ‘In the theatre, one becomes people, herd, female, Pharisee, voting cattle, patron, idiot.’ Such a masculinist determination of theatricality, argues that it is merely ‘a feminine mode of presentation’ aligned with ‘inauthenticity,’ and a ‘debasement of the virility of “pure” modernism.’ Le Roy’s illusionistic transformation can also be interpreted as ostentation which was theorised by Umberto Eco (1932-2016). Eco, via Charles Peirce imagines a drunkard exposed in a public place by the Salvation Army in order to serve as a sign communicating a message about the negative effects of drinking alcohol. For Eco this example involves communication in an indirect way. In this example the red nose, slurred speech and overall behaviour of the drunkard are all signs of his condition and for the Salvation Army stand as a sign for the evil effects of drink. With the aid of semiotician Charles Morris, Eco argues that the central dynamic of the sign lies not in the intention of the sign producer, but in the interpretation of its receiver. Hence the drunkard becomes a sign because a person or group recognize him as such. Eco labels this process ostentation. Performance theorist Marvin Carlson explains the operation of ostentation: ‘When something is ostended, it is picked up among existing items and displayed,’ emphasising ‘something about the phenomenon itself.’

Similar to this concept of ostentation as behaviour that relies upon the interpretation of its receiver, Sabisch describes Le Roy’s presentation of an illusion of transformation as ‘the reality of the virtual that unfolds.’ Sabisch goes on to extend this thesis so that the reality of the virtual ‘transpired in its various actualizations’ has consequences for any theory of agency or subjectivity. For Sabisch, Le Roy’s Self-Unfinished gives rise to a conception of agency that generates transformations through the specific relations of time: they articulate duration as a contagious force of transformation... communicate a virtuality that uses the movement-percepts as a shared and complex instrument for the production of a new image of movement. This new image of movement encompasses thought, mobile images, kinetic and kinaesthetic transformations.

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348 Jones, 284.
350 Carlson. 37.
351 Sabisch. 164-165.
2.7 Conclusion

After standing naked and upright for a spell, Le Roy then puts on his underwear, the elongated singlet or black tube of fabric. He walks downstage right, rolls up the singlet pulls on his pants and zips up the fly. He puts on his sneakers and his dress shirt. Le Roy rights the table, picking up the lid and placing it back upon the frame. He then sits back at the table, fully clothed. Le Roy stands, bends over the desk, walks to the back wall and lies down, facing the wall. He gets up, walks back to the table, sits down, stands up, he faces the back wall. Le Roy looks at the audience, walks downstage left, he turns on the stereo, it plays Diana Ross singing *Upside Down* some of the lyrics include ‘I said upside down / You’re turning me / you turn me / inside out / and round and round.’ He leaves.

Although Le Roy ends his performance as a man in trousers, fully-dressed, he does so only after enacting a series of transformations. Like many performance artists before and after him he attempts to create new relations with himself in the hope of achieving, if only momentarily, to display himself as ‘unfinished,’ radically incomplete, open, processual - a work in progress. Le Roy uses the practical means of his body in order to evoke the possibility of evading the assignation of subjectivity, a probing of his dependence upon the disciplinary structures of dance and art as well as an attempt at independence. Although Le Roy enjoys the privileges and authority of a white, cis-gendered male solo performer he literally bends himself backwards in an attempts to challenge, undermine and subvert this power.

I have argued that Le Roy constitutes a very particular artistic subject, that of the solo male performer/choreographer. In making evident his inadequacy as well as a masquerade of masculinity, Le Roy can be interpreted as both challenging and perpetuating a singular, unitary male artistic genius. Le Roy's actions see him positioning himself as a privileged, white, cis-gendered male artist with an orientation towards philosophy as well as an isolated choreographer compulsively abiding his own instruction as part of a methodological solipsism in the hope that it is conducive to systematic experimentation. I then explained one way in which intersubjectivity helps to produce subjecthood, how a process of ‘spatio-subjectivisation’ manifests a mutually-reinforcing relationship between figure as a specific type of artistic subject and the ground that is the white cube art gallery space. It is important to note that various experiments with subjectivity may be situated within the ‘given’ space that is the white cube and that such experiments deploy the space in which they are found. Various strategies could be employed to attempt to evade the restrictions of spatio-subjectivisation, as well as its onus on productivity and efficacy, these include choreographed actions of moving like a robot, moving

352 Diana Ross quoted in Sabisch. 167.
slowly or lying still. Each of these strategies also thematise the problematics of artistic and effective labour, labour that is often intangible, immaterial, even futile. They also reveal the possibility of agency or of moving differently within controlling regimes of subjectivity, labour and mobility. There is also a larger ontological argument about how the always-already subject is part of a greater system of organisation and how this may be challenged via acts of transformation and the creation of bodymades or executing choreographed movements or still-acts that are unreadable or bodies stripped of meaning. Effeminisation is another technique by which an artist like Le Roy can present an-other body, assuming a subordinate relation to a male majority utilising the minoritarian feminine as an active medium of becoming. Via means that are somewhat theatrical or illusory, Le Roy demonstrates his ability to appear to transform himself challenging the assumption that as a male performer/dancer he manifests presence, masculininity, verticality, frontality, faciality, even humanity. Crucially what is activated is a different space or ‘other place,’ one that is heterotopic and where an individual whose behaviour is deviant in relation to norms is placed. This happens specifically when the subject is molecularised through affect which undermines the ego and its relation to the white cube, the mutual reinforcing action of spatio-subjectivisation is broken up by disorientation of affect. The second half of this chapter mentioned the concept of the plane of consistency and although this plane is a conceptual one, it points to pertinent ideas about space. Space can be organised, structured, striated in a place such as a museum; it can be more open and smooth, or it can be a particular combination of both. Activities such as those by Le Roy change the very nature of space itself, indicating the ways in which it is relational or matrixial, something unique created when bodies come together in a particular way for a specific purpose, perhaps inflected in a certain way by a performance or choreography.
3 Theories of intersubjectivity: alterity, recognition and somatic attention

Moving through a door left ajar into a gallery space, at first the room seems empty. Then I notice someone on the floor, by one white wall. She rolls and rolls, often her back and head are on the cement floor and her legs are bent. She rolls onto her side, her weight on her shoulder, then from her shoulder she rotates onto her stomach with her legs extended. Sometimes she stays on her back, her feet stay flat on the floor and she moves her torso to the side. At other times she lies on her back as if she were sitting on a chair with her feet on the wall. She moves slowly. At one point she moves on her back away from the wall. She spreads out like a starfish, arms apart from her torso and legs more than hip-width apart. She lies there flat and a little spread. Just lying on the floor. After a while she brings her knees up towards her body in a diamond shape until they are both bent on either side like a frog. She then moves one shoulder towards one knee and uses the momentum to lift her head and body until she is sitting. She then moves back to the wall and continues a slow, aimless sort of progress around the wall and floor. Rolling and rolling. There is another component to her perambulations, sometimes when her head is very close to the wall she brings her legs bent up beneath herself, then, sitting on her feet with the crown of her head against the wall she brings her hands together and creates a rectangular shape with her fingers on the floor. Slowly, while peering through this rectangle she rotates her body around, maintaining the same orientation of head and fingers. As she moves around she peers through the aperture of fingers, looking through it in order to see her audience. She continues to roll with the rectangle of fingers held before her face until one shoulder makes contact with the ground again and the rectangle is disassembled, her arms and hands return to the sides of her body.

The situation just described was one instance of Instead of allowing some thing to rise up to your face dancing bruce and dan and other things (2000) by Berlin-based choreographer and artist Tino Sehgal. Sehgal does not allow any visual documentation of his work so that direct experience and oral and textual description of the kind given above are extremely important. For as long as Instead of allowing... is being exhibited, every hour of every day that the gallery was open, a dancer performed, executing a choreography that involves heavy, weighted and slow rolling movements along the ground. Every now and then each dancer was replaced by a new one who lay down taking the exact same position, continuing the movement, while the first dancer stood up and left. One of Sehgal’s earlier works, the choreography of Instead of

353 This work was performed at St Paul St Gallery as part of the Fourth Auckland Triennial from 12 March to 20 June, 2010.
allowing... physically quotes works by performance artists Bruce Nauman (Tony Sinking into the floor, Face up and Face down; Elke allowing the floor to rise up over her, Face up and Wall Floor Positions, 1968) and Dan Graham (Roll, 1970). In doing so, Sehgal self-consciously engages with art history whilst explicitly inserting choreography, that is a ‘choreographed body,’ into a contemporary art context. As is the case with the majority of Sehgal’s works, Instead of allowing... is conceived as a situation that unfolds in time-space, as curator Dorothea von Hantelmann writes ‘the work is the situation including the viewer.’ Von Hantelmann reflects on the piece’s title:

The extra space between some and thing in the title... can be understood programmatically: the material object is replaced by a situation between two people; while one embodies an artwork, the other observes the embodiment of the work.\textsuperscript{355}

Whereas the performance of attempting to sink into the floor and the assuming of certain positions between wall and floor was taken from Nauman’s works, the way in which Sehgal’s dancer creates the camera shape with her fingers is a reference to Graham’s Roll in which the artist filmed himself rolling around on the ground whilst simultaneously holding a camera.\textsuperscript{356} Von Hantelmann has referred to the shape which the dancer makes with her fingers as ‘Sehgal’s fictive camera’ one that ‘initiates a closed circuit between the dancer and the viewer.’ Indeed the moment during each performance when Sehgal’s dancer frames one or more audience members with her fingers and peers through it is one that directly thematises a relationship between dancer/performer who embodies an artwork and beholder who observes, or art as an encounter that is inter-subjective, one that involves a meeting of individuals, what Bourriaud refers to as a ‘rendez-vous.’ Sehgal’s Instead of allowing some thing to rise up to your face dancing bruce and dan and other things is a choreographed work that explores processes of intersubjectivity-as-art. The previous chapters examined artworks as experiments in subjectivity and the ways in which space might be considered relational or matrixial, something created anew each time bodies come together in a particular way for a specific purpose, inflected by performance or choreography. This chapter will probe further how such a relational space might function, examining theories of intersubjectivity and accounts of what might happen when individuals meet or encounter one another. The aim of this chapter is to investigate how one might conceptualise experiencing a choreographed body as an artwork in a way that is not limited to visual or formal analysis. The emphasis shifts from a singular, heroic masculine artist to an examination of the role of a ‘beholder,’ or one who attends a performance. These theories of intersubjectivity are taken from the disciplines of: philosophy, psychology, cognitive science,

\textsuperscript{355} Von Hantelmann. 133.
\textsuperscript{356} Ibid., 132.
phenomenology as well as dance studies. Although each of these theories looks at quite general encounters, each also has implications for an encounter that might take place between a performer/dancer and attendee/behavior. Such analyses of intersubjectivity are not merely for the benefit of a separated first person, the idea is that particular artworks might enable or arrange for experimentation and various becomings so that one might forget oneself as part of a spontaneous intersubjective relation, the freedom of two spontaneities coming together.

Tying into Von Hantlemann’s proposition of Instead of allowing... as an artwork that is a situation which includes the viewer, Cvejić points out that the term performance is commonly used to describe ‘a live event with spatio-temporal coordinates, implying a process of carrying out an action.’ A ‘performance of choreography’ is generally approached from a unitary perspective, as a live event rather than diverging into three versions of the same work synthesized from the distinct viewpoints of maker, performer, and spectator. However for Cvejić any binding together or synthesising of making and performing; performing and attending performance within the term ‘event’ needs to be interrogated. This chapter therefore turns its attention to the reception of performed choreographies, exploring concepts of intersubjectivity with a view to analyse what types of co-presence might be created by various artworks. Theories of intersubjectivity will be explored in order to disentangle and subsequently analyse attending. According to Cvejić, various activities of making, performing and being a spectator of performance are frequently unified or subsumed into ‘acts of communication.’

This section aims to rehabilitate the status of the spectator or beholder of performance so that she is more than an impoverished entity, an other or object to the performer’s ‘subject.’

With a view to finding possible ways of conceiving the beholder of a performed choreography, as well as choreographed works that produce intersubjectivity-as-art the following section examines theories of ‘the Other’ or alterity as described by philosophers operating mostly in France after World War II and in the second half of the twentieth century. These different theories of and approaches to intersubjectivity provide important levels of description for what implicitly happens in the meeting of two subjects, the performer and the observer. Intersubjectivity is important because it presents an important level of description of what actually occurs when witnessing choreographed works. These theories also help to make explicit

357 Cvejić. 22-23.
358 Cvejić. 23.
359 According to Simone de Beauvoir ‘the Other’ is a primordial category, part of the duality of Self and Other, ‘Thus it is that no group ever sets itself up as the One without at once setting up the Other over against itself.’ For de Beauvoir, human relations are often viewed as a series of contrasts or oppositions, via Hegel she argues that ‘we find in consciousness itself a fundamental hostility towards every other consciousness, the subject can be posed only in being opposed – he sets himself up as the essential, as opposed to the other, the inessential, the object.’ Simone de Beauvoir. The Second Sex. Tran. H. M. Parshley. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1977. Print. 16-17.
how the encounter between different subjects affect and are affected by the design of these artworks to produce extraordinary intersubjective experiences. Such theories help to provide a critical framework for understanding the structure, effects and exchanges produced by choreographed works such as the work I just described by Sehgal. Philosophical concepts of action, alterity and sociality help to enrich a concept of intersubjectivity that might support a wider argument about intersubjectivity-as-art produced by choreographed works. As mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, the concept of intersubjectivity is crucial due to the way in which it produces subjecthood but also due to the way in which it is engineered by artworks that consist of social relations.

In attempting to explore what the relational space mentioned in the first chapter might look like, this chapter offers an account of what might happen when individuals meet or encounter one another as part of a choreography or performance such as Sehgal’s *Instead of allowing some thing to rise up to your face dancing bruce and dan and other things* (2000). Theories of intersubjectivity taken from philosophy offer an ethical dimension to such encounters. From philosopher Hannah Arendt (1906-1975) can be taken the provocation of performance as a political art *par excellence* utilising ‘man and his relationship to others’ as its very subject matter. Entangling intersubjectivity with action that is initiating, revelatory, challenging and unexpected, Arendt argues that intersubjectivity helps to produce subjecthood, positing action as something which takes place within a greater field of human relations, occurring in-between people and with the supportive presence of others. The way in which Emmanuel Levinas (1906-1995) formulates the face-to-face as an ethical encounter signals the intricate and co-dependent relationship between subjectivity and intersubjectivity and introduces a novel conception of the relationship between performer/dancer and attender/beholder. There is an emphasis on an approach that resists thematization by language as well as unmediated proximity, sensibility and contact with a singularity. By postulating a performer/dancer as a Levinasian Other this puts the attendee/beholder in a position of responsibility for this other, one who is for the other and subject-to. According to Levinas there is a substitution of ‘me’ for ‘others,’ once an encounter or confrontation occurs a response is obligatory. A process of assignation takes place between performer and beholder, a relationship that might be chaotic or destabilising.

Moving on from preoccupations with self and other, so often utilised in discussions of intersubjectivity, from here I briefly examine the *transindividual*, a way of conceiving the collective from Gilbert Simondon (1924-1989) as explicated by philosopher Muriel Combes. Simondon’s *transindividudal* further complicates the subjectivity-intersubjectivity relation, by postulating an interaction or inciting incident that renders someone, perhaps a performer,
absolutely ordinary and more-than-individuality, suspending her usual function or role within society. Any such process of *disindividuation* points to the preindividual share of the individual who is no longer merely a performer, as well as that of the individual that is the beholder. For Simondon, both individuals, performer and attender exist as shares of nature or potential and it is this that means they can enter into a *transindividual* relation with one another and constitute a collective.

In terms of intersubjectivity, Guattari focuses on ecologies, or the relationships between any given subjectivity and its exteriority whether that be social, environmental, animal, vegetable or cosmic all of which are vital to an analysis of choreographed works that explore processes of intersubjectivity as art. Of particular relevance within such an *ecosophy* is Guattari’s concept of *social ecology* which concerns a ‘group Eros’ or preoccupation with human groups of various different sizes. For Guattari it is crucial to question modalities of group-being and run counter to the normal order of things. As such this philosopher’s *social ecosophy* consists of micro-political or micro-social practices that are innovative and alternative experiences such as instances of performance art, that centre on a respect for singularity and in which one might encounter creative autonomy. There is an emphasis on ways in which any given subjectivity might be re-organised in relation to subject groups of many different sizes rather than given, standard or habitual structures. And lastly, Latour points out that any given interaction, even a simple face-to-face encounter is in fact the terminus point of a great number of various different agencies including non-human actors and objects. Such interactions are in fact *actor-networks*, made up of a range of agencies and informal associations. For Latour each interaction overflows with elements that come from another time, place and generated from some other agency. The world is a series of interconnected things so that there is an emphasis on connectors, assembling, collecting and composing rather than interaction. Latour theorises a *mediator* who gathers and assembles collective relations, perhaps making others do unexpected things. Latour encourages an interrogation of action including asking who else is acting and how many agents are also present. For Latour, any action is in fact a node, a knot or a conglomerate of many unexpected sets of agencies. There is always uncertainty about the origin of action, it can often be overtaken, or ‘other-taken,’ carried out and distributed to others.

Theories from psychology and cognitive science emphasise the unconscious process that might take place during an interaction with a performer. In terms of perception of another person, visual recognition is considered very important, in particular processes of facial recognition which involve particular networks of pathways and brain areas and co-operating with other classification systems such as object and scene recognition. Accordingly the process of facial
recognition is perceptual and also pre-semantic. Any viewing or matching of unfamiliar faces relative to other categories of objects activists the area of the brain that is preferentially responsive to faces. However these disciplines also offer an account of more kinaesthetic acts of recognition that involve greater aspects of posture. For psychologists such as Hari et al there is reliance upon unconsciously formed inferences of the other person’s goals and intentions as part of direct face-to-face encounters and attempts to understand and be understood by others. According to this argument, mutual understanding requires some similarity of perception and action to the extent that during interaction people often automatically adopt the other person’s postures or movement patterns which can even lead to synchronisation. Such unconscious mirroring of other people’s actions helps in the sharing of feelings, as well as goals. Chartrand and Bargh argue for a link between perceptions and behaviour so that perception can have an automatic, unintended and passive effect on behaviour. Accordingly within an art encounter there might be non-conscious mimicry of the behaviour of another person including postures, mannerisms as well as facial expressions which physically demonstrates empathy, togetherness and perhaps even interpersonal bonding. The contribution of such studies to my overall argument is important due to the way in which it produces a normative account of intersubjectivity which is frequently problematized by choreographed works.

Where psychology and cognitive science accounts of intersubjectivity tend to focus on visual recognition of faces, classification of people and acts of non-conscious physical mimicry, the philosophical tradition of phenomenology is mostly concerned with the problem of other minds, social cognition or how one might attribute mental states to another person. According to phenomenology one can interpret, predict and explain another’s behaviour by adopting a theoretical stance, putting oneself in their place and asking ‘what would I be thinking or feeling?’ In tandem with research from cognitive science there is also an appeal to sub-personal processes of immediate, automatic and almost reflex-like perception and understanding so that with a knowledge of social and cultural context as well as a perception of another’s action or

360 It is important to note here that psychoanalytic accounts of intersubjectivity will not be discussed in this thesis. According to Guattari, psychoanalytic practice is complicit with patriarchal and normative values of ordinary existence, while art and ‘schizoid’ aesthetics suggest that one should not need to fit in to a homogenous kind of stratified subjectivity but allow non-logical, schizoid fragments to come together. For further discussion see Deleuze and Guattari’s *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1983), Guattari’s *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm* (1995), *Molecular Revolution: Psychiatry and Politics* (1984). In many of these works Guattari is intent on dismantling the tradition of psychoanalysis established by both Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) and Jacques Lacan (1901-1981). This discussion is dense and complex and would take this thesis into a different direction. While there is much research to be conducted into the psychoanalytic or schizoanalytic aspects of choreographic works, I have pragmatically limited myself in this thesis to the discourse around the subject and intersubjectivity. Similarly, there is much literature concerning the rich sense of self pursued by art, literature and film along with its cognates, identity and individuality, for a discussion of these see Zahavi and Gallagher, and for an overview of the neurocognitive and philosophical research on the self in art, see Minissale, (2013) 233-251.
gestures one can directly perceive their intentions and mental states. Additionally an argument from analogy posits that knowledge of one’s own mind and self-acquaintance can serve as a departure point for an understanding of others. However it is here that the problems with phenomenological approaches arise, there are many difficulties involved in any kind of self-knowledge and such an analogical process is highly prescriptive and universalising, ignoring the diversity of others. It is also important to note that phenomenological accounts of intersubjectivity also present theories of empathy as a form of intentionality directed towards the others’ lived experiences. Empathy is therefore an intentional act that presents another’s subjectivity from a second-person perspective. It can involve perception of another’s bodily presence, inference in a difficult or problematic situation as well as an experience of the other directly as a person or intentional being whose bodily gestures and actions are expressive of his or her experiences or states of mind.

However it is also crucial to note the many issues with phenomenological as well as many psychological and cognitive science accounts of intersubjectivity. Feminist scholars have argued that phenomenology is too focused upon description rather than sensation, the so-called body described is thin and colourless as well as urban with a certain relationship to technology and that phenomenology fails to differentiate bodies creating a so-called abstract, ‘master subject’ that is normative, normate, specifically masculinist and racist, devoid of gender and ambiguous in terms of its historical situation.

The last part of this chapter examines concepts taken from dance studies that might be utilised to analyse encounters between performers/dancers and spectators/beholders, specifically those of: somatic attention, kinaesthetic empathy and affect. As elucidated by Csordas, somatic empathy involves two aspects, attention and situation. In terms of attention, this lies in a turning towards someone, where the aim is to be conscious and considerate of a whole person as a changeable, fluid entity. Turning toward implies bodily and multisensory engagement rather than mere visual perception. Such perception is bodily-based sensing of one’s own and another’s fundamentally unique experience. Attending to aspects of other’s bodily forms, positions or movements could be visceral and might involve erotic, moral or aesthetic sensibilities. However it is crucial to remember that any attending with or through the body comes with the caveat that each body’s mode of attention is culturally, socially and intersubjectively formed. This is where situation comes in, for as explained by Rothfield, any somatic mode of attention or way of attending is in fact a process that has been culturally and politically constituted. Bodily experience is culturally patterned, embedded in forms of practice and embodied rituals of everyday life, ethics and aesthetics. If one perceives and understands the world in a culturally specific manner then this will affect somatic attention as the manner by which one engages with
another and others bodies. As stated by Ginot, somatic practices act as normative systems, they are ideologically constructed and must be de-naturalised in order to take into consideration the complexity of physical, symbolic, social, economic and political environments and in the hope of finding somatic modes of attending to decolonising, prosthetic, queer, differently-abled bodies.

Similarly there is also the concept of kinaesthetic empathy, an empathy that is physical and that entails a kinaesthetic rather than merely visual level of recognition of the other. According to cognitive science, kinaesthetic empathy is a sensorimotor response, a kind of covert simulation or inner mimicry of physical action that occurs when one attends to others moving bodies. Though as argued by Cvejić it is unwise to attribute psychological states or pleasure to such isomorphisms. It could be a process in which one’s entire physicality comes to inhabit the other, a casting of oneself into the position of another to a projection of one’s three-dimensional structure into the energy and action of the other. Situation is equally important to any account of kinaesthetic empathy, a kinaesthetic analysis could function as a crucial methodology in understanding cultural distinctiveness in dance and everyday life. One way in which to attend to a performer or dancer is to take into consideration her qualitative dimensions of movement, kinds of flow, tensions and the timing of any given actions as well as the ways in which her movement interacts and interrelates with objects, events and importantly other people. It is also important to know that any given movement repertoire has implicit politics and might be engaging with religious, gendered or symbolic systems – there is an important connection between kinaesthetic experience and cultural values.

The emphasis can also be shifted away from individuals and subjects, instead stressing the importance of affect, or the ways in which a choreography such as Sehgals’ Instead of allowing… might generate affects. Focusing on the degree of a body’s power to be affected and to affect, each choreography or performance might create singular or very specific, novel relations with those who observe or behold it. As Cvejić argues, choreography might prompt affective responses or generate affects. Here an affect is the transition from one state to another felt by the affected body, a sensation of change, in one’s own body affected by an external body. Affects might be produced by a performer’s body, resulting from choreography as a rational construction which problematizes emotional expression through experimenting with ways of composing affects with bodily motion and still-acts. Recalling Arendt, Machery suggests that an affect might be an interstitial event, one formed in the intersection of action and reaction, producing itself somewhere in-between bodies. An affect is thus an independently existing thing, an effect of modification of experience. Similarly for Deleuze an affect is purely transitive, impersonal and divorced from the interiority of a subject. And according to Massumi,
affects arise from a gap, emerging from an autonomous relation between resonating sensations and this is why it is *synesthetic*, causing multiple senses to participate with one another.

Althusser’s *philosophy of the encounter* introduces a new relation, one between subjects and an encounter that dominates with its own spontaneity, logic and operations. Utilising Althusser’s thesis, an encounter or performance acts as a *clinamen* or swerve, something unexpected, echoing Arendt’s theory of action. What can be taken from Althusser is a valorisation of the haphazard and aleatory as well as process, contingency, chance, displacement and freedom, a novel angle from which to approach instances of performance art. This ties into arguments made in the previous chapter as spatio-subjectivisation can be transformed by the uncertain, unpredictable, topological a-signifying and creative space of intersubjectivity, allowing a new kind of subjectivity to emerge. Intersubjectivity, to some extent always-already precedes each performance, as a social and physical fact it has been studied by each of these theorists. My objective is to show whether the principles that these theorists have identified in broader social practice might also hold true for particular performances, whether it retains, intensifies or transforms these principles. Each performance is an experiment which can be observed through a particular lens that normally remains imperceptible and part of implicit everyday life and which has its own constraints for producing a particular kind of intersubjectivity. Rather than just occurring in the wider world, I argue that intersubjectivity can be performed or choreographed within the constraints of worlds of art. There is then the possibility that the concept might then be utilised in new and different ways.

### 3.1 Action and alterity: philosophical accounts of intersubjectivity

At the end of the 1950s, Arendt theorised about action as well as what she called ‘the subjective in-between.’ When exploring what can lie or occur between subjects Arendt began with otherness or *alterity*. For Arendt otherness is shared, it is something one has in common with everything that is. Arendt argues that action as well as speech are indubitably intersubjective, it is ‘with word and deed’ that ‘we insert ourselves into the human world.’ To act, in its most general sense is to take initiative, to begin, to set something into motion. Action, according to Arendt is a beginning, one that corresponds to natality or the fact of birth, there is a ‘startling unexpectedness’ that is inherent in all beginnings and origins.’ A capacity for action means that ‘the unexpected can be expected’ and that such a capacity means that one is able to perform ‘what is infinitely improbable.’ Although Arendt’s thesis on action is a general one, her

emphasis upon actions that are new, original, and unexpected could easily be applied to the actions conceived and performed by artists.

Arendt argues that an act might have an ‘agent-revealing capacity,’ so that it is in acting and speaking that one reveals who one is and makes an appearance in the human world.\(^{362}\)

This revelatory quality of speech and action comes to the fore where people are with others and neither for nor against them – that is, in sheer human togetherness.\(^{363}\)

Unfolding this quotation, Arendt argues that action discloses, it can be revealing when people are with others or within what she calls ‘sheer human togetherness.’ Action always-already appeals to alterity or otherness, according to Arendt it ‘is never possible in isolation,’ and ‘needs the surrounding presence of others.’\(^{364}\) Arendt goes on to say that action is surrounded by and in constant contact with the ‘web of acts and words of other men.’ Arendt utilises a concept of shared or common *inter-ests* which lie ‘between people and therefore can relate and bind them together.’ Action as well as speech are concerned with this in-between. Arendt discusses a *subjective in-between* that consists of deeds and words that originate from ‘men’s acting and speaking directly to one another. Such an in-between is intangible, yet according to Arendt ‘We call this reality the “web of human relationships.”’\(^{365}\) For Arendt, the web of human relationships is the medium in which action takes place. Arendt states that action ‘always establishes relationships and therefore has an inherent tendency to force open all limitations and cut across all boundaries.’\(^{366}\) This utopic assertion is central to this thesis, for it argues that action changes or produces change. Action is boundless due to its tremendous capacity for establishing relationships, it has an ‘inherent unpredictability.’

For Arendt action is irrevocably tied to intersubjectivity, to act is to do something that is revealing, to take initiative, to do something unexpected, to set something in motion.\(^{367}\) An action is something that happens when one is *with* others in ‘sheer human togetherness,’ by necessity it requires the presence of others. According to Arendt, any action is surrounded by a web of acts and words, it is concerned with the in-between, part of a larger web of human relationships. An action that challenges has the capacity to produce change. Although Arendt’s

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\(^{362}\) Ibid., 175.

\(^{363}\) Ibid., 180.

\(^{364}\) Ibid., 188.

\(^{365}\) Ibid., 182-184.

\(^{366}\) Ibid., 190-191.

\(^{367}\) This proposition of unexpected action can be applied to instances of performed choreographies such as Seghal’s *Instead of allowing*. Indeed museum visitors who encountered the work have been observed to be irritated, confused, frightened and insecure. Some visitors expressed their concern to the dancers themselves or else reported to the front desk that they thought something was wrong. Von Hantelmann. 132.
theory of action and intersubjectivity is a general one, much of it can be applied to choreographed performances. At one point she posits theatre as ‘the political art par excellence,’ where the political sphere of human life might be transposed into art. Perhaps ‘theatre’ might be replaced with ‘performance’ so that it too might be theorised as an ‘art whose sole subject is man and his relationship to others.’

Whereas Arendt focuses her attention on action and the way in which it might take place within a greater field of human relations, for Levinas the face-to-face encounter is the ethical encounter par excellence. In his 1968 essay ‘Substitution’ Levinas posits subjectivity as ‘being hostage’ so that any ‘presence’ is ‘undone by the other’ and a subject is confounded by a wordless accusation for which one cannot decline responsibility. Levinas’ ideas bring novel and radical concepts of intersubjectivity into this thesis, proposing that any notion of an “I” is in fact totally dependent upon alterity. As outlined Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority (1961) the face of the Other opens up a confrontation with an absolutely other and discourse begins. Once the face has spoken or expressed itself a response or response-ability is obligatory. 368

In his later essay Levinas elaborates, this encounter starts with a process of identification, ‘we identify beings across the dispersion of silhouettes in which they appear.’ 369 However such a process is highly dependent upon the structures of language and for Levinas the way language operates means that it renders things already closed or ‘said’ rather than ‘saying,’ unknown, or open to possibility. As an alternative, Levinas prefers to start with ‘sensibility interpreted as proximity’ and to seek in language ‘contact and sensibility.’ Importantly Levinas posits that ‘proximity appears as the relationship with the other, an ‘absolute exteriority’ who is ‘incommensurable’ and cannot be fixed or resolved into ‘images’ or be ‘exposed in a theme.’ Such a figure cannot be thematised by language or in a sign, but instead signifies via contact, activating what Levinas calls the trope of ‘the-one-for-the-other,’ someone who has a surplus of responsibility for the other. 370

Proximity is thus anarchically a relationship with a singularity without the mediation of any principle, any ideality. What concretely corresponds to this description is my relationship with my neighbour… this very relationship with the other, the-one-for-the-other. 371

369 Levinas, “Substitution,” 89.
370 Levinas, “Substitution” 90.
371 Ibid., 90-91.
For Levinas the relationship of proximity involves an ‘assignation by another’ that is in fact ‘a responsibility with regard to men we do not even know.’ Such assignation is extremely urgent, it is also a way of being affected, a relationship that Levinas calls obsession. According to Levinas obsession is ‘something foreign, a disequilibrium, a delirium,’ perhaps chaotic, destabilising and deterritorialising. Crucial to performance art is this notion of the approach, one person approaching another. Such an approach is anarchic, it is a relationship that resists thematization by language. Levinas cautions that ‘To thematize this relation is already to lose it, to leave the absolute passivity of the self.’

Levinas cautions that consciousness is not all there is to the notion of subjectivity, although there is what he calls a ‘subjective condition,’ an identity one calls ‘ego’ or ‘I.’ The who or me is a term within a relation, a term of ‘an irreversible assignation’ that recurs. What Levinas calls the ‘oneself,’ ‘is already formed with absolute passivity,’ responsibility for the other means that ‘oneself’ is irreplaceable, ‘incarnated in order to offer itself, to suffer and to give.’ For Levinas the self recurs in responsibility for others, responsibility for another is not an accident that happens, it precedes the very essence of a subject, it is unconditional, undeclinable and absolute. An extreme way of expressing this idea is that ‘the subject is under hostage,’ for ‘under accusation by everyone, the responsibility for everyone goes to the point of substitution. Levinas takes the title for his essay from this core concept, ‘a substitution of me for the others,’ a substitution that ‘frees the subject from ennui, that is, from the enchainment to itself.’

Levinas takes care to point out that substitution has nothing to do with ‘moral qualities,’ there is a subjection to everything, a being ‘divesting itself, emptying itself of its being, turning itself inside out.’ Evading the active/passive binary, substitution is a passivity incontrovertible into an act, ‘to be oneself, otherwise than being, to be dis-interested, is to bear the wretchedness and bankruptcy of the other, and even the responsibility that the other can have for me.’ One must always have ‘one degree more responsibility.’ Crucially Levinas summarises that:

It is through the condition of being hostage that there can be in the world pity, compassion, pardon and proximity – even the little there is, even the simple ‘After you sir.’

Levinas likens responsibility for the other to being made hostage, he sought to de-substantiate the subject, de-reify it until it is ‘a pure self” oriented towards another, or a self ‘in the accusative’

372 Ibid., 110-111.
373 Ibid., 95-96.
374 Ibid., 104, 113.
375 Ibid., 114.
376 Ibid., 106.
377 Ibid., 107.
so that responsibility precedes freedom.\textsuperscript{378} For Levinas intersubjectivity produces subjecthod, the self is unavoidably \textit{subject-to}, it bears a responsibility that equates to ‘the weight of the universe.’\textsuperscript{379} Accordingly, any initial ethical encounter extends itself onwards so that ‘the other, my neighbour, is also a third party with respect to another, who is also a neighbour,’ and so on and so on.

A unique account of the face-to-face encounter is offered by Levinas, one that might be applied to that of performer and beholder. When read in relation to Sehgal’s \textit{Instead of allowing... a situation in which a dancer perpetually performs and is open to an encounter, it seems fitting to me that the dancer acts as a Levinasian Other, appealing to each beholder as they enter the room. One of my own responses to this performance was that each time I visited the performance, I would always wait until another beholder arrived before leaving as I did not want to leave the performer alone. Indeed, for Levinas, a subject is dependent upon the other, a confrontation occurs and a response is obligatory. The importance of unmediated proximity, contact and sensibility is stressed rather than processes of identification structured by language. A process of assignation takes place, such as that between performer and beholder, the relationship is one that might be chaotic or destabilising. Levinas posits the self, or beholder as one who is absolutely passive, irreplaceable and unique to the point where she is hostage to the other, infinitely responsible, and completely oriented towards someone else. Levinas’ account seems extreme, perhaps impossible, but it is worth noting that the example he gives of such a condition is physical, proprioceptive, spatial and generous, it is the act of saying ‘After you sir’ occurring when one entreats another person to enter through a door first. One example of an artwork that manifests a relationship between a choreographer behaving as though he is infinitely and completely oriented towards someone else, is Auckland-based artist Sean Curham’s \textit{Gentle Resting on the Bonnet of a Popular Car} (2016, Figure 38). This work involves the artist and an assistant inviting participants, one by one, to step up custom-built steps onto the bonnet of a car where they then lie down. Curham, with the aid of his assistant, proceeds to cushion the participant with bolsters and blankets behind their head, spine and underneath their arms, hands and legs so that they can completely relax their bodies for ten minutes. He constantly asks his participant for feedback on the micro-adjustments he makes so that he customizes the supports for each individual’s body. Using restorative yoga techniques as well as a soothing, gentle manner, Curham creates a unique time-space in which his participants can rest and relax.

\textsuperscript{378} Ibid., 115-117.  
\textsuperscript{379} Ibid., 105, 118.
Levinas’ emphasis on a face-to-face encounter with an Other might be examined in relation to Simondon’s elucidation of his concept of the *transindividual* as way of exploring the relation between an individual and the collective or subjecthood and intersubjectivity. The transindividual is a ‘relation of relations,’ it involves both a relation interior to an individual which defines its psyche as well as a relation exterior to it, defining the collective. Similar to the way in which Levinas argues that responsibility for the Other precedes essence and for Althusser an encounter has to have taken place for ‘a being to be,’ according to Simondon both psychic and collective individuation are problematized by affectivity, a relational layer that constitutes the centre of individuality, a tension or ‘liaison between the relation of the individual to itself and its relation to the world.’ It is affectivity or this relation layer that is the bridge between subject and inter-subjectivity and one reason why they are so inextricably entangled. Crucially, affectivity for Simondon ‘includes a relation between the individuated being and a share of not-yet individuated preindividual reality that any individual carries with it: affectivity means ‘that our being is not reducible to our individuated being.’ According to Simondon it is only within a collective, in relation to others, that this tension between individuated and preindividual, or that which exceeds the individual, might be resolved.

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381 Combes points out that Simondon wishes to think of the psyche and the collective in a way that is anti-substantialist, i.e. without appealing to substances such as the ‘soul’ or ‘society.’

382 Ibid., 32-33. The concept of *affect* will be discussed in more detail at the end of this chapter.
For Simondon, a unity, the domain of the collective or transindividual is an important milieu for any individuated being, it is a ‘mixed and stable home’ in which ‘emotions are perceptual points of view, and points of view are possible emotions.’ It is the collective that allows perspective and relations:

Relation to others puts us into question as individuated being; it situates us, making us face others as being young or old, sick or healthy, strong or weak, man or woman: yet we are not young or old absolutely in this relation; we are younger or older than another; we are stronger or weaker as well.383

These relations allow the perceived to become inseparable from the experienced. Elaborating somewhat paradoxically on the subjectivity-intersubjectivity relation, for Simondon, the collective results from a specific operation of individuation. Of note is the example Simondon gives of a type of encounter or ordeal which allows a subject to encounter the transindividual, ‘a mode of relation to others constitutive of collective individuation.’ The example of a transindividual relation chosen by Simondon is that of Nietzsche’s fictional character Zarathustra with a tightrope walker who has been abandoned by the crowd and lies crushed on the ground before him. Zarathustra feels himself to be the brother of this man, and carries off his corpse to give it a proper burial.384

This fictional encounter is utilised by Simondon to contrast a transindividual relation with one that is inter-individual, to further complexify intersubjective relations. Within the narrative, the tightrope walker is, ‘in fact, one of the most ordinary beings to be found.’ The moment when he becomes absolutely ordinary is his fatal fall, as it is this incident that strips him of his ‘quality of tightrope walker’ so that he can become for Zarathustra ‘the vector of a relation of another type’ rather than the inter-individual. The preindividual share or zone ‘remains uneffectuated by any functional relation between individuals’ and it is through this that the collective arises. For Simondon, the inter-individual is that which links individuals on the basis of their roles and lives within society, it involves the individual entering into a relation with others so that she appears to herself in her own eyes as ‘a sum total of social images’ and is part of the ‘constituted human community.’ The tightrope-walker’s fall breaks the functional inter-individual relationship, that of performer and mark and it allows another subject, one stripped of his social function, to appear in his more-than-individuality. Zarathustra is then forced as a subject to become aware of what in himself is more-than-individual and to become engaged in the ordeal called forth by this discovery. Such an intersubjective event, according to Simondon is disindividuating, it

383 Ibid., 34-15.
provokes an interrogation of the subject, what Simondon calls ‘a momentary loosening of the hold of constituted individuality, which is engulfed by the preindividual.’ As synthesised by Combes: ‘transindividual disindividuation is the condition for new individuation.’

For Simondon, the paradoxical condition for the encounter with transindividual is a passage through solitude, it is only in Zarathustra’s solitude and in his support for a dead friend that the test of transindividual begins. In summary, such solitude is the consequence of a relation that is not inter-individual, but transindividual, one ‘whose establishment calls forth the momentary suspension of all inter-individual relations.’ Simondon argues that there are in fact two modes of sociality, the inter-individual involves the enclosure of humans in their function or role and the other mode is the transindividual relation which demonstrates a potential for ‘becoming others.’ Simondon conceives of the social as a site of specific individuations, so that the relation between individual and society can be re-thought in terms of a ‘procesual and emergent sociality.’ With the notion of the transindividual Simondon proposes a new manner of conceiving the system of relations between individual and society. He argues that the social results from individuation. It is only a group that has the ability to individuate, and a group is the very movement of self-constitution of the collective. Such an individuation is at once an individuation of the group and an individuation of grouped individuals, which are inseparable… the group is constituted by a superimposition of individual personalities… an individuation wherein grouped individuals become “group individuals.”

To be human, according to Simondon is to be essentially incomplete, a bearer of potentials ‘of uneffectuated real possibility;’ the human carries with it, its ‘charge’ of preindividual reality, a ‘reserve of being as yet nonpolarized, available, awaiting.’ For Simondon the transindividual is ‘an impersonal zone of subjects that is simultaneously a molecular or intimate dimension of the collective itself.’ Accordingly the collective is an individuation that is transindividual, it reunites the natures that are borne by many individuals but not contained in the individualities already constituted from these individuals. Only living, already-individuated beings who are subjects with a share of apeiron insisting in them can engage in such a transformative relation. According to Simondon, individuals in a collective exist as shares of nature or potential and it is this that means they can enter into relation with one another and constitute a collective. For

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385 Combes. 44.
386 Ibid., 42-43.
387 For Combes it is arguments like this that enable Simondon to conceive of the political as something outside the horizon of the legitimization of sovereignty, legitimating the State.
388 Ibid., 52.
Simondon, together all individuals have ‘a sort of unstructured ground from which new individuation may be produced.’

Simondon’s example of the transindividual relation as an encounter between the tight-rope walker or performer and the attender as Zarathustra helps to support why it is important to think of performance in terms of the subjectivity-intersubjectivity relation. From Simondon’s argument can be furnished an account of an instance of performance art as an activation of the transindividual, a milieu, or relation between individual and collective. What needs to be stressed is the way in which an encounter, one that renders a performer ‘absolutely ordinary’ might strip her of her usual existence as a term within an inter-individual relation. The interindividual relation linking and enclosing individuals on the basis of their functions, roles and lives within constituted society might be suspended by the force of an incident and the transindividual relation can then be realised. Such an incident, perhaps a performance might render a performer absolutely ordinary, appearing as more-than-individuality. Any such process of disindividuation points to the preindividual share of the individual who is no longer merely a performer, as well as that of the individual that is the beholder. According to Simondon, both individuals exist as shares of nature or potential and it is this that means they can enter into a transindividual relation with one another and constitute a collective.

In his own writings, Guattari sees intersubjectivity as something that is inextricably linked to the broader political, economic and psychic structures of capitalism. He stresses the importance of singularity and a cultivation of dissensus in the face of ‘an erosion of subjectivities,’ and the prospect of such dissensus is crucial to the fourth chapter of this thesis. For Guattari singularization might be a method for distancing oneself from normalized subjectivity, allowing one to obtain for oneself ‘a bare minimum of existential territories.’ There is an emphasis here on action or ‘effective practices of experimentation’ rather than philosophical speculation. Guattari emphasises the importance of interrogating the ways in which subjectivity is produced, the components of such mechanisms which might instead be utilised for the purposes of ‘individual and/or collective resingularization.’

Continuing with and adding nuances to challenges to oppositional structures such as subject/object, self/other, subjectivity/intersubjectivity, Guattari instead focuses on ecology,
which enables a questioning of subjectivity and its accompanying capitalistic power formations.\textsuperscript{394} There is the implication of a wish to preserve the asperity or harshness of otherness and a description of both individual and collective ‘human modes of life,’ which he lists as ‘kinship networks,’ ‘domestic life,’ ‘family and married life’ as well as ‘neighbourhood relations.’\textsuperscript{395} Guattari valorises relationships between subjectivity and its exteriority – be it social, animal, vegetable or Cosmic.’ For Guattari the individual and collective subjective assemblages or groupings as listed above are in fact ‘works in progress’ with the capability and potential ‘of developing and proliferating well beyond their ordinary equilibrium’ via practices, an extension beyond the ‘existential territories’ they have already been assigned.\textsuperscript{396}

As part of what he calls an \textit{ecosophy}, Guattari champions what he calls an ‘ethico-political’ and ‘aesthetic’ articulation between three ecological registers: human subjectivity, social relations and the environment.\textsuperscript{397} What makes this articulation ethical is the responsibility and engagement required of anyone in a position to intervene in individual and collective psychical proceedings. By aesthetic Guattari means that everything must be continually reinvented, starting again from scratch so that processes do not become trapped in a ‘cycle of deathly repetition.’\textsuperscript{398} Social ecosophy consists of developing specific processes and practices that might modify and reinvent the ways in which one lives in various capacities, groupings and contexts. For Guattari what is at stake is ‘a question of literally reconstructing the modalities of ‘group-being,’ through the implementation of ‘effective practices of experimentation, as much on a microsocial level as on a larger institutional scale.’ Although Guattari warns that one must not distinguish between psychical, social and environmental actions, it is his discussion of \textit{social ecology}, work towards ‘rebuilding human relations at every level of the socius’ that is most relevant to this thesis.\textsuperscript{399} On this level Guattari describes practices that are ecological, ones that seek out potential vectors of subjectification and singularization, ‘they generally seek something that runs counter to the ‘normal’ order of things.’\textsuperscript{400} Guattari’s thesis supports Bourriaud’s description of artworks which engineer intersubjectivity as involving the invention of alternative models or forms of sociability. For Guattari, a gentle de-territorialisation might enable assemblages or groupings to evolve in a constructive, processual fashion. The principle specific

\textsuperscript{394} Guattari. 52.
\textsuperscript{395} Ibid., 27. Guattari has a \textit{transversalist conception of subjectivity}, proposing an interface between ‘existential territories’ which are personal, singular, idiosyncratic, sensible and finite and ‘incorporeal Universes’ which are non-dimensioned, non-coordinated, trans-sensible and infinite. Translator’s note 75-76.
\textsuperscript{396} Ibid., 40.
\textsuperscript{397} Ibid., 28. Although Guattari adds that ‘it is quite wrong to make a distinction between action on the psyche, the socius and the environment.’
\textsuperscript{398} Ibid., 39.
\textsuperscript{399} Ibid., 49.
\textsuperscript{400} Ibid., 45.
to social ecology concerns what Guattari calls a ‘group Eros,’ the development of an affective and pragmatic obsession with human groups of differing sizes. The emphasis is on the ways in which a given subjectivity with its attendant mental ecology might be reorganised in relation to intersubjective subject-groups which open broadly onto the socius and the Cosmos rather than simple structures, stock identifications or triangulations such as me/you, she/he, father/mother/child.’  

The ecological practices described by Guattari are highly relevant to a discussion of performance art. Guattari declares the need for ‘new social and aesthetic practices, new practices of the Self in relation to the other, to the foreign, the strange – a whole programme’ which could be read as a call to arms for artists and choreographers. Guattari hopes that so-called ‘new ecological practices,’ ones that are ‘micropolitical’ and ‘microsocial’ might ‘processually activate isolated and repressed singularities that are just turning in circles’ creating ‘new solidarities’ and a ‘new gentleness.’ Such innovative practices should involve the creation of ‘alternative experiences’ that are centred on a respect for singularity. Guattari posits that such ecological practices might be created in the hope that ‘if someone encounters creative autonomy in one domain, they might practice it in others,’ practices can act as a ‘catalyst for a gradual reforging and renewal of humanity’s confidence in itself starting at the most miniscule level… to counter the pervasive atmosphere of dullness and passivity.’

When trying to unravel intersubjectivity or being-together, French theorist Bruno Latour cautions against appealing to the term social. Instead he champions actor-network theory (ANT) as a critical sociology of associations, one that can encompass non-human actors, so that they might also have agency rather than mere causality. For Latour, the social is ‘a provisional movement of new associations,’ it cannot bind together elements in a straightforward or unproblematic way. Like Arendt, Latour is concerned about action, posing questions such as ‘When we act, who else is acting? How many agents are also present?’ For Latour action is far from transparent, it is ‘a node, a knot, and a conglomerate of many surprising sets of agencies that have to be slowly disentangled.’ For Latour action is overtaken or other-taken, it is taken

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401 Ibid., 60, 57.
402 Ibid., 68.
403 Ibid., 50-51.
404 Ibid., 59
405 Ibid., 69.
406 Latour. 10.
407 Ibid., 43, 238.
408 Ibid., 43-45.
up by others and shared. It is mysteriously carried out and at the same time distributed to others. Latour utilises the term *actor* who is:

the moving target of a vast array of entities swimming toward it… to use the word 'actor' means that it's never clear who and what is acting when we act since an actor on stage is never alone in acting.

For Latour, action is dislocated and far from a ‘coherent, controlled, well-rounded, and clean-edged affair.’ Accordingly action is ‘borrowed, distributed, suggested, influenceed, dominated, betrayed, translated.’ Crucially what Latour terms an *actor-network* ‘represents the major source of uncertainty about the origin of action.’

For Latour agency is ‘the most difficult problem there is in philosophy,’ too often it is conceived as an anthropomorphic figure, when for Latour many different entities, not just humans can exercise agency. Agency is important for this thesis due to the way in which subjects have the ability to produce intersubjectivity and choreographed works produce complex and special forms of social relations which actually interrogate what it means to be a subject or agent. For ANT the ‘figuration of agency’ might involve ‘ideo-, or techno-, or bio-morphisms,’ agency need not be restricted to an ‘actant’ as a ‘single individual.’ Elaborating on the phrase *actor-network theory*, a network, according to Latour is ‘an informal way of associating together human agents.’ Tracing a network involves connecting entities with other entities. What is highlighted are ‘connections, vehicles and attachments’ Importantly Latour points out that an *actor-network* can capture a wide variety of states, entities and collections: ‘With Actor-Network you may describe something that doesn’t at all look like a network – an individual state of mind, a piece of machinery, a fictional character…’ Latour points out: ‘Stretch any given inter-action and it becomes an actor-network.’

It is perfectly true to say that any given interaction seems to overflow with elements which are already in the situation coming from some other time, some other place, and generated by some other agency... action is always dislocated, articulated, delegated, translated.

Of great importance is the recognition of what Latour calls a ‘networky’ shape,’ to recognise connections. According to Latour, telling an actor-network story involves being able to capture
‘centres of calculation’ with their star-like shapes, emphasising the network.\textsuperscript{417} For Latour, a network is ‘what connects actors together with indirect, yet fully traceable connections.’\textsuperscript{418} Latour prefers to focus on what he calls ‘connectors’ rather than context or interaction, highlighting the ‘work of assembling, collecting and composing.’\textsuperscript{419} According to Latour, face-to-face interactions are ‘constantly interfered with by other agencies… action is dislocated, diffracted, re-dispatched and redistributed.’ Latour sets out a series of statements about interactions, such as:

What is acting at the same moment in any place is coming from many other places, many distant materials, and many faraway actors… places that are acting on one place….

Importantly, Latour is sceptical of emphasising ‘intersubjective interactions’ due to the fact that inter-objectivity introduces into any local interaction ‘some fundamental dislocation.’ Any tracing of social connections or associations reveals that they are star-shaped, and that templates and formats are circulating.

Latour goes on to explain that interactions may involve hidden parties: ‘Very few participants in a given course of action are simultaneously visible at any given point… many others are acting as well, only there is no way to sum them up.’ Interactions are far from homogeneous a ‘crowd of non-human, non-subjective, non-local participants’ gather ‘to help carry out the course of actions and transport it through channels’ and ‘all of them are associated together.’ By Latour’s account, interactions cannot be contained, they ‘overflow in all directions,’ a ‘bewildering array of participants is simultaneously at work’ within them, dislocating any neat boundaries, ‘redistributing them away and making it impossible to start anywhere that can be said to be ‘local.’\textsuperscript{420}

Latour unfolds the various agencies, human and non-human, from different places and times that affect any given interaction or encounter. Where Latour chooses to focus his energies upon a flattening out or analysis of what an encounter might actually consist of, Guattari, with his

\textsuperscript{417} Ibid., 178.
\textsuperscript{418} Ibid., 180.
\textsuperscript{419} Latour highlights the importance of non-human actors. For him objects are ‘participants’ that perform actions as ‘any thing that does modify a state of affairs by making a difference is an actor… or actant.’ Any object or entity can be an implement, an actor or even a participant in the course of an action. According to Latour things might ‘authorize, allow, afford, encourage, permit, suggest, influence, block, render possible, forbid and so on.’ (Ibid., 71-72, 85) The actions of objects are varied, their influence is ubiquitous, their effects ambiguous and their presence is distributed. Latour’s thesis on objects is important due to the agency he affords them, this is highly relevant to any artwork involving objects but it can also be applied to the object of the museum, art gallery or institution. Latour also discusses a certain kind of object, that of the script, which relates to the score in choreography. For Latour, any given location has always-already been affected by the power of local mediators who have made such a place, ‘you are thoroughly framed by other agencies brought silently on the scene.’ (195-196)
\textsuperscript{420} Ibid., 202.
focus on ecologies or registers of subjectivity and exteriority instead looks towards groupings and practices that explore possibilities other than the usual order of things. In a similar way Simondon posits an encounter or inciting incident in which habitual roles within society might be momentarily dismissed so that deeper, transindividual relations might be explored, ones that in fact dis-individuate. Whereas Levinas chooses to emphasise aspects of alterity barely contained within an encounter that is face-to-face, introducing radical ethical implications into such interactions. Returning to Arendt, intersubjectivity is entangled with action, something that can be unexpected and occurring within a greater field of human relations. To conclude, philosophical accounts of intersubjectivity from all of these post-World War II, Western European philosophers introduce the necessity for imaginative, critical, ethical and political considerations of the implications of any given intersubjective encounter. These philosophical accounts of intersubjectivity provide an interpretive and evaluative framework for choreographed works that provide an exploration of processes of intersubjectivity-as-art. As part of a mutually critical model, choreographed works can also contribute more to this paradigm due to the way in which they enact intersubjectivity in ways that can affect new intersubjectivities.

3.2 Recognition and mimicry: accounts of intersubjectivity from psychology and cognitive science

I will now examine approaches from the disciplines of psychology and cognitive science to intersubjectivity due to the way in which they add other important phenomenal and psychological dimensions to an understanding of what happens in intersubjective encounters between performers and beholders in choreographed artworks. According to US-based philosopher Shaun Gallagher, intersubjectivity or an awareness of others starts extremely early on in life. Gallagher argues that ‘we are born into a world of others’ and ‘one’s earliest experiences include a sense of self and others.’ Gallagher supports his views on intersubjectivity with an account of the ways in which newly born infants perform imitation. Studies of neonate imitation are important to Gallagher because a capacity for imitation is directly related to: perception, the origins of a sense of self as well as social recognition and the ability to understand another person. Gallagher argues that studies show that the imitation of another person’s movements using parts of the body that are invisible to oneself, occurs as

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421 A diagram might be envisaged, a pyramid in which intersubjectivity is at the bottom, quite loose and coarse-grained. The second, higher level is subjectivity and self, with its various levels of thick and thin self. The higher up the pyramid the more it enters into personal and private consciousness. This thesis is not concerned with the increasingly refined or fine-grained level of analysis.
422 Ibid., 18, 65.
423 Ibid., 66, 68. Studies of neonate imitation include those from 1977 by A. Meltzoff and M. K. Moore.
‘normal and alert newborn infants systematically imitate adult gestures of mouth opening and tongue protrusion.’

From studies of neonate imitation Gallagher argues that from birth, the capacity to develop a body image comes from intermodal and intersubjective interaction between proprioception and the vision of another’s face. An intermodal, sensory system enables an infant to recognise a structural equivalence between itself and another person. Any communication that is inter-corporeal or between different bodies and people is based upon intra-corporeal communication that is communication between different senses within one’s own body. Inter-modal translation amongst one’s own senses, such as from the visual to the proprioceptive-kinaesthetic acts as a bridge to understand others. Infants already apprehend equivalences between visible transformations of others and their own transformations, not necessarily giving priority to their own body awareness over a perception of the other. Importantly, a newborn attends not to the outward appearance of another, but to her action and expression, sensing her on a behavioural and motor level. According to Gallagher, a proprioceptive self is always already coupled with the other.

Continuing on from Gallagher’s arguments and further examining the subjectivity-intersubjectivity relation, one way in which a person recognises another is through the psychological specialisation that is the process of facial recognition according to which ‘faces are special kinds of objects that will involve a particular network of pathways and brain areas.’ For the recognition of faces to occur, this particular network may cooperate with object and scene recognition, as well as other classification systems. According to research by neurologists M. L. Gorno-Tempini and C.J. Price, functional imaging experiments have established that the fusiform gyri areas of the brain are preferentially responsive to faces. In terms of perceptual, pre-semantic processing, the viewing and matching of unfamiliar faces relative to other categories of objects consistently activates a region of the lateral fusiform gyrus bilaterally, but more consistently on the right, which has been labelled the ‘fusiform face area’ or FFA. Art historian Gregory Minissale points out that for facial recognition to be successful it should proceed configurally, looking globally at all the features of a face as a whole as well as dynamically. Facial schemata or certain invariable features allow for recognition across

425 Ibid., 70.
426 Ibid., 73.
429 Ibid. Interestingly the same area of the brain responds to animals and animal faces.
instances and contingencies. Elaborating, the fusiform area of the brain is coupled with emotional processing or the limbic system to help process the composite situation in the visual field where a face is to be recognised, along with the emotional expression it is supposed to be wearing. Facial recognition can involve simple and relatively instant responses to stimuli or very complex conceptual processes: detecting gaze direction and speech-related movements in observing others involves the superior temporal sulcus; facial expressions involve the limbic regions; semantic processing involves the inferior frontal gyrus.

Despite the difficulty in studying more than one person at a time from a neurological point of view, Neuroscientist Riitta Hari et al point out that humans are also extremely skilful in forming quick impressions of other people and in following their actions. Summarising, Hari et al explain that everyday life is full of intersubjective or social interactions, some of which are direct face-to-face encounters and as part of such interactions ‘people try to understand others and to get themselves understood, largely relying on unconsciously formed inferences of the other person’s goals and intentions.’ Any mutual understanding requires some similarity of perception and action between participants. In interactive situations, people often automatically adopt other persons’ postures and movement patterns which can lead to a synchronization in walking rhythm, bodily sway and gesturing. Such unconscious mirroring of other people’s actions helps to share feelings and goals, so that ‘human brains and minds are not as private as traditionally thought.’ It is important to note that instances of performance art can complicate these finely-tuned and normative evolutionary processes. A performer might do something that problematizes or makes explicit the ways in which facial expression can trigger empathy. An example of this is Auckland-based artist Campbell Patterson’s Long and Slow (2011, Figure 39) in which, recalling Acconci’s Openings, the artist filmed the lower half of his face as he slowly pulled out his facial hairs one by one for the extreme duration of almost ninety-eight minutes.

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431 Uri Hasson and others have discovered ‘intersubject synchronization’ of brain patterns watching films, and reported that ‘despite the completely free viewing of dynamical, complex scenes, individual brains ‘tick together’ in synchronised spatiotemporal patterns when exposed to the same visual environment.’ In particular, this synchronization was observed while watching ‘delicate hand movements during various motor tasks…faces buildings, open landscapes scenes and ….objects.’ Uri Hasson, et al. "Intersubject Synchronization of Cortical Vision During Natural Vision." Science 303.5664 (2004) Print. 1635-1637.
Similarly, psychologists Tanya L. Chatrand and John A. Bargh argue that there is a strong link between perception and behaviour so that ‘the act of perceiving another person’s behaviour creates a tendency to behave similarly oneself.’ Further exploring the chiasmic relationship between subjectivity and intersubjectivity and tying into the research of Hari et al, such unintentional imitation of another's actions is sometimes known as *echopraxia*. Mimicry is just one kind of non-conscious behaviour and according to Chartrand and Bargh earlier research conceptualised it in terms of empathy. Importantly, in 1964 A. E. Scheflen observed ‘that postural configurations were a source of information about an ongoing social interaction, as they communicated messages about liking and understanding.’ Additionally, it was also claimed that individuals who used this postural information unconsciously did so to orient themselves within a group.

Chartrand and Bargh summarise that since then this area has seen research on: *rhythmic synchrony* or the precise synchronisation between the speech and body movements of two interaction partners and as mentioned earlier *facial mimicry* which has focused on neonates’ mimicry of adult facial expressions that it has also been found in adults. *Behavioural matching* occurs when people mimic behaviour patterns by adopting similar postures or showing similar body configurations, a phenomenon which could have implications for performance art as well as choreographed works. Such research links posture similarity to rapport, including a measure

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433 Ibid., 895.
of a degree of togetherness, being in-step and compatibility. Chartrand and Bargh posit what they call the *chameleon effect* or non-conscious ‘mimicry of the postures, mannerisms, facial expressions, and other behaviours of one’s interaction partners, such that one’s behaviour passively and unintentionally changes to match that of others in one’s current social environment.’\(^{434}\) Chartrand and Bargh argue that the chameleon effect is indeed ‘the mechanism behind mimicry and behavioural coordination and thereby is the source of the observed smoother social interaction and interpersonal bonding produced by the (nonconscious) mimicry.’\(^{435}\) The hypothesis is that the perception of another’s behaviour increases the tendency for the perceiver to behave in a similar manner and this is an entirely passive and nonconscious phenomenon. A directional causal sequence is posited: ‘Perception causes similar behaviour, and the perception of the similar behaviour on the part of the other creates shared feelings of empathy and support.’ For Chatrand and Bargh an automatic link between perception and behaviour exists as a ‘social glue’ that unintentionally produces empathic understanding and a greater liking between people.

Chartrand and Bargh argue for a perception-behaviour link that is the mechanism underlying the phenomenon of non-conscious mimicry. This link posits a non-conscious connection between the act of perceiving and the act of behaving, or intersubjectivity and subjectivity, so that perceiving an action made by someone else makes one more likely to engage in the same behaviour. Such a mechanism can account for the chameleon effect, or ‘the tendency of people to take on the postures and mannerisms of those around them.’ Part of this effect is the way in which an individual’s behaviour naturally adapts to changes in social environmental setting by blending in to them. Chartrand and Bargh state that there is consensus among researchers that behaviour matching is related to greater liking and rapport between those who interact with each other, and that it is also plausible that the chameleon effect serves the basic human need to belong.\(^{436}\) Motor mimicry is a subset of behaviour matching that refers to an individual reacting to another person going through a specific, emotion-laden incident, for example wincing at Patterson’s pain as he plucks hair from his face and it begins to bleed. Hence motor mimicry is not an overt manifestation of an intrapersonal process, it is instead ‘an important communication tool that relays the message “I am like you” or “I feel as you do” to the other person.’ Chartrand and Bargh suggest individuals use behaviour mimicry as a communication tool on a completely non-conscious level. Additionally there is a link between behaviour matching and rapport, so

\(^{434}\) Ibid., 893.
\(^{435}\) Ibid., 897.
\(^{436}\) Ibid., 900-901.
that the chameleon effect operates in a passive, non-goal-dependent manner to create greater liking and creating smooth, harmonious interactions.

Also pointed out by Chartrand and Bargh are individual differences in the extent to which an individual engages in behavioural and postural mimicry. This may be due to the cognitive facet of empathy or perspective-taking. ‘A person will be more susceptible to the effects of perception on behaviour if he or she engages in greater perceptual activity directed at the other person. Taking the perspective of others is a perceptual, cognitive process that is likely to lead to greater perception of an interaction partner, which in turn leads to more mimicking. To summarise, Chartrand and Bargh argue that the perception-behaviour link, by which one perceives an action performed and then is lead to performing the same action is the very mechanism behind behaviour mimicry and consequently empathic understanding within social interactions. This perception-behaviour link is one of several routes through which the environment can influence behaviour without one knowing it and another way in which intersubjectivity helps to produce subjecthood.

In summary, psychology and neuroscience have a lot to say about some aspects of the subject-intersubjectivity relation such as unconscious and pre-reflective processes that might usually, though not always, occur during interactions between people that form part of intersubjectivity. In order for another person, such as a performer or dancer to be ‘recognised’, processes of facial recognition involving particular networks of pathways and brain areas co-operate with other classification systems such as object and scene recognition. Accordingly the process of facial recognition is usually perceptual and also pre-semantic. Any viewing or matching of unfamiliar faces relative to other categories of objects activates the area of the brain that is preferentially responsive to faces. Hari et al argue that there is reliance upon unconsciously formed inferences of the other person’s goals and intentions as part of direct face-to-face encounters and attempts to understand and be understood by others. According to this argument, mutual understanding requires some similarity of perception and action to the extent that during interaction people often automatically adopt the other person’s postures or movement patterns which can even lead to synchronisation. Such unconscious mirroring of other people’s actions helps in the sharing of feelings as well as goals. Chartrand and Bargh argue for a link between perceptions and behaviour so that perception can have an automatic, unintended and passive effect on behaviour. Their chameleon effect, or the non-conscious mimicry of the postures, mannerisms, facial

Ibid., 904.
Ibid., 905.
expressions and other behaviours creates a sequence from environment to perception, and from perception to behaviour demonstrating empathy, togetherness and perhaps even enabling interpersonal bonding.

3.3 The problem of other minds: phenomenological accounts of intersubjectivity

Whereas accounts from psychology and neuroscience describe unconscious and pre-reflective processes that occur in an intersubjective situation, the philosophical tradition of phenomenology has much to say about social cognition, ‘how we get to know and understand others’ or what is referred to as ‘the problem of other minds.’ Phenomenological accounts of intersubjectivity provide an account of intersubjectivity from a first-person perspective, attempting to come to terms with the subject-intersubjectivity relation. There is also the possibility that phenomenology has an ability to engage with more kinaesthetic forms of corporeality, providing an account of more subjective dimensions of movement and its perception as well as questions of corporeal and kinaesthetic difference. Phenomenology originated in Europe at the end of the nineteenth century and it emphasises the importance of consciousness of or about perceiving and experiencing the world in which one is situated, a world that includes others and so is intersubjective. Gallagher together with philosopher Dan Zahavi argue that phenomenology offers unique resources with which to examine ‘our ability to attribute mental states to self and others and to interpret, predict, and explain behaviour in terms of mental states such as intentions, beliefs, and desires.’

Phenomenological traditions give various accounts of the problem of other mind, for simulation-theories of mind, understanding of the other is based on self-simulating their beliefs, desires, or emotions, that is, putting oneself in their place, asking ‘what would I be thinking or feeling?’ and then projecting results onto them. However many encounters are not ‘third-person puzzles solved by first-person procedures.’ Within second-person interactions, argues Gallagher, are what one requires for a pragmatic understanding of another person, there are embodied expressions that can be perceived on another’s face and in their postures, movements and gestures, all of which are situated in social and pragmatic contexts. In the context of this thesis, interactions take place in the cultural context of an art gallery or museum, one that has

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440 Rothfield. 304.
its own history, conventions and rules of behaviour which were described in depth within my first chapter. This intersubjective environment is complicated even more when performers or dancers enact choreographed works that involve behaviour that is often deliberately different to more day-to-day interactions. As Merleau-Ponty states ‘I experience a certain cultural environment along with behaviour corresponding to it.’\textsuperscript{443} Importantly, philosopher Gilbert Ryle via Gallagher and Zahavi argued that ‘the logic of simulation isn’t correct, because the idea of imputing to a variety of others what is true of my simulated action ignores the diversity of their actions.’\textsuperscript{444} Gallagher and Zahavi go on, ‘If I project the results of my own simulation on to the other, I understand only myself in that other situation, but I don’t necessarily understand the other.’ Gallagher and Zahavi’s argument as well as Ryle’s point out that simulation ignores the diversity of others is augmented by feminist and philosophical objections to phenomenology which are discussed later on in this section.

An implicit version of simulation theory of mind appeals to neuro-scientific evidence involving the subpersonal activation of mirror neurons, shared representations or resonance systems which were introduced in my first chapter.\textsuperscript{445} Shared representations are activated when one observes another person engage in an action, when imagining oneself or another person engage in an action and when preparing to imitate another person’s action. This harks back to the studies of Hari et al, as well as Chartrand and Bargh. Neuroscientist Vittorio Gallese elaborates ‘Whenever we face situations in which exposure to others’ behaviour requires a response by us, be it active or simply attentive, we seldom engage ourselves in an explicit, deliberate interpretive act. Our understanding of a situation most of the time is immediate, automatic, and almost reflex like.’\textsuperscript{446} These sub-personal processes are generated by what Gallese calls ‘automatic, implicit and non-reflexive simulation mechanisms.’ Gallagher and Zahavi argue that such ‘neuronal resonance processes’ are ‘part of the processes that underlie intersubjective perception.’\textsuperscript{447} Again recalling Gallagher’s description of neonate imitation, such processes can be seen to underpin a direct perception of another person’s intentions, rather than a distinct mental process of simulating their intentions. Gallagher and Zahavi argue that such a perception must therefore be an enactive phenomenon that unfolds over time and involves motor processes.\textsuperscript{448} As elucidated in the prior section of this chapter, experiencing others has a great many involuntary or spontaneous aspects,
it is not always intentional. Elaborating, if intersubjective perception is a sensorimotor and enactive process then such resonance processes must be part of the structure of the perceptual process when perception is of the other’s action.

At the phenomenological level, when I see the other’s action or gesture, I see (I directly perceive) the action or gesture as meaningful. I see the joy or I see the anger, or I see the intention in the face or in the posture or in the gesture or action of the other. I see it. I don’t have to simulate it. And I immediately see that it is their action, gesture, emotion, or intention, and it is extremely rare that I would be in a position to confuse it with my own.\textsuperscript{449}

Phenomenologists such as Max Scheler and Merleau-Ponty agree that ‘in some cases, we can know about other people’s mental states by directly perceiving them.’ Philosopher Soren Overgaard adds that such perceptual accounts of knowledge of other minds are phenomenologically and epistemologically plausible, rendering inferential accounts superfluous.\textsuperscript{450} Performance artists have frequently drawn attention to such mechanisms, shifting them from the pre-reflective to the reflective level. One example is I’m too sad to tell you (1971) a 16mm film (Figure 40) by Dutch-Californian artist Bas Jan Ader (1942-1975) in which he films himself crying to camera. One’s initial response is to feel for the artist’s sadness.

\textsuperscript{449} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{450} Overgaard. Overgaard looks at arguments for and against this thesis 460-479.
However there is also the fact that the film is very constructed and contrived. It begs the question, if the artist is really too sad to explain his sadness, how is he able to make an artwork about it?

Another account of intersubjectivity or the problem of other minds from the phenomenological tradition is the argument from analogy. This theory argues that one has an immediate and direct access to the content of one’s own mind and such self-acquaintance can serve as a point of departure for an understanding of others, therefore ‘we come to know others by analogy with ourselves.’ Scheler argues that the argument from analogy, like simulation theory underestimates both the difficulties involved in self-knowledge and experience as well as overestimates the difficulties involved any experience of others. For Scheler, self-acquaintance is embodied rather than merely mental and a basic acquaintance with others is not merely inferential, one can perceive something of someone else’s mental states in the movements, gestures, facial expressions and actions. Gallagher and Zahavi summarise:

Affective and emotional states are not simply qualities of subjective experience; rather, they are given in expressive phenomena, i.e. they are expressed in bodily gestures and actions, and they thereby become visible to others.

The way in which such states are understood and used will also depend on a larger reading of a social situation. The emphasis is upon the face-to-face encounter, a confrontation with neither a mere body, nor a hidden psyche but with a unified whole, an expressive unity. At this point Gallagher and Zahavi state that phenomenological views emphasise ‘non-mentalizing, embodied perceptual approaches to questions of understanding others and the problem of intersubjectivity.’ This emphasis on embodiment is one of the reasons why these views enjoy such popularity with dance theorists like Maxine Sheets, who wrote The Phenomenology of Dance (1966). Embodiment is a crucial concept to this thesis due to the way in which performance art and choreographed works involve a display or presentation of bodies and behaviour of one party to another in a shared space. The complex relationship between bodies and subjecthood, as explored by Le Roy in Self-Unfinished and the way in which choreography, as argued by Lepecki involves the regulation of bodies by an apparatus of capture also relates to arguments about embodiment and subjection. A more specific example is Sehagl’s Instead of

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451 Gallagher and Zahavi. 201.
453 Gallagher and Zahavi. 203. Once again emphasis is placed upon visible perception, ignoring other kinds such as touch and proprioception.
allowing..., a choreographed work which persists in the exhibition space as an encounter with a body.

As argued by Gallagher, Zahavi, Ryle and Scheler, it is important to recognise the body of the other as it presents itself as a lived body, one that is actively engaged in the world and radically different so that one’s perception of the other’s bodily presence is unique. Gallagher and Zahavi utilise an idea taken from French existentialist philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980) that the body of another is always given in a situation or meaningful context which is co-determined by the action and expression of that very body. Such a distinctive mode of consciousness is labelled empathy by some phenomenologists, returning to the importance of this mode by Chartrand and Bargh. Here empathy is defined as ‘a form of intentionality in which one is directed towards the others’ lived experiences.’ Rather than a mere combination of perception and inference, empathy can describe any intentional act that presents the other’s subjectivity from the second-person perspective, a concept central to witnessing performances or choreographed works. Although empathy is based on perception of another’s bodily presence as well as inference in difficult or problematic situations, a phenomenological conception of empathy involves experiencing the other directly as a person, ‘as an intentional being whose bodily gestures and actions are expressive of his or her experiences or states of mind.’

As part of his perceptual theory of other minds Scheler argues that we are empathically able to experience others minds. Gallagher and Zahavi point out that empathy is like perception in that it is direct, unmediated and non-inferential but it is also unlike perception because it cannot offer one the fullest presence of the empathized experience, this is only available to the subject of that experience.454 Gallagher and Zahavi point out that there is a constitutional difference between experiential access to one’s own mind and access to the minds of others and they argue that it is because of this asymmetry that one can claim that the minds one experiences are indeed other minds. This asymmetry recalls Levinas with his unique conception of alterity, the radical difference of the other is highlighted, ‘the givenness of the other is of a most peculiar kind’ and ‘the otherness of the other is precisely manifest in his elusiveness and inaccessibility.’ Returning to Merleau-Ponty, the embodiment thesis as well as Gallagher’s earlier argument from neonate imitation, both Gallagher and Zahavi argue that embodied being in the world is the bridge or common ground between self-acquaintance and an acquaintance with others as one’s experience of one’s own subjectivity must contain an anticipation of the other.455 Any experience or certain

454 Ibid., 204.
455 Ibid., 206.
way of engaging with the world already involves others and anticipates possible relations and responses to them, there is a chiasmic relationship between subjectivity and intersubjectivity.

For Gallagher and Zahavi, expressive behaviour reveals minds so that the actions and expressive movements of other people are seen as meaningful. Minds are not things visible to only one person and invisible to everyone else. Although different from the way in which minds are directly manifest from the first-person perspective the asymmetry between first person, second and third person access to psychological states should be respected.\textsuperscript{456} According to this view, intersubjectivity is dependent upon the thesis that not all experiences lack a natural expression. For Gallagher and Zahavi intentionality should be perceived in the contextualised actions of others who are perceived as agents whose actions are framed by their practical activities. Thus any relations are mediated through the various pragmatic circumstances of encounters and actions are meaningful in the context of a physical and intersubjective environment: ‘We interpret the actions of others in terms of their goals and intentions set in contextualized situations, rather than abstractly in terms of either their muscular performance or their beliefs.’\textsuperscript{457}

Instances of performance art and choreographed works problematize this correlation between action and expressive movement. Sehgal’s dancer does not roll around on the ground as an expression of an internal mental state, she does so because she is following instructions in order to present a specific choreography to visitors. Any environment, situation or pragmatic context, such as that of an art gallery is never perceived neutrally, neither in regard to one’s own possible actions nor to the actions and possibilities of others. ‘Our perception of the other person, as another agent, is never of an entity existing outside of a situation, but rather of an agent in a pragmatic context that throws light on the intentions (or possible intentions) of that agent.’\textsuperscript{458} Context or situation is crucial for an encounter with another person who is performing as they may be dissembling, executing a task or carrying out an activity at the behest of an artist or choreographer. The unique cultural context of an art gallery means that people one encounters might be performers who have been engaged to act in a difficult, problematic or unexpected

\textsuperscript{456} Ibid., 207.
\textsuperscript{457} Ibid., 211-212. Minissale adds that conceptual categories such as a genre, type of place, scene or script provide numerous situational examples or conceptualizations without which emotions cannot be experienced meaningfully. Emotions appear to result from distributed circuitry throughout the brain within which various brain states for a given emotion arise, each corresponding to a different situated conceptualization. Emotions are continually nuanced by contextual and situational conceptual processing that involves a massive interconnectivity of memory, semantic, sensorimotor and nervous systems. To isolate and emphasise sensorimotor involvement [reading face and body] in this wider connectivity would be misleading. Minissale. 104-105.
\textsuperscript{458} Gallagher and Zahavi, 211.
ways. This means that when encountering them their actions will need to be interpreted in a way that is different to or even the same as they would be in an everyday situation.

The following treatment of empathy is important for an understanding of choreographed works due to the way it provides gives one account of what kind of relation might be activated by choreographed works. Gallagher and Zahavi return to the notion of empathy, linking it to the problem of how one subject can encounter and understand another. Here empathy misconstrues the nature of intersubjectivity because it posits intersubjectivity as a thematic encounter between individuals, where one is trying to grasp the inner emotions or experiences of the other when under normal circumstances understanding of each other is obtained according to Heidegger via ‘our shared engagement in the common world.’ Similarly Aron Gurwitsch argues that ‘we encounter others in worldly situations, and our way of being together and understanding each other is co-determined in its meaning by the situation at hand.’ It is within common and pragmatic situations that expressive phenomena occur therefore what any such phenomenon signifies becomes comprehensible with the whole of a present situation: intersubjective understanding is socially and culturally embedded. What is important is the shared motivational context and situation, the fact that one encounters others in a shared world. Empathy is therefore an ability to experience behaviour as something that expresses a mind or access the life of the mind of others or even the other person’s world in their expressive behaviour and meaningful action however slight. Quoting Merleau-Ponty, Gallagher and Zahavi summarise ‘In effect, to understand other persons I do not primarily have to get into their minds; rather, I have to pay attention to the world that I already share with them.’

The shared world or context of the art gallery or exhibition space is therefore crucial to any understanding of or empathy with someone who is performing a choreographed work.

### 3.4 Criticisms of phenomenological approaches to intersubjectivity

An example of an artwork that choreographs a dyadic and phenomenological relation is *Three Angles* (2012) by Melbourne-based choreographer Sandra Parker (Figure 42). When a viewer sits down upon a chair within the darkened room of the installation, a filmed performer walks in and also sits. Motion detectors were installed within the space so that when a viewer moves, the filmed performer executes a series of pedestrian or everyday movements in response. The aim of the piece is for participants to move and physically engage with the recorded

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459 Heidegger quoted in Gallagher and Zahavi. 211-212.
460 Gurwitsch quoted in Ibid.
461 Ibid., 213.
462 Gallagher and Zahavi, 213.
Parker has explicitly stated her intention for the work to activate a phenomenological relationship and unfortunately this means that it falls prey to the many objections with such approaches. As hinted in some of the objections raised by Gallagher, Zahavi, Ryle and Scheler, phenomenological methods have been criticised from many different positions including philosophical and feminist ones who argue that: phenomenology is too focused upon description rather than sensation; the so-called body described is thin, colourless and urban with a certain relationship to technology; and that phenomenology fails to differentiate bodies creating a so-called abstract, ‘master subject’ that is specifically masculinist and racist, devoid of gender and ambiguous in terms of its historical situation. All of these objections are important due to the way in which performance art history and dance studies frequently appeal to the discipline of phenomenology. As part of my broader argument that choreographed works examine the subject-intersubjectivity relation, it is important to note the complications and dangers associated with the accounts phenomenology gives of such relationships.

Surprisingly, given its emphasis on embodiment, in one interview, philosopher Michel Serres (b. 1930) criticized the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty for being ‘risibly thin and bodiless.’ Serres criticises *The Phenomenology of Perception* for being too descriptive and for creating an ‘ethnology of city dwellers, who are hypertechnicalised, intellectualised, chained to their library chairs and tragically stripped of any tangible experience.’ Similar to Levinas, for Serres, language has a haunting or *spectralising* effect upon bodies, once captured by it they are ‘rendered so soft and nebulous as to be no more than a shade, or a name.’ According to Serres, language is an essential and absolutely homogeneous principle with universal and unvarying effects, whereas ‘The body is the site of the nonsite: a teeming plurality that overruns and overrules every vicious and narrow dichotomy.’ Serres rejects Merleau-Ponty’s language-heavy phenomenology in favour of emphasising sensations.

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465 Connor. 160. Cvejic also mentions a mistrust of verbal language common amongst practitioners of the somatic practice of contact improvisation. Cvejic. 129.
466 Connor. 165
Geographer Gillian Rose concurs with this suspicion of the way in which language is used in phenomenology stating that that there is a ‘queer neutrality’ about the phrase ‘the body’ rendering it strenuously colourless.\footnote{467} Rose’s criticisms are aimed at her own discipline of geography, however much of her critique can also be applied to phenomenology. Accordingly, phenomenology is ‘undifferentiated…all bodies are the same because no body is specified’ yet ‘their very lack of defining characteristics begins to specify them.’ Rose asks ‘But whose, then, is the minimalist, colourless, bounded body/path that represents human agency?’ The performer in Parker’s Three Angles is a young, white women, begging the question of how viewers belonging to one of the many ethnic minorities of multicultural Melbourne would have reacted to the presentation of such a normative and privileged body. Recalling Foucault, bodies are far from natural, they are in fact ‘maps of the relation between power and identity.’\footnote{468} Here skin is colourless, yet if colour is a ‘key signifier of difference’ and ‘only those seen \textit{from} the master subject are designated ‘coloured’ then ‘Whiteness retains its hegemonic position by denying its own colour and so becoming transparent to the critical gaze.’ For Rose so-called ‘human agency’ is masculine and constructed in the image of the master subject,’ a very specific concept of subjechthood is involved in the phenomenological account of intersubjectivity.

\footnote{468} Rose. 361.
Rose’s concerns are echoed by Butler in her specific critique of Merleau-Ponty whose conception of the subject she finds problematic due to its abstract and anonymous status. The ideological character of *The Phenomenology of Perception* is produced by the impossible project of maintaining an abstract subject even while describing concrete, lived experience. The subject appears immune from historical experience... but then reveals itself in the course of the description as a concrete cultural subject, a masculine subject.469

Butler points out that within phenomenology it is as if the subject described were a ‘universal subject’ one that is devoid of gender, devaluing it as a relevant category in any description of lived experience. Hence the subject described ‘resembles a culturally constructed male subject,’ consecrating masculine identity as a model for the human subject and thereby devaluing women.470 This ties into Australian philosopher Philipa Rothfield’s argument that ‘the subject is a false universal’ and that ‘the tendency towards universality’ in phenomenology represents a risk of failing to achieve any kind of generality similar to other enlightenment discourses which ‘covertly assume particular forms of gender, sexuality and ethnicity.’471

Despite Merleau-Ponty’s central thesis that ‘the world is refracted through our bodily sensibilities’ and that human corporeality is the means by which the world is understood, such a relationship is articulated in overly general terms concerning ‘the body rather than, for example, this body.’472 Rothfield argues that phenomenological universalism brings with it:

> an ethical danger that corporeal forms of difference which occur within networks of domination will be elided; that the desire to achieve universality will blind itself to the discriminations performed in the name of sameness.473

Similarly, Rothfield warns that there are many forms of social inequality inherent in social life and that any ‘universal impulse’ is co-opted towards hegemonic forms of utterance and appearance so that the universal is in fact homogenised and difference is effaced according to dominant norms of articulation. If the world is indeed refracted through bodily sensibilities Rothfield asks ‘Is there one means by which refraction occurs or are there many?’


470 Butler. 98.


472 Ibid., 304.

473 Ibid., 306.
Butler notes that in Merleau-Ponty’s later writing he sought to replace phenomenology’s ‘social ontology of the look’ with an ontology of the tactile, ‘a description of sensual life which would emphasise the interworld, that shared domain of the flesh which resists categorization in terms of subjects and objects.’

Rothfield shares in this hope that phenomenology indeed has an ability to engage with kinaesthetic forms of corporeality, explicating subjective dimensions of movement and its perception as well as questions of corporeal and kinaesthetic difference. If anything can be salvaged from phenomenology Rothfield argues that it is its potential to work through difference by approaching lived bodies according to their lived situation. Hence ‘lived body’ becomes lived bodies, pluralising the lived body and allowing the concept to stand as an index of differential corporeal circumstance. Rothfield asks that phenomenology relinquish the idea of universalism and recast lived bodies in pluralised terms, aiming for a ‘regional series of understandings.’ Rothfield’s proposal to relinquish the universal in favour of complex specificity and the particular is realised in one way through her notion of somatic attention as it emerges within an ethnographic framework. Somatic attention will be examined in great length in the next section, however briefly, for Rothfield, somatic attention allows for a ‘differentiated, cultural understanding of body-to-body relationships’ although it too is subject to the vicissitudes of power and dominance in situations of kinaesthetic exchange.

Butler concurs with Rothfield, arguing that Merleau-Ponty’s descriptions claim universality and are abstracted from concrete experience so that they codify and sanction one particular form of cultural organization as legitimate. Pertinent to intersubjectivity, Butler points out that ‘The dynamics of autonomy and dependence characterize human life universally’ and ‘arise from the metaphysical structure of my body.’ Moreover, this dynamic is part of:

> a dialectic of the self and other which is that of master and slave: insofar as I have a body, I may be reduced to the status of an object beneath the gaze of another person, and no longer count as a person for him, or else I may become his master and, in my turn, look at him.

The critique that Butler introduces is critical for phenomenological descriptions of intersubjectivity as well as choreographed works due to the way in which they present a relation of alterity, or someone to be viewed by another. The Master-slave is a metaphysical dynamic which posits the so-called body as always an object for others inasmuch as it is perceived.

Butler utilises the concept of Master-slave dialectic introduced by philosopher G. W. F. Hegel

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475 Butler. 96.
476 Although Merleau-Ponty does not equate the master with the male body or the slave with the female body this master-slave dialectic returns to an argument of Simone de Beauvoir that women are culturally constructed as the Other particularly within Butler’s larger critique of Merleau-Ponty’s theory of sexuality.
(1770-1831) and subsequently elaborated by Alexandre Kojève (1902-1968). Kojève’s master/slave dialectic is a dual and hierarchical opposition, the second term, the slave is inferior to the first term or master. This is relevant to choreographed works in which a dancer or beholder might be considered ‘object’ or ‘other’ to a beholder or choreographer’s ‘subject.’ The first term is positively charged, it is familiar, desirable and favoured, relying upon the second term for its power. The opposition between the two terms means that they are unequal, they cannot exist in a state of ‘mutual and reciprocal recognition.’ The master ‘is recognised,’ while the slave ‘recognises.’ According to this dialectic the relation is a fundamental social one, ‘man is never simply man. He is always, necessarily, and essentially, either Master or Slave.’

Kojève elaborates that ‘the man who wants to be recognised by another in no sense wants to recognize him in turn. If he succeeds, then, the recognition will not be mutual and reciprocal: he will be recognised but will but will not recognize the one who recognises him.’ Butler’s argument that the structure between self and other within phenomenology resembles Kojève’s master/slave dialectic is troubling as it situates the self or subject posited by phenomenology as well as psychology and neuroscience in a position of power, an entity that is recognised but never recognises. Hence the self occupies the position of the master, and the other that of the slave. The same argument can be applied to other areas such as cognitive science and psychology as they also tend to focus upon a very discrete, separated subject and go on from there to examine the social cognition or awareness of others such a subject might have.

Yet there are exceptions to this dominant hierarchy of self and other which have been described earlier on in this section and these moments are worth salvaging before continuing. From his discussion of neonate imitation or one’s earliest experience of self and others Gallagher surmises that a proprioceptive self is always already coupled with the other. According to Gallagher the visual experience of another, their action and expression, rather than mere outward appearance, communicates in a code related to oneself and that such communication is organised on the basis of an innate system that does not necessarily give priority to one’s own body awareness over and against perception of the other. Hari et al argue that people often automatically adopt another person’s postures or movement patterns, sometimes even in synchronisation as part of an attempt to understand, be understood as well as to demonstrate the sharing of feelings and goals. The automatic, unintended and passive effect of perception on behaviour argued by Chartrand and Bargh is part of their chameleon effect as non-conscious mimicry of postures, mannerisms,

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478 Kojève, Introduction to the Reading of Hegel, 8.
facial expressions and other behaviours creates a sequence from environment to perception, and from perception to behaviour demonstrating empathy and togetherness and evading the self/other construction.

Theses from cognitive science, particularly situated cognition composed of embodiment, embeddedness and extension might also add important nuances to the social and relational aspects of cognition and phenomenology.\footnote{479} Such theses relate to my own argument that choreographed works produce complex and special forms of social relations which actually interrogate what it means to be a subject and activate similar concerns. Such concerns include: what a body can do or does, the affect of another person; and the importance of specific cultural environments and the way in which they might impact upon the significance or a-significance of intersubjectivity-as-art. According to the \textit{embodiment thesis} cognition depends on the body, not just on the mind; the \textit{embedding thesis} posits that cognitive activity often utilises structures in the social and natural environment and the \textit{extension thesis} argues that the boundaries of cognition extend beyond the boundaries of individual organisms. According to each of these positions mental activity is dependent on the situation or context in which it occurs. The \textit{extension thesis} in particular dictates the importance of intersubjectivity, for it argues that the boundaries of cognition extend into the social, involving other people. Philosophers Philip Robbins and Murat Aydede propose that any cognition is dependent or equivalent to a body, utilising structures in natural and social environments and extending beyond the boundaries of individual organisms.

Supporting these arguments are philosophical antecedents from thinkers such as Dewey, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and Wittgenstein who concur with the importance of context as argued by Gallagher, Zahavi and Gurwitsch. For American philosopher John Dewey (1859-1952) cognition emerges from relations between an organism and the physical and social environments engaged with as a series of situations and interactions. Cognition for Dewey is a social event, a form of action that is socially situated so that intersubjective interactions shape perceptual processes. Similarly, Merleau-Ponty’s concept of affectivity means that one’s situation shapes one’s perception and German philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) also argues that ‘I find myself already included with others’ and such being-with-others, particularly being situated with others is an integral part of the structure of human existence.\footnote{480} For German


\footnote{480} Heidegger quoted in Shaun Gallagher, “Philosophical Antecedents of Situated Cognition” in Aydede and Robbins eds., 41.
philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951) the very significance of any language is dependent upon the linguistic community and environment it is part of so that any practice is defined by its physical and social situation and concepts are determined by the human interactions that surround them. Such interconnected accounts of cognition argue against a downwards-oriented operation of self-other, anticipating the arguments of the following section which will look at more fluid and dispersed concepts of intersubjectivity. Of course, cognitive science has many more theories relevant to intersubjectivity. Some of these will be mentioned in the next chapter, in particular, ideas related to extension and distribution into particular socio-cultural environments, such as the art gallery or the museum are the most relevant.

3.5 Somatic attention, kinaesthetic empathy and affect: theories of intersubjectivity from dance studies

Since the 1960s scholars from the field of dance studies have frequently turned to phenomenology in order to create accounts of the lived experience of dance. Dance theorist Maxine Sheets wrote: ‘Through the lived experience we arrive not only at the sense of any particular dance, but also at the essence of dance.’ The questions that mattered to her included ‘What is dance? How does it appear? What are the structures inherent in that appearance.’ Sheets turned to phenomenology in order to create a ‘descriptive analysis of dance,’ one that presupposes nothing in advance so that one’s perspective remained continually fresh and open, ‘an uncharted and exciting path of discovery.’ Despite the objections discussed above to phenomenology, as well as the problems with such essentialist accounts of dance, phenomenological approaches are still taken by some dance scholars today. Also utilised is knowledge from cognitive science which dance scholars, including Sheets, use in order to furnish themselves with theories of cognitive embodiment or embodied knowledge as well as possible implications of proprioception and mirror neuron systems. Armed with such concepts, scholars work towards theorising perception that is not limited to the visual and explore the potential affects of another’s body. In the final section of this chapter, theories of kinaesthetic empathy as well as somatic empathy or attention and affect studies will be examined with a view to creating a more well-rounded account of encounters between individuals, or intersubjectivity. The terms somatic empathy, kinaesthetic empathy and affect add a less

481 Wittgenstein quoted in Gallagher “Philosophical Antecedents of Situated Cognition,” in Aydede and Robbins eds., 46.
machinic, retinal, ocular or vision-centric account of the perception of choreographed works that explore processes of intersubjectivity-as-art. Sehgal’s *Instead of allowing*... cannot be reduced to merely how it appears to the eye, as discussed in the previous sections, ethical, social, political and affective dimensions are also involved. Terms such as somatic and kinaesthetic empathy and affect are necessary in order to broaden accounts of the perception of performing or choreographed bodies, going some way to match their nuances and complexity as they probe the subject-intersubjectivity relation.

Somastics, an area often appealed to by dance practitioners, is derived from the Greek work *soma* meaning ‘the living body in its wholeness’ referencing processes inclusive of the entire being – body, mind and the environment in which they coexist, here the soma is a changeable, fluid entity that responds to both external and internal stimuli.⁴⁸⁴ Somatic practice is important to this thesis because it is one technique that those trained in the area of dance often appeal to when in intersubjective experiences of performance or dance composition. The emphasis is on physical sensation and the fundamentally unique experience of each person. Somatic practices associated with dance studies include: Alexander Technique, Feldenkrais Method as well as yoga, *tai-chi-chuan* and *zazen*.⁴⁸⁵ Aspects of Feldenkrais Method can be seen in Curham’s *Gentle Resting on the Bonnet of a Popular Car*, during which the artist attends to his participant, making micro-adjustments to their body and supports so that they might be more relaxed. Also worth mentioning is the somatic technique of contact improvisation, one centred on relational or intercorporeal dimensions utilised by dancers and choreographers, an intersubjective technique that is utilised in some of the choreographed works discussed later on in this thesis.⁴⁸⁶ Paris-based academic Isabelle Ginot, who takes a thoroughly critical view of this area of dance studies, summarises that the criterion of all somatic methods is to generally aim to be conscious and

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⁴⁸⁶ Contact Improvisation as it is known today is a technique which came to prominence in the US during the 1960s and 1970s with practitioners such as Steve Paxton, Nancy Stark Smith, Lisa Nelson and Simone Forti. Officially founded in 1972 it is a style of dance composition based on personal and bodily experience. As a dance technique or mode of performance, Contact Improvisation is a movement form involving at least two individuals who maintain a spontaneous physical exchange through sharing weight, support, common or counterpoised momentum. It deals with so-called organic bodily movement in response to physical forces like gravity or constraints that can range from surroundings, architecture or even restricted clothing or costume. Generally heavily reliant on the physical laws of gravity as well as momentum there is a strong emphasis on technical ability and training, improving and expanding the existing possibilities of a body in relation to given physical forces. Crucially the ‘contact,’ between improvisers can involve physical touch as well as eye contact Cvejić. 130-131. Contact Improvisation has also been known as: open choreography, situation-response composition, in-situ composition, spontaneous determination, open or total improvisation.
considerate of a whole person.\textsuperscript{487} Attention is given to self-awareness, the improvement of coordination and the improvement of certain movement qualities so that movement is reversible and mild, a foundational principle is that of alteration or the virtue of variation. Recalling Guattari’s thesis of micro-political practices that might lead to a re-organisation of a given subjectivity in relation to various groups, Alexander Technique and Feldenkrais Method aim to reorganise a range of acquired ‘coordinations or automatisms. Each works on how gestures are initiated before attempting to de-construct and re-organize gestural \textit{habitus} and motor command.\textsuperscript{488} Aspects of this re-organising of acquired behaviour are activated in Sehgal’s \textit{Instead of…} in which a visitor to an art gallery walks into a room expecting to engage with a range of objects and instead is confronted with a dancer.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.8\textwidth]{figure42.png}
\caption{Kalisolaite Uhila, \textit{Mo'ui tukuhausia}, 2012. (Live performance, Two-weeks). Two-week performance at Te Tuhi, 19 March – 01 April, 2012, as part of ‘What do you mean, we?’ Pakuranga, Auckland.}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{487} Ginot. 16.
\textsuperscript{488} Ibid., 20.
Empathy has already been discussed as part of approaches to intersubjectivity from cognitive science and phenomenology. It is concept central to any engagement with choreographed works that explore due to the way in which they involve multiple human participants. Chartrand and Bargh argued for empathy as perspective-taking, which is an engagement in perceptual activity that is directed at another person. Similarly Gallagher and Zahavi argue for empathy as ‘a form of intentionality in which one is directed towards the others’ lived experiences.’ Empathy presents another’s subjectivity from a second-person perspective. It can involve perception of another’s bodily presence, inference in a difficult or problematic situation as well as an experience of the other directly as a person or intentional being whose ‘bodily gestures and actions are expressive of his or her experiences or states of mind.’ It is this last conception that is relevant for somatic empathy or awareness. Most often empathy is not intentional and can therefore be manipulated by instances of performance art that allow one to reflect on the non-intentionality of empathy and its manipulation. Pain and endurance in performance art is one way to create transformative and non-normative empathy. The centrality of the face and the role facial recognition plays in intersubjectivity has been deconstructed and problematized in performance art since the 1970s. Recent examples of this include: Mike Parr’s Close the Concentration Camps (2002) in which the artist’s lips, eyes and ears were sewn together or Kalisolaite Uhila’s 2012 iteration of the work Mo’ui tukuhausia (Figure 42) in which the artist covered his face with black fabric and a hood.

_Somatic awareness_ is a bodily based sensing of one’s own and another’s experience as _somatic empathy_. Such awareness is important to choreographed works because it provides modes of perception and engagement that are not limited to the visual. Important theorizing of somatic attention was done by anthropologist Thomas J. Csordas who stressed the importance of embodiment to subjectivity and introduced his own notion of _somatic modes of attention_ that can be identified in a variety of cultural practices. A concept of somatic attention is useful for this thesis due to the way in which it enriches way in which one might attend to a choreographed work. Central to Csorda’s thesis is the importance of _attention_ and _situation_. Csordas defines attention as a ‘consciously turning toward’ someone or something, combined with further

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489 Gallagher and Zahavi. 203.
490 For example: Gina Pane _Le Lait Chaud_ (1972) in which the artist made small incisions in her skin and face to camera; Hannah Wilke _S.O.S. Starification Object Series_ (1974) in which the artist is photographed with small vaginal shapes made of chewing gum adhered to her face and the public surgical procedures altering the physiognomy of Orlan’s face (1990-1993).
491 The title of this work is a Tongan phrase meaning ‘a life set aside.’ It will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Four.
consideration and anticipation of the characteristics of the object of attention.\textsuperscript{493} Unfolding the role of attention in the very constitution of subjectivity and intersubjectivity as bodily phenomena, Csordas argues that this notion of ‘turning toward’ implies bodily and multisensory engagement rather than mere visual perception.

Tying into Chatrand and Bargh’s propositions on behavioural matching, Rothfield points out that bodily acts of perception can be described as forms of \textit{somatic attention} that involve firstly an attending with or through the body with the caveat that each body’s mode of attention is culturally, social and intersubjectively formed.\textsuperscript{494} Intercorporeal understandings and kinaesthetic sensibilities are embedded in forms of practice, there are links between the embodied rituals of everyday life, ethics and aesthetics.\textsuperscript{495} Similarly for Csordas, any experience of bodies, our own as well as others is \textit{situated} upon the phenomenological horizon, or the ambiguous point at which the act of constitution and the object that is constituted meet. Csordas points out that sensory engagement to and with the body in the immediacy of an intersubjective milieu might be culturally elaborated. Attending to aspects of others’ bodily forms, positions or movements can be visceral and might involve an erotic, moral or aesthetic sensibilities.\textsuperscript{496} Crucially Csordas summarises that there is a cultural patterning of bodily experience and an intersubjective constitution of meaning through that experience, attending to and with the body involved ‘culturally constituted somatic modes of attention.’\textsuperscript{497} Somatic attention provides an account of how one might attend to the performers, dancers or fellow participants within a choreographed work in a way that is: conscious and considerate of a whole person, a multisensory engagement and an attending with and through one’s entire body rather than just one’s eyes.

Before moving onto a discussion of kinaesthetic empathy and anticipating the fourth section of this thesis, it is worth noting Ginot’s criticisms of the somatic practices peripheral to dance studies. Sharing Rothfield’s concerns, Ginot points out that somatics acts as a normative system, it is an ideological construction or ISA and as such must be examined critically:

\begin{quote}
Behind the insistence on the singularity of each corporeality, most somatic methods have as a backdrop a homogenous, universal, ahistorical and occidental body… an essentialist ideal of the body
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{493} Alfred Schutz quoted in Warburton. 138.
\textsuperscript{494} Philipa Rothfield “Differentiating Phenomenology and Dance” in Carter and O’Shea. 311.
\textsuperscript{495} Rothfield. 315.
\textsuperscript{496} Ibid., 139-140.
\textsuperscript{497} Ibid., 140-141.
reasserts itself, one that brings with it illusions of the natural and organic.\textsuperscript{498}

Ginot encourages a de-naturalisation of somatics in order to resituate the complexity engaged each time something changes in relation of a subject to its physical, symbolic, social, economic and political environment. As examples, Ginot posits somatics that can deal with processes of decolonization, prosthetics or cyborg bodies, queer practices, as well as politico-pharmaceutical or hormonal experiments. Attention to and with a body is thereby complicated and problematized, making its aim of conscious and consideration of a whole person even more important. Somatic modes of attention or ways of attending are culturally and politically constituted. As argued by Rothfield, and in the tradition of Foucault, bodily experience is culturally patterned, embedded in forms of practice and embodied rituals of everyday life, ethics and aesthetics. If one perceives and understands the world in a culturally specific manner then this will affect somatic attention as the manner by which one engages with another. However a crucial aspect of somatic attention remains a turning toward another which implies bodily and multisensory engagement. This concept of bodily engagement leads onto a discussion of kinaesthetic empathy.

Earlier on in this chapter empathy was discussed as perspective-taking, the engagement in a perceptual activity or intentionality directed at another person’s lived experience, an intentional act presenting another’s subjectivity from a second-person perspective. An empathy that is somatic might involve the perception of another as an intentional being with bodily gestures and actions that express her experiences or states of mind. California-based choreographer and scholar Susan Leigh Foster argues that the residence of the concept of empathy within the domain of psychology over the course of the twentieth century meant that it was usually investigated as an emotional rather than a physical experience.\textsuperscript{499} Foster points out that the very qualification of empathy with the adjective ‘kinaesthetic’ demonstrates the pervasive assumption that empathy is emotional rather than physical. Performance scholar Dierdre Sklar names her own technique for observing the actions of others a practice of \textit{kinaesthetic empathy}, arguing that any empathy entails a kinaesthetic level of recognition. Recently the kinaesthetic dimension of empathy has been reintegrated into neuroscientific investigations of mirror neurons and theories of affective proprioception. However, according to Foster, even during the 1880s empathy was considered ‘a process in which one’s entire physicality comes to inhabit the

\textsuperscript{498} Ginot. 23. Another aspect missing is the eroticism, a powerful pre-reflective interpretational mode that engages with all of the senses.\textsuperscript{499} Susan Leigh Foster “Introducing Choreographing Empathy” in Susan Leigh Foster. \textit{Choreographing Empathy: Kinesthesia in Performance}. London and New York: Routledge, 2011. Print. 10.
other. Foster also gives a brief account of the history of the neologism kinesthesia, which was coined in 1880 in response to research establishing the existence of nerve sensors in the muscles and joints that provide awareness of the body’s positions and movements. Since then the term has been revised, so that at the start of the twentieth century it was largely replaced in neurological investigations by the concept of proprioception, a more focused system that adjusts for the body’s changing relationship to gravity. By the mid twentieth century kinaesthesia it was revived by perceptual psychologist James J. Gibson who posited a perceptual system that synthesized information about joint positioning, muscular exertion, and orientation within space and in relation to gravity. And more recently kinesthesia has been taken up by neurobiologists exploring how the brain senses bodily movement.

Sklar argues for kinaesthetic analysis as a crucial methodology in understanding cultural distinctiveness in dance and everyday life. For Sklar kinaesthetic analysis might be one way in which to attend to the qualitative dimensions of movement, the kind of flow, tension, and timing of any given action as well as the ways in which any person’s movement interacts and interrelates with objects, events, and importantly other people. Such a theory of kinaesthetic analysis is another way in which one might attend to a choreographed work. Theorist Randy Martin advocates for the social kinaesthetic, a set of movement attributes or traits that make evident deeper affinities between movement and culture. Martin emphasises the politics implicit in any given kinesthesia, so that ‘movement repertoires’ engage with religious and gendered symbolic systems and there is a connection between kinaesthetic experience and cultural values. One example of this could be Leahy’s thesis of the ways in which museum bodies have been constructed as described in the first chapter of this thesis. Another example of a movement-

500 Ibid., 10-11.
501 Ibid., 7.
502 In terms of the history of dance studies, the most prominent account of kinaesthetic empathy is that of dance critic John Martin (1893-1985). Martin attempted to define the relationship between dancer and spectator using terms such as ‘inner mimicry’ and kinaesthetic sympathy to refer to spectator’s muscular and emotional responses to watching dancers. He argued that inner mimicry of dance movement had a physiological dimension involving movement memory, anticipation and associated changes in psychological states. In a position that closely resembles mimicry and mirror neuron theory combined with presumptions about emotions, Martin proposed that inner mimicry of a dancer’s movements allowed spectator’s direct access to dancer’s feelings. Dee Reynolds and Matthew Reason, “Introduction” in Dee Reynolds and Matthew Reason, eds. Kinesthetic Empathy in Creative and Cultural Practices. Bristol, Chicago: Intellect Ltd, 2012. Print. 19.
503 Foster. 8.
reertoire might be the behaviour one is expected to display within the white cube or spatio-subjectivisation, a repertoire that might be disrupted by certain performances or choreographed works such as Le Roy’s *Self Unfinished* or Curham’s *Gentle Lying* that unsettle prescribed modes of spectatorship.

California-based dance theorist Edward C. Warburton argues that dance can elicit a very wide variety of empathetic responses of which empathy, or a ‘sharing the feelings of others’ is ‘only one part of a large spectrum of a person’s possible vicarious responses towards others.’

Warburton summarises:

> We ‘empathize’ with others when we have 1) an affective state 2) which is isomorphic to another person’s affective state, 3) which was elicited by observing or imagining another person’s affective state, and 4) when we know that the other person’s affective state is the source of our own affective state.⁵⁰⁴

Warburton divides empathy into three types, they may blend into each other, and each is reliant on at least partially dissociable neural systems: motor empathy, cognitive empathy and emotional empathy. *Motor empathy* is the tendency to automatically mimic and synchronize movements with those of another person, *cognitive empathy* refers to the ability to represent the internal mental state of others, their thoughts, beliefs, desires, intentions and knowledge and *emotional empathy* is a response to the emotional displays of others, their facial and vocal expressions and body movements, and other emotional situations. Warburton points out that phenomenological accounts of dancing describe somatic empathy as a ‘feeling in’ movement which provides a foundation for kinaesthetic empathy or the ‘feeling of’ movement as well as mimetic empathy or ‘feeling for’ movement in dance. Warburton argues that these three forms of empathetic experience in dance all emerge from motor resonance and mimicry mechanisms. For Warburton, although dance has a visual component is it ‘fundamentally a kinaesthetic art whose apperception is grounded not just in the eye but in the entire body.’

Warburton’s division of empathy is useful as an analytical tool, rather than being representative of the ways in which choreographed works engage with empathy. Such a division is a useful way of breaking down the various kinds of empathy that a choreographed work might produce. Whereas motor empathy is present and actual, cognitive empathy involves knowing the text, script, situation or premise of the work including the place it is performed within and any other prior knowledge. And emotional empathy may arise as a combination of these as part of experience. Particular instances of Sehgal’s *Instead of...* can be used to demonstrate this simultaneity of empathy in the following ways: *motor empathy* is engaged when witnessing the

⁵⁰⁴ Warburton. 71.
dancer assume the position of lying spread out on her back along the floor, this could lead to an off-line activation of brain areas which would be involved in executing such a movement. At the same time cognitive empathy could involve imagining the dancer following a sequence of learnt actions as part of Sehgal’s choreography. In terms of emotional empathy one might imagine the tranquillity or boredom of the dancer as she slowly moves within the room for hours on end.

Warburton argues that in dance the source of empathy is fundamentally somatic, his description of somatic empathy is a bodily-based sensing of one’s own and another’s somatic experience. Such an ‘empathic and connected knowing’ allows contemporary somatic practitioners and educators to know or help others either with or without verbalization while guiding their movement. Somatic empathy involves a sensing of things in the body movement of others such as signals, vibrations or sensory cues about another’s state or intention. Relating back to the earlier description of becoming-animal, mimetic empathy, posited by Warburton as a kind of cognitive empathy, involves a performer’s simulated or outward mimicry, ‘the ability to put oneself imaginatively into the place of another, reproducing in one’s own imagination and physicality the emotional tenor and movement form of another.’ Such mimetic empathy is not merely re-presenting or re-imagining, it has a decisively corporal, physical, tangible quality from which movement emerges and from which it derives its significance. It is fundamentally creative, requiring the construction of an experience constrained by an artwork or situation, rather than mere passive reception. Lastly, kinaesthetic empathy, according to contemporary cognitive neuroscientific research, is a kind of covert simulation of physical action that has the possibility, according to Warburton of reaching a level of emotional response or emotional empathy: ‘a kinaesthetic empathy suggests that when, even while sitting still, dancers (and others) can feel they are participating in the movements they observe.’ Tying back into arguments about the mirror neuron systems, for spectators to watch a movement can involve a ‘feeling of’ such movement, there is a resonance or simulation of movement sensations so that for Warburton, observers of dance are in some sense ‘virtually dancing along.’

Earlier on in this chapter, Simondon’s concept of affectivity, a relational layer constituting the centre of individuality, a tension or liaison between the relation of the individual to itself and its relation to the world was discussed. For Simondon, such affectivity is something irreducible to an individuated being, exceeding it as a pure potential. Indeed when examining what might be

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505 Warburton. 74.
relational about an individual, or in giving an account of how the actions of one person might affect another, choreographers and dance scholars often appeal to the concept of affect, particularly as it was articulated by Netherlandish philosopher Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677) via the writings of Deleuze and Guattari. Such theories of affect provide an account of what Lepecki calls a ‘mode of relationality.’\footnote{Lepecki. 11.}

To every relation of movement and rest, speeds and slowness grouping together an infinity of parts, there corresponds a degree of power. To the relations composing, decomposing, or modifying an individual there correspond intensities that affect it, augmenting or diminishing its power to act; these intensities come from external parts or from the individual’s own parts.\footnote{Deleuze and Guattari. 283.}

For Deleuze and Guattari ‘affects are becomings,’ yet they also relate to the Body without Organs, by avoiding the definition of a body by its organs and functions, its species or genus characteristic, what is sought is a way to ‘count its effects.’ Spinoza focuses on the question of what a body can do, rather than what it is. According to Sabisch these two concepts can be read as a direct response to the question of what a body can do because: \textit{becoming} accounts for the qualitative transformations of bodies and \textit{Body without Organs} creates intensive zones of difference.\footnote{Sabisch. 10.} Sabisch argues that in his \textit{Ethics}, Spinoza characterises the body as something which is not merely ‘given’ and ‘explicable through its components,’ but according to ‘its power to affect and be affected.’\footnote{Sabisch, 8.} For Sabisch, Spinoza’s argument about the degree of a body’s power to be affected and to affect will determine whether its power to act is increased or diminished and therefore indicates the limits of what one can do. Such a Spinozan body ‘obliges thought to enquire about the pathways from passions and affections to an increase in action, a more powerful degree of participation, which is orchestrated through a multiplicity of relations.’\footnote{Ibid., 8-9.} Sabisch argues that while Spinoza transforms a question about ontology ‘what is a body?’ to a question about ethics, Deleuze extends the onto-ethical questions of what a body can do to a question of methodology. Instead of what ought to be, the question becomes ‘what is to be done next?’\footnote{Ibid., 9-10.}

Deleuze and Guattari together call the ‘\textit{latitude} of a body the affects of which it is capable at a given degree of power, or rather within the limits of that degree. \textit{Latitude is made up of intensive parts falling under a capacity, and longitude of extensive parts falling under a relation.}’ To

\begin{itemize}
    \item \textit{Latitude} is made up of intensive parts falling under a capacity, and longitude of extensive parts falling under a relation.
\end{itemize}
focus on the dancer who performs a choreography as a work of art is to focus upon a body’s latitude, to focus on the beholder of an instance of choreography is to explore a body’s longitude. In a crucial passage, the importance of affects of a body, especially in relation to another body:

We know nothing about a body until we know what it can do, in other words, what its affects are, how they can or cannot enter into composition with other affects, with the affects of another body, either to destroy that body or to be destroyed by it, either to exchange actions and passions with it or to join with it in composing a more powerful body.\textsuperscript{513}

This account of a circulation of affects and their transformation as they are taken up as part of a larger assemblage or becoming is crucial to the way in which concepts of affect are utilised by choreographers and dance scholars due to the way in which they create and account of the relations between dancer/performer and beholder/spectator. For Sabisch each choreography creates singular relations with its audience members. Such a singularity is due to an assemblage of very specific relations: ‘relations to objects, to music, to bodies, relations between bodies, relations of visibility, relations between forces, relations of movement and rest, etc.’\textsuperscript{514} For Sabisch, relations are not describable, fixed or signified objects, they are subtle and changeable with different coexisting durations relying on ‘a compound of other relations.’ Sabisch’s account of relations takes a Spinozist slant on choreography, for her, to focus attention on relations means to have to give an account of the becomings, or qualitative transformations within the relational assemblage that is a choreography, asking the question ‘what can choreography do?’ For Sabisch the potential of choreography encompasses a capacity to create new relations.

Sabisch’s proposition that choreography creates new relations is important in clarifying the difference or relation between subjectivity and intersubjectivity and helping one to understand choreographed works. In the other direction, choreographed works can add nuances to this difference or relation by involving dancers whose bodies demonstrate the power to affect and be affected. Cvejić’s contempt for theories of authentic movement and kinaesthetic empathy lead her to utilise the concept of affect, in particular expression of movement accounted for by a composition of affects and sensations.\textsuperscript{515} Similar to the way in which Deleuze and Guattari posit \textit{unnatural participation}, or an affectability that is no longer that of subjects, Cvejić wishes to detach movement from its subject and demonstrate:

how the composition of movement relies on another understanding of expression, one that does not belong to the individual self of the performer, or to its attender, or to the relation between these two terms,

\textsuperscript{513} Deleuze and Guattari. 284.
\textsuperscript{514} Sabisch. 7.
\textsuperscript{515} Cvejić. 165.
but that instead arises in performance in and for itself and has an existence of its own.\textsuperscript{516}

Cvejić returns directly to Spinoza’s writings in order to describe affects as ‘adequate ideas of actions of the mind,’ or the concept of affect as a product of rationalist thought. For Cvejić it is the Spinozan background of affects and passions which will enable her to argue for choreography as ‘a constructivist composition of affects, an externalist expression which gives rise to concepts.’\textsuperscript{517}

Importantly, Cvejić explains the difference between Spinoza’s affection and affect. As part of his mind-body duality, affection is a form of inadequate knowledge that belongs to the body, ‘the existence of our body, of external bodies, and of our mind alike is known to us only through the external affections our body undergoes, so long as it endures.’\textsuperscript{518} Thus affection is a modification of a body, a change on its surface by the impingement of other bodies and accompanied by the idea of this modification, or by the affect. So affection is a state of the affected body implying the presence of an affecting one and affectus or “affect” is the transition from one state to another felt by the affected body. For Spinoza affections are emotions because they involve an affected body and an imagining of the cause of the affecting body mixing affect, or the sensation of a change in one’s own body affected by an external body, and an imagining.\textsuperscript{519} Such a process can yield neither knowledge of the external body, nor an understanding of one’s own body. Even though one might form an idea of the external affecting thing as if it had a reality independent of our immediate perception of it, such an external body is in fact independent, it is composed of parts that are not related in the affection of our body. Therefore, affections give rise to inadequate ideas. Similarly according to Deleuze’s reading of Spinoza, feeling is something that arises from ‘a subjective appropriation of affect through the image of affection.’\textsuperscript{520}

Cvejić argues that empathy is in fact affection, because it involves the imagination and the identification or imitation of affects. Cvejić quotes Spinoza:

\begin{quote}
By affect I understand affections of the body by which the body’s power of acting is increased or diminished, aided or restrained, and at the same time, the ideas of these affections. \textit{Therefore, if we can be the adequate cause of any of these affections, I understand by the affect an action; otherwise, a passion.}\textsuperscript{521}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{516} Ibid. Deleuze and Guattari. 285.  
\textsuperscript{517} Ibid. Cvejić requires an account of concepts in order to support her overall thesis about choreographing problems or Deleuzian concepts.  
\textsuperscript{518} Cvejić. 166.  
\textsuperscript{519} Ibid., 167.  
\textsuperscript{520} Ibid., 168.  
\textsuperscript{521} Spinoza quoted by Cvejić. 166.
For Spinoza most affects are passions that need to be managed by reason, yet he also acknowledges affects that might ‘approximate or coincide with adequate ideas of the mind, or actions.’ Crucially, for Spinoza it is possible for the mind to be the cause of an active affect, action of the mind or an adequate idea. These affects are conceived by the mind solely from the dictate of reason and not from encounters with other bodies that affect us.\footnote{Ibid., 166-167.} Spinoza makes a distinction between passive affects and active affects, one that will prove crucial for understanding the affects a choreographer aims to produce or what Lepecki would call ‘an exchange of affects.’\footnote{Lepecki. 128.} Cvejić takes Spinoza’s thesis of active affects conceived by the mind and argues that these might also be produced by a performer’s body. Hence affects result from a choreography that is ‘a rational construction, which problematizes emotional expression through experimenting with ways of composing affects from bodily motion.’

Cvejić utilised French philosopher Pierre Macherey’s argument that affect is an interstitial event, one formed in the intersection of action and reaction:

> It does not find itself neither in the affecting body nor in the affected body, nor in the parts or in the parts of the parts of the bodies, but produces itself somewhere between these elements. The corporal event can be neither localized nor analysed in regard to the bodies, or their parts or the parts of their parts; it is impalpable, evanescent, tied to the fleeting character of the occasion that provoked this event or affection.\footnote{Macherey quoted in Cvejić, 168.}

All of these nuances and possibilities need to be kept in mind in certain performances and choreographed works that engage with shock, disorientation and affect, for example in Parr’s *Close the Concentration Camps* when one is confronted with the isolated artist’s pain. It is from Macherey that Cvejić takes an account of affect that is no longer a quality or predicate of a body, instead it is ‘an effect of modification of experience as an independent thing of existence.’ Affect can then be conceived of as impersonal, and ‘divorced from the dynamic of the interiority of a subject.’ Deleuze concurs, arguing that affect is ‘purely transitive, and not indicative or representative, since it is experienced in a lived duration that involves the difference between two states.’\footnote{Deleuze quoted in Ibid.} Emphasising duration, for Deleuze affect is ‘a transition between two states of affection’ this helps him to posit ‘a gradual process of transformation from passions or positive affects of joy to actions.’\footnote{Ibid., 169.} According to Deleuze affects ‘aren’t subjectivist feelings, since they don’t arise from the affection of the subject. Instead, active affects arise from the subject’s

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\footnote{Ibid., 166-167.}
\footnote{Lepecki. 128.}
\footnote{Macherey quoted in Cvejić, 168.}
\footnote{Deleuze quoted in Ibid.}
\footnote{Ibid., 169.}
increased power of acting (*puissance*), of forming compositions or *agencements* in which they emerge.’ Therefore affects confuse the distinction between subjectivity and intersubjectivity.

Cvejić also co-opt a conception of *affect* from theorist Brian Massumi who claims that the primacy of affect ‘arises from a gap between content and effect of expression, between cognitive and sensorial registers in perception.’ For Massumi affect is based on the intensity of resonance between multiple sensorial stimuli. Such intensity as a different order of connection operates in parallel to the signing order while being disconnected from it. Crucially Massumi argues that affect emerges as an autonomous relation between resonating sensations and is therefore *synesthetic* so that multiple senses participate with one another. Affect then becomes a capacity, a ‘measure of a living thing’s potential interactions’ and its ‘ability to transform the effects of one sensory mode into those of another.’ Affect is therefore ‘matter of synesthetic transversal and transformative power of intensity.’ Massumi’s synesthetic affect is useful for accounts of choreography as a composition of affects due to the way in which it can avoid being limited to what is visually perceived or cognitively processed.

In terms of affect, an encounter with a particular performance, one that choreographs certain intersubjective relations and realises affects might allow a temporary departure or relief from the always-already subject. The previous analyses of intersubjectivity are not merely for the benefit of a separated first person, the idea is that particular artworks might enable or arrange for experimentation and various becomings so that one might forget oneself as part of a spontaneous intersubjective relation, the freedom of two spontaneities coming together. I propose that affect might molecularise the subject by challenging the logic of self-consciousness and subjectivisation. This means that intersubjectivity becomes possible beyond that shared by separate, controlled, logical and economically useful subjects. The question is whether it might be possible for choreographed intersubjectivity to allows subjectivity and intersubjectivity to shimmer, becoming indiscernible for as long as an artwork lasts in order to perhaps be re-channelled into new experience.

To return to philosophers mentioned at the start of this chapter, Arendt posited the unexpected nature of actions, similarly Althusser’s *philosophy of the encounter* written from the 1970s to late 1980s stresses the importance of improvisation and spontaneity and the primacy of matter or materiality:

> the materialism of the encounter is the materialism… of a process, a process that has no subject, yet imposes on the subjects (individuals or

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527 Ibid., 174.
In a way, Althusser introduces a new relation, one between subjects and an encounter or process that dominates with its own unpredictability, logic and operations. In relation to performance this could be translated into a certain trust required by the choreographer/artist so that one might encounter their work with a sense of openness to the unexpected. As part of his philosophy of the encounter, Althusser repeatedly refers to the importance of ‘catching a moving train.’

The materialist philosopher, in contrast, is a man who always catches ‘a moving train,’ like the hero of an American Western. A train passes by in front of him: he can let it pass and nothing will happen between him and the train; but he can also catch it as it moves.

Althusser proposes a materialism that is aleatory or haphazard, one that is dependent upon uncertain events or occurrences. Althusser recounts, ‘before the formation of the world, an infinity of atoms were falling parallel to each other in the void.’ He continues: ‘an atom ‘swerves’ in the course of its fall in the void, inducing an encounter with the atom next to it.’ As part of his materialism of the encounter, Althusser stresses ‘elements destined to encounter each other and, by virtue of their affinity, to ‘take hold’ one upon the other.’ Althusser summarises, for a being to be, an encounter has to have taken place. Such an encounter takes-hold in a random, haphazard or aleatory way. It could be argued that a performance created by an artist might also act as a clinamen or swerve, it might act as a change in the direction of art history, intervening in a state of affairs and produce an encounter with an encounter that might result, perhaps only temporarily, in the inauguration of a small world. Importantly, every encounter is haphazard or aleatory in terms of its origins as well as its effects, it might not have taken place at all – ‘its possible nonexistence sheds light on the meaning of its aleatory being.’

Accordingly, attending to a performance might involve being thrown into something that involves chance and is extraordinary, one might choose to catch a moving train and by sheer strength of arm hoist oneself aboard. Althusser champions a materialism of the encounter, a materialism of a process, of contingency and the aleatory, one that defends categories such as ‘the void, the limit, the margin, the absence of a centre, the displacement of the centre to the margin (and vice versa), and freedom.’

531 Ibid., 197.
532 Ibid., 193.
533 Althusser, “Philosophy and Marxism: Interviews with Fernanda Navarro, 1984-87” in Althusser, Philosophy of the Encounter, 261.
In conclusion, by explaining various levels of description in this chapter, the main aim has been to suggest that in order to give an account of the complexity involved in choreographed works, what is required is a dynamically-complex approach, rather than a reductionist one. Any activation of a system is always-already within a continuously dynamic set of activations in emotional, cognitive and visceral systems. Any reductionist theory or approach which seeks to itemise dynamic processes is untenable. This is also the case with attempts to reduce subjectivity and intersubjectivity in art encounters down to discrete units or ingredients. An interdisciplinary approach is required, one with multiple levels of description to reflect a dynamic complexity of activities which takes place within an intersubjective art encounter. Neither cognition, nor visuality, perception, phenomenology nor philosophy can take precedence as they are all commingled within experience.
4 Choreographing intersubjectivity: posthuman, post-internet, queer and decolonising choreographies

In my first chapter, Jordan Wolfson’s metallic marionette served as an emblem for bodies made docile by the authority of museums and choreographer/artists. The ways in which one is able to engage with art, or look, walk, think and rest are manipulated within the space of the art museum by architecture, display, instruction and example as well as by parameters, scores and instruction created by either artists, choreographers or curators. Regulation, indeed self-regulation seems to be an inevitable reality of the museum, one is choreographed by one party or another. Artworks by the Bouillon Group, Menzies, Linder, Neshat and Garcia produce relations which explore what it means to be a subject and realise processes of intersubjectivity-as-art, presenting individuals who, like Wolfson’s puppet, are entangled within complex relations with various authorities that dictate their movements, whether they be religious, salutary, professional, psychoanalytic or choreographic.

However in this chapter Goumarre’s proposition of Pinocchio as a disobedient wooden boy, not yet finished but already with no respect for his father, is an appropriate representative for artworks which realise intersubjective encounters that might undermine authorities. I will argue that certain choreographies or performances might challenge, subvert or even evade the manipulative structures realised within and by art museums by enacting intersubjectivity in ways that can affect new intersubjectivities. Aspects of earlier chapters can contribute to such an argument. In Chapter One I introduced Foucault’s concept of the heterotopia which theorises a deviant ‘counter-site’ that might enable an interrogation, neutralisation or inversion of habitual relations. Utilising Brown’s thesis of space that is matrixial there is also the proposition of a subjective space of possibilities and dissensus, one that contests masculine, Newtonian space, challenging prior categories so that a previously cis-gendered space might be challenged, opened up and become heterotopic. Continuing on from this argument in Chapter Two an analysis of Le Roy’s Self-Unfinished included an appeal to Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of becoming as a process of non-identitarian transformation that conceives of the possibility of experimental practices that might go some way in destabilising authoritarian structures. Employing particular acts, Le Roy escapes the restrictions of spatio-subjectivisation via the appearance of transformation and the creation of choreographed movements that present effeminisation, becoming-animal or even a body stripped of meaning. Each assumes a subordinate relation to a male majority utilising the minoritarian as an active medium of becoming. And the previous chapter examined discipline-based theories of intersubjectivity which might help to provide a critical framework for understanding the structure, effects and exchanges produced by choreographed works. In this chapter I argued for an interdisciplinary
approach which reflects the dynamic complexity of activities that take place within an intersubjective encounter, encounters in which visuality, multi-sensory perception, phenomenology and philosophy are commingled within an experience.

The first part of this chapter examines artworks in which a choreographer manipulates a crowd or multitude of performers, complexifying spatio-subjectivisation and inviting an interrogation of unitary acts of subjection, subjectivity and intersubjectivity. The examples introduce concepts of swarming, muscular bonding, collective frenzy, distributed cognition and the multitude. Concepts from Utrecht-based philosopher Rosi Braidotti will be utilised, in particular her argument about posthumanism, in order to extend an analysis of artworks which go some way in contesting the authority and power which is co-opted by museums, choreographers and artists as well as championing a novel approach to the concept of intersubjectivity. The central question is: how does posthumanism reconceive intersubjectivity? Posthumanism can be utilised to critique the normative and patriarchal aspects of phenomenology and many other accounts of intersubjectivity that focus upon the importance of human facial recognition. The oppositions, hierarchies and categories reinforced by museums are challenged by selected artworks via devices of confusing unitary identity, blurring the boundaries between individuals and re-structuring human relations to animals, objects as well as the planet earth. Also of importance are techniques of de-familiarisation such as darkness. The second part of this chapter examines artworks that involve choreographies that are self-taught, subsequent to viewing dance content which has been uploaded to the internet from dancers and choreographers across the globe. The kinds of relations between those who conceive of particular movements or steps and those who might come to perform them is diffuse and complex, far from the authoritative relations between a singular choreographer and his dancers as described in my first chapter. The final part of this chapter turns to choreographies performed by those categorised by the museum and its binary logic as sexualised and racialized: choreographies that are queer, de-colonizing or ‘counter-hegemonic.’ Such counter-hegemonic choreographies also present their own particular permutations of intersubjectivity, enacting dissensus in ways that can affect new intersubjectivities.

4.1 An unruly mob: swarming, social bonding and the multitude

Included within Chapter One was Leahy’s thesis of performing museology, a museology that promotes the museum as a site of social and corporeal practices. There is the possibility as part of such a philosophy for a museum to ‘unsettle spectatorship’ or deliberately change the usual

script and familiar choreography of viewing. According to Leahy the annual commissions for the Turbine Hall in the Tate Modern in London often interrogate relationships between bodies, artworks and space. One example of such an artwork is Sehgal’s three month performance *These associations* in 2012. Although at first the performance may seem amorphous and spontaneous, it in fact realized very specific, complex and authoritative relations between choreographer/artist, his participants and museum visitors. The performance was built around an east-west pendulum movement, a response to the Turbine Hall’s division into two distinct, lopsided spaces (one level, one sloping; one leading nowhere, one open-ended). The work explored processes of intersubjectivity-as art, involving a cluster or collective of individuals, 300 in total who were chosen for ‘certain qualities of openness, subtlety, curiosity towards the other, and the ability to engage in reflective conversation without dominating it.’ They were also expected to sing, withstand high amounts of physical activity and move in a coordinated fashion.

The participants performed free association or flow, breathing life into the hall, making it resonate with their voices, animating it with gestures, walking, jogging, running up and down, sitting, kneeling or lying down on its polished concrete floor for hours on end. One way of conceiving Sehgal’s performers is as a collective or human swarm, a group of individuals who have been recruited and who subsequently gather. Throughout the performance, individual participants could choose to separate themselves from the group to address a visitor, couple or small group before returning to the fold. Responding to a set of questions participants were meant to ask themselves such as ‘When have I experienced a sense of arrival?’ these interactions between individual participants and visitors relied on a hook or arresting image to capture the visitor’s imagination in an opening gambit and then progressively draw them into a conversation. Such ‘moments of intimacy’ acted as ‘nodal points’ in a larger work which was ‘conceived as a meditation on the individual in relation to the mass.’ The only restrictions to these conversations were that they could not discuss the work itself or art in general. Occasionally participants would holler ‘This piece is called *These associations* and it’s by Tino Sehgal.’

*These associations* ‘explores the differences between the collective or swarm and the individual, and how the two can coexist or not.’ The way in which Sehgal’s performers moved in a group, similar to the foraging or flocking behaviour of social insects and animals, demonstrated collective intelligence and interactions. Such swarming intelligence challenges habitual notions

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535 Agnieszka Gratza “Conversation Pieces: Taking part in Tino Sehgal’s *These associations* ” Frieze No. 152, January/February 2013, 21-22.
537 Majid et al.
of intersubjectivity, extending it to involve tacit communication, synchronization and dispersion. There were no leaders, yet the group still functioned and behaved cohesively, demonstrating the tension between autonomy and following. The swarm-like behaviour demonstrated in These Associations enacted or produced intersubjectivity, evoking the way in which manipulations of rhythm, breath and movement might be utilised to create a de-subjectivizing affect.\footnote{As discussed in John Protevi. "Rhythm and Cadence, Frenzy and March: Music and the Geo-Bio-Techno-Affective Assemblages of Ancient Warfare." \textit{Theory & Event} 13.3 (2010) Print. Protevi theorises that rhythmic marching, singing and the shouting of war cries may have been used to trigger berserker rage and mindless frenzy in Viking warriors. His thesis suggests that musical pulse, rhythm and breath might be manipulated to create collective, de-subjectivizing states.}

As part of an account of the unfolding of intersubjectivity into multiple dimensions, such a blurring of boundaries between subjects, artworks and the location or environment of the art museum recalls arguments from cognitive science about intersubjectivity that are more complex than those covered in the previous chapter. Robert Pepperell argues that art can be extended to include subjects, therefore any artistic activity involves a highly distributed process existing as a function of numerous minds, diverse materials, technologies, actions all of which occur in a socially structured environment such as an art gallery or museum.\footnote{Robert Pepperell “Art and Extensionism” in Riccardo Manzotti, ed. \textit{Situated Aesthetics: Art Beyond the Skin}. Exeter, UK: Academic Imprint, 2011. Print.} Other relevant arguments include those from Jelle Bruineberg and Erik Ritveld who detail the ways in which a particular environment, such as an art gallery might function as an ‘ecological niche,’ one that offers particular possibilities for skilled action and response.\footnote{Jelle Bruineberg and Erik Rietveld. "Self-organization, free energy minimization, and optimal grip on a field of affordances." \textit{Frontiers in Human Neuroscience} 8 (2014) Print.} Ian Sutherland and Sophia Krys Acord argue that works like These Associations set up conditions for interactive experiences that enable knowledge that is experiential to take place in a distributed manner, inseparable from the art museum or context of its production and reception.\footnote{Ian Sutherland and Sophia Krzys Acord. “Thinking with art: from situated knowledge to experiential knowing.” \textit{Journal of Visual Art Practice} 6.2 (2007) Print.} Similarly Evelyn Tribble argues that cognition might be distributed or off-loaded by some subjects onto an environment to then be encountered by others and used as tools or prosthetics for particular cognitive activities.\footnote{Evelyn Tribble. "Distributing Cognition in the Globe." \textit{Shakespeare Quarterly} 56, No. 2.Summer (2005) Print.} According to theorists Pedro Silva et al, co-ordinated behaviours as part of a performance must be based on the formation of interpersonal synergies between performers, co-ordination must be the result of collective actions executed on the basis of shared affordances or collective opportunities for action.\footnote{Pedro Silva, et al. "Shared Knowledge or Shared Affordances? Insights from an Ecological Dynamics Approach to Team Coordination in Sports." \textit{Sports Med} 43 (2013) Print.} What is shared by those engaged in co-ordinated actions is not
representative knowledge but rather affordances, the opportunities for or constraints on action and being-in-the-world.

In the face of such an entanglement of art, environment and subjectivity, the question remains of how, within the larger choreo-political formation of the swarm one might mobilize one’s own agency and ‘move otherwise.’ The performances of These associations explored very specific processes of intersubjectivity-as art, they were always overseen by the choreographer, maintaining his apparatus of capture. Sehgal was present, almost full-time at the start, usually somewhere in the hall or behind the scenes. Before the museum opened the artist would talk his participants through sequences, explaining what he had envisioned. Due to his personal prohibition of images, objects or texts in his works, all of his instructions or scores were delivered verbally. Participant Agnieszka Gratza noted ‘The artist’s presence in our midst was encouraging but it could equally be debilitating: it took me a while before I could relax into the piece without feeling self-conscious under his watchful eyes… we were, after all, only the human clay he worked with – the most brittle of artistic materials.’ The intersubjective relations orchestrated by Sehgal in These associations were improvisational and spontaneous, oscillating between a large collective and more intimate encounters. According to the artist, the whole point of the performance was to realise this tension between the singularity of specific performers and their existence within a swarm. Sehgal reflects that after a visitor has had a really intimate moment with a specific performer, ‘if you’ve just heard this story about their mother or something,’ one can no longer see them as merely part of the swarm. ‘Once they go back in… you’ve had this moment with them, with that particular person, you can’t see them as being part of the collective anymore… they always stand out’ in their singularity.

One example of a choreographed work that explores processes of intersubjectivity-as-art which can be examined in relation to the question of how one might maintain or reclaim one’s singularity from within a choreography is Alicia Frankovich’s Defending Plural Experiences which was exhibited at the Australia Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne in 2014. This is a complex work involving video, performance and installation components. The live performance involved a crowd of participants striking various poses and performing certain movements, sometimes in unison, sometimes in small groups, or provisional clusters, sometimes in pairs and sometimes alone (Figure 43). All of the poses, movements and configurations were selected, choreographed and directed by the artist and taken from vernacular images on the

545 Gratza, ‘Conversation Pieces,’ Ibid.
internet. These images included stock images, computer generated figures, publicity photographs of musicians and models, instances of photojournalism, as well as amateur family photos and documentation of athletic teams and individuals. Other prompts were more linguistic, there were choreographic phrases such as: zombie legs, airport pace, or cat which were utilised by the artist. Utilising ubiquitous formats of portraiture as well as tropes of the alien, zombie and avatar signals Frankovich’s interest in broader categories of the human, a diversity reflected in the casting of her performers. An emphasis was placed on those who were in some way marginal, transitional or in the process of some kind of transformation and this was highlighted by the filmed performance taking place in the butterfly house of the Melbourne Zoo.\(^{547}\) Selected trained dancers performed alongside women who were pregnant, those transitioning from one gender to another, young people, bush doofers, menopausal women as well as members of a circus. A central ‘company’ was supplemented with additional viewers or canned audience members who would wander through the performance, observing and occasionally participating.

Historian William McNeill argues for the importance of what he calls ‘muscular bonding,’ the visceral pleasure that might be gained from ‘moving rhythmically together in dance and drill.’ Exploring this aspect of intersubjectivity, McNeill posits that such practices can have anarchic and innovative possibilities, they can be consciousness-altering and develop group cohesion, solidarity and consolidation.\(^{548}\) Similar arguments are made by Deleuze and Guattari as part of what they call deterritorialising molecular becomings which can evade prior stratified structures of organisation.\(^{549}\) Yet such lines of flight and instances of becoming-indiscernible or like everyone else must be approached with caution, there is a fine line between becoming like everyone else and the parades of totalitarian regimes. This returns to the notion of choreography as an art of command, Lepecki points out that such power is ‘genealogically majoritarian in the sense that it names a very specific masculinist, fatherly, Stately, judicial, theological and disciplinary project.’\(^{550}\) He goes on to advocate for a choreography that is becoming-minoritarian, in which the dissenting, somatic-political capacities of bodies are put towards new political use.

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Figure 43 Alicia Frankovich, *Defending Plural Experiences*, 2014. (Live performance, 4-hour duration). Commissioned for the Framed Movements exhibition at the Australia Centre for Contemporary Art, as part of the 2014 Melbourne Festival.
The overarching title of Frankovich’s choreographed work comes from political theorist Paolo Virno, who according to the artist posits the *multitude* as something ‘in-between the individual and collective,’ redefining masses beyond concepts of nationalism to create a more fluid group of ‘many individuals,’ ones that might be considered *minoritarian*, re-organising themselves according to their own autonomous and post-human principles.\(^{551}\) For Virno, intersubjectivity as a multitude signifies ‘plurality’ or ‘being-many – as a lasting form of social and political existence,’ it consists of a network of individuals.\(^{552}\) Inspired by Simondon, Virno adds that the singularities within the multitude exist at a ‘point of arrival’ they are ‘the ultimate result of a process of individuation.’ The individual in Virno’s multitude ‘is the final stage of a process beyond which there is nothing else, because everything else has already taken place.’ Frankovich’s performers enact intersubjective relations by forming provisional alliances, families and groupings, only to disperse again.

The concept of the *swarm* activates tensions between the inhuman and the post-human. Swarming is collective activity that vibrates between subjectivity and intersubjectivity, between the swarm as a group and the crowd as a multiplicity, between bodies that subsume through contamination and bodies that might articulate.\(^{553}\) Acts of swarming involve gathering, then breaking apart, becoming-molecular, only to re-group and re-form again in various configurations. Sehgal and Frankovich activate this vibration and problematize binaries of molar/molecular and majoritarian/minoritarian choreography through transversality or a passing through, so that swarming might be free from the molar/majoritarian but not be so molecularised that it is purely a stochastic indulgence.

Lepecki unravels choreographic autocracy and obedience utilising dancer-philosopher Erin Manning’s concept of *leadingfollowing* according to which ‘to follow is to initiate,’ where ‘initiate’ blurs and confuses ‘leading’ and ‘following.’\(^{554}\) Rather than a model of an artist as author choreographing a crowd of bodies *en masse*, there might be what Lepecki describes as ‘a formation of an a-personal force field of actions and counter actions, emerging and dissolving as ever-multiplying actions and counter actions.’ So the question remains as to how the performers initiated-followed and maintained their singularity from within Frankovich’s choreography or art of command.

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\(^{551}\) Alicia Frankovich. ‘defending plural experiences’ Email communication with the author. 18 November 2015., 2015. Web.


\(^{553}\) For choreography that creates relations of articulation and contamination see Petra Sabisch, *Choreographing Relations: practical philosophy and contemporary choreography* (Munchen: epodium, 2011).

\(^{554}\) André Lepecki ‘From Partaking to Initiating: Leadingfollowing as Dance’s (a-personal) Political Singularity’ in Gerald Siegmund and Stefan Hölscher (eds.) *Dance, Politics & Co-Immunity* (Zurich: diaphanes, 2013).
Within the choreographed work, Frankovich’s multitude moved together, sometimes performing actions in a co-ordinated way, sometimes acting separately. Performance theorist Kai van Eikels points out that self-induced synchronization never leads to perfect uniformity but always retains a difference between the rhythms, the reality of ‘doing things together separately’ is that there is the freedom of going on to do something that has already been started.\(^{555}\) This is demonstrated in Frankovich’s performers’ frequent hesitations, the lags and pauses between each actions and position. They never move completely in unison, there are irregularities, different rhythms and paces as each performer takes their time, adjusts themselves, negotiate their space or territory, silently engages their partners or groups before then executing various attitudes or tableaux. Frankovich remembered that ‘there were diverse instances of re-embodiment or ‘plural ways of doing things… rather than an assimilation into one mode of behaviour.’\(^{556}\) Similarly, curator Hannah Mathews perceived that each participant/performer definitely performed their singularity … as each instruction was open to individual interpretation even when performing in a small or dispersed group … Each person was also chosen individually, one at a time in relation to another rather than as one block-like links forming. I think the way Alicia approached the casting reflects a real focus on the individual among the collective. The collective wasn't 'right' without each individual being 'right'.\(^{557}\)

In terms of reading Frankovich’s *Defending Plural Experiences* as a choreographed work which enacts intersubjectivity, producing it for the duration of the work in ways that can affect new intersubjectiveivities, this is supported by Guattari’s arguments as mentioned in the last chapter. Guattari described practices of experimentation on a microsocial level that might develop diverse modalities of group-being, ones that might enable a distancing from normalized subjectivity through processes of singularization.\(^{558}\) Utilising a principle of ‘group-Eros’ Guatarri champions an interest in human groups of various different sizes as well as subject-groups which open onto the socius and the cosmos rather than be limited by simple and habitual triangulations. Each individual who took part in the performance, possessed their own differences and singularities. Each was temporarily summoned together into a multitude or crowd, as part of a choreographed work in order to be together separately for a spell, to be managed in processes of choreography, *leadingfollowing* or being together separately.

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556 Frankovich. 2015.
557 Mathews. 2015.
4.2 The posthuman: post-anthropocentrism, darkness and defamiliarisation

The final section of this chapter uses concepts from Utrecht-based philosopher Rosi Braidotti, in particular her argument about posthumanism, together with various choreographed works which go some way in contesting the authority and power which is co-opted by museums, choreographers and artists as well as championing a novel approach to the concept of intersubjectivity. Firstly it is important to note that from the 1970s there have been many actions by artists attempting to unravel the authority and authoritative relations set up by museums. Hans Haacke critiqued the social system of art institutions in conceptual and cognitive terms with works such as Shapolsky et al. Manhattan Real Estate Holdings, a Real-Time Social System, as of May 1, 1971, an exhibition of a series of photographs and documents with which he drew attention to the commercial interests that supported the museum’s institutional structure. However more embodied critiques include Acconci’s 1970 Proximity Piece which involved the artist visiting the Jewish Museum in New York City and standing near another visitor, intruding on his or her personal space. The following year Trisha Brown staged Walking on the Gallery Wall (Figure 44) at the Whitney Museum. As part of this ‘equipment piece’ Brown’s dancers stood, walked and ran parallel to the floor along two adjacent walls, whilst suspended in special harnesses, rigged on cables to trolleys, on industrial tracks along the ceiling. Thus the very act of walking around the gallery was interrupted and altered, also changing the very orientation of the performers in relation to spectators. As mentioned earlier, in 1973 Laderman Ukeles activated the very threshold of the art museum by scrubbing its front steps. By assuming the duties of the cleaning staff of the museum and explicitly performing them, Laderman Ukeles made visible activities not normally seen by visitors to museums and also conducted activities not normally associated with performers or artists. The activities habitually performed within art museums and galleries was further challenged by artists involved in relational aesthetics in the 1990s such as Tirvanija whose cooked meals encouraged gallery visitors to sit and chat while sharing a meal. Such instances of performance art or intersubjectivity-as-art have seen artists play with proximity, orientation and service in order to question the habitual forms of behaviour expected by art institutions.


However another strategy is to challenge the very theoretical foundations of such institutions and this is an approach enabled by posthumanism. Posthuman thought contests the authority of the art museum or gallery by questioning the centrality of the human and his achievements which such institutions were built to celebrate. Braidotti’s thesis seeks to reveal a deconstruction of humanism as a constraining factor in subjectivity, an argument that also has implications for intersubjectivity. This is relevant to my thesis due to the way in which the structures of authority of the museum are accompanied by certain presuppositions and implicit values. The institutional thinking of the museum and the white cube presents the always-already predicament in which artists find themselves, the inherited structures of authority that exert their influence on art, the body, subjectivity and intersubjectivity. Such premeditated structures also demand allegiance to certain undeclared and implicit presuppositions about the human, what it means to be human, often understood to be ‘natural’ evolutionary and normal, but really masking political, ideological traditions that favour the white, imperialist male corresponding to the points earlier made by Rose and Rothfield in relation to geography and phenomenology.

Braidotti’s theories are crucial for this thesis due to the way in which they challenge humanism, or ‘man as the measure of all things.’ Humanism promotes a very specific and restricted sort of ‘human,’ it is a view predicated on eighteenth and nineteenth-century renditions of classical
Antiquity and Renaissance ideals.\textsuperscript{562} The dominant cultural model of universal Humanism is re-perpetuated by museums and the motor for its cultural logic is the binary of identity and otherness, central to the museum’s ‘universalist’ pose is a logic that is binary with its positioning of ‘difference’ as pejoration’ recalling Kojève’s master/slave dialectic. Such association of difference with inferiority impacts upon the subject-intersubjectivity relation, with ‘essentialist and lethal’ connotations for those who are branded as others: ‘these are the sexualised, racialized and naturalized others,’ women, indigenous peoples and animals who are reduced to the less than human status of disposable bodies.\textsuperscript{563} This is a very particular concept of the human, one that is instrumental to intersubjective practices of exclusion and discrimination. It is with the aid of such a concept that humanism spells out a systematized standard of recognisability or sameness by which all others can be assessed, regulated and allotted to a designated social location.\textsuperscript{564}

Braidotti argues that the ‘posthuman predicament’ stems from the ‘anthropocene,’ the current historical moment in which the Human has become a geological force capable of affecting all life on this planet. This necessitates a re-thinking of the basic tenets of interaction with both human and non-human agents on a planetary scale, recalling Latour.\textsuperscript{565} For Braidotti the critical condition of humanity means that a ‘qualitative shift in thinking’ is required, in particular thinking about the human, or ‘the basic unit of reference for our species, our polity and our relationship to other inhabitants of this planet. For Braidotti what is required is the devising of new social, ethical and discursive schemes of subject-formation to match the profound transformations we are undergoing.\textsuperscript{566}

According to Braidotti, theorists who unfold the productive potential of the posthuman predicament are genealogically traced back to the 1960s and 1970s when an activist brand of Anti-Humanism was developed by post-structuralists, the anti-universalism of feminism, anti-colonial phenomenology as well as anti-nuclear and pacifist movements.\textsuperscript{567} All had in common a sustained commitment to work out the implications of posthumanism for shared understandings of the human subject. Post-structuralist theorists sought a way to deal with understandings of human subjectivity removed from dialectical oppositional thinking and movements such as Marxism which were criticised for their ‘humanistic arrogance’ in

\textsuperscript{563} This has particular resonance for decolonising choreographies as discussed later on in this chapter.
\textsuperscript{564} Braidotti. 26.
\textsuperscript{565} Ibid., 1,2,5,12.
\textsuperscript{566} The profound transformations described by Braidotti include: lone-wolf shootings in everyday environments, the increasing use of drone warfare, the extreme exploitation of homogenous crops and cattle, climate destabilisation as well as advancements in biotechnology and artificial intelligence.
\textsuperscript{567} Braidotti, 46, 16-25.
continuing to place Man at the centre of world history. For Braidotti, anti-humanism consists of de-linking the human agent from a universalistic posture, particularly as ‘Man’ is an historical construct, contingent to values and locations. Tying into the critiques of phenomenology mentioned earlier, such a ‘Man’ is conceived as male, white European, handsome and able-bodied. Such an abstract masculinity is in fact mere patriarchal posturing and triumphant whiteness. Hence humanist universalism is objectionable on epistemological, ethical and political grounds.

Braidotti’s anti-humanism means she objects to the unitary subject of Humanism, preferring to replace it with a more complex and relational subject framed by embodiment, sexuality, affectivity, empathy and desire. Anti-humanist feminism rejects unitary identities indexed upon a Eurocentric and normative, humanist ideal of ‘Man.’ Additionally, due to the way in which it is impossible to speak in a unified voice about women, indigenous peoples and other marginal subjects, the emphasis falls instead on issues of diversity and difference. Echoing Rothfield’s emphasis on approaching lived bodies in pluralised terms, according to their lived situations, acknowledging complex specificity and the particular, Braidotti argues that what is required instead is a political economy of difference, an intersectional analysis which argues for the methodological parallelism of gender, race, class and sexual factors, investing politically in their complex interactions. Alternative ways of conceiving of the human from a more inclusive and diverse angle produces a so-called ‘crisis of the majority.’ Emancipatory movements have been driven and fuelled by what Braidotti refers to as the resurgent or structural ‘others’ of modernity: women’s rights movement, anti-racism, de-colonization, anti-nuclear and pro-environment. Each marks a crisis of the former humanist centre or dominant subject-position.

Ecology and environmentalism is another source of inspiration for critical posthumanism due to the way in which they rely upon an enlarged sense of inter-connection between self and others. What is important is a respect for the diversity of living matter and human cultures, a reverence for the sacredness of life, a deeply seated respect for all that lives. An ecological posthumanism raises issues of power and entitlement and calls for self-reflexivity on the part of the subjects who occupy the former humanist centre.

For Braidotti, a perspective that is posthuman works towards elaborating alternative ways of conceptualizing the human subject. Central to Braidotti’s thesis is the proposition that contemporary science and biotechnologies affect the very fibre and structure of the living, dramatically altering our understanding of what counts as the basic frame of reference for the

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568 Ibid., 26-30.
569 Ibid., 37.
570 Ibid., 47-48.
human today.\textsuperscript{571} Braidotti aims to create a re-integrated posthuman theory, one that includes both scientific and technological complexity, simultaneously being critical and aware of its implications for subjectivity. In such a posthuman situation, a human, individualized self is not assumed as the deciding factor or main subject. What is envisaged instead is a transversal inter-connection or an assemblage of human and non-human actors. Pragmatic experimentation, rather than humanist values, is required in the face of the posthuman powers of the recent developments in technologies.\textsuperscript{572}

Recalling Sehgal’s \textit{These Associations} (2012) and Frankovich’s \textit{Defending Plural Experiences} (2014), Braidotti defines the critical posthuman subject within an eco-philosophy of multiple belongings, a relational subject constituted in and by multiplicity. An ethical bond is promoted, a posthuman ethics for a non-unitary subject proposes an enlarged sense of inter-connection between self and others, including the non-human or ‘earth’ others, rejecting self-centred individualism.\textsuperscript{573} For Braidotti, climate destabilisation and the realities of contemporary biogenetic capitalism with its cloned cattle and rodents bred for the purposes of research into human health, highlights the global, mutual interdependence of all living organisms, including those that are non-human. Human interaction is therefore re-conceived as an affirmative bond locating the subject in the flow of relations with multiple others. Braidotti argues that critical posthumanism is linked to a move beyond anthropocentrism.\textsuperscript{574} A concept of life is thereby expanded towards the non-human.

But the question is, how does posthumanism reconceive intersubjectivity? How might choreography situate itself not only in re-performing the museum, but re-performing the human museum? How can choreography perform the posthuman – thereby escaping the limits of traditional humanism and its baggage of normative assumptions? And how might it be utilised to dissolve the authoritative relations created by museums with visitors, choreographers with their dancers, or participants with each other? A central tenet of Braidotti’s posthumanism is positing the universe as monistic, or made up of intersections of affective relations and raw cosmic energy. This thesis originates with Spinoza and was re-habilitated during the 1970s by scholars including Althusser and Deleuze. According to Braidotti there is a direct connection between \textit{monism}, the unity of all living matter and post-anthropocentrism as a general frame of reference for contemporary subjectivity.\textsuperscript{575} Spinoza’s argument is that matter, the world and humans are not dualistic entities structured according to principles of internal or external

\textsuperscript{571} Ibid., 40.  
\textsuperscript{572} Ibid., 45.  
\textsuperscript{573} Ibid., 49.  
\textsuperscript{574} Ibid., 50.  
\textsuperscript{575} Ibid., 55-57.
opposition. Matter is one, driven by the desire for self-expression and ontologically free. Such a ‘Spinozist legacy’ consists of an active concept of monism, that of ‘vital materialism,’ where matter is vital and self-organizing.

Figure 45 Trisha Brown, *Floor of the Forest*, 1970. (Live performance, installation, metal pipes, used clothing). Re-performed as part of Documenta 12, at Museum Friedericianum, Kassel, Germany, 2007.

One way in which artworks indicate the monism of the universe, challenging the oppositions, hierarchies and categories enforced by the museum, is by confusing unitary identity and blurring the boundaries between individuals. Such techniques could be considered part of bioexperimentation of *body without organs*, due to the ways in which they unhook separated individuals from their points of subjectification. The choreographed works discussed in this section utilise such techniques in order to probe the subject-intersubjectivity relation and producing intersubjectivity in unexpected ways, so that new intersubjectivities might ensue. Returning to a work first performed in 1970 then re-performed as part of an exhibition in 2011, Trisha Brown’s equipment piece *Floor of the Forest* (Figure 45) altered the orientation of an everyday activity. In this work, two performers traverse a rope grid, undressing and dressing themselves in the clothes which are also suspended from the frame. Brown, who was one of the original performers reflects:

Two people dressed and undressed their way through the structure. It was done as naturally as it could be done. A normally vertical activity performed horizontally and reshaped by the vertical pull of gravity. It was strenuous. Great strain and effort to support the body weight while negotiating buttons and zippers. We rested at times, and when we rested
hanging down, an article of clothing became a hammock. The audience ducked down to see the performers suspended or climbing below the frame, or stretched upward to see the activity above.\textsuperscript{576}

For Brown a key element to the work is the way in which it invites audience members to reconsider their perceptions of movement. \textit{Floor of the Forest} re-frames the habitual activity of dressing, reconfiguring it by making it a physical reconsideration of effort and gravity. Crucially, each time a performer moves from one piece of clothing to another, undressing and dressing she shifts herself from one part of the grid to another, from one unit to another, unfixed and open to possibility. Each piece of clothing is like a different identity, so that the way in which performers weave in and out of them confuses unitary identities.

In French choreographer Boris Charmatz’ \textit{Levée des conflits} (2010) 24 dancers perform 25 movements, at any one time there is always a missing movement as one action is not being performed (Figure 46).\textsuperscript{577} It has been shown in multiple contexts, including the sculpture atrium of the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The repetitive actions begin with sweeping circular movements on the surface of the ground with one hand, from there the movements progress and include a rocking back and forth of the torso with arms swinging freely, kneeling down with elbows on the ground, rocking the pelvis back and forth in the air, dragging other dancers,

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure46.png}
\caption{Boris Charmatz, \textit{Levée des conflits extended (Suspension of conflicts extended)}, 2010. (Live performance for 24 dancers, 1h40 approx.) Performed at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2013.}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{577} Ibid., 130.
spinning and rolling back and forth, jumping and running. As the piece progresses, the momentum builds to an extreme intensity that highlights points of unison in rhythm. Similar to affect, each movement is individualised or realised by an individual for a spell, before it moves on to be enacted by another performer. Charmatz describes the way in which ‘Each dancer is caught in a movement permeable both to the dancer that precedes him or her, and to the one that follows, in order to create a choreography where every part can be seen simultaneously. Bodies replace one another continuously.’

Just as choreographed actions flow through various different bodies in *Levée des conflits*, a monologue flows through different performers within the film *Gaps* (2014) by Australian artist David Rosetzky. In this work four dancers, Dimitri Baveas, Lee Serle, Jessie Oshodi and Rani Prameti share a monologue previously delivered by one person. Towards the beginning of the looped film, Rani describes her experiences engaging with other young women who come from very different socio-political backgrounds. The first time this is heard as a voice-over during which the footage shows Rani as well as another dancer Jessie, stretching. At a later point in the film all four dancers sit in a row on a studio floor (Figure 47). Three are on their knees, one has his legs bent in triangles beneath him. They all look towards the camera with their hands placed straight on the ground in front of them, their fingers extended forwards. Moving from left to right, beginning with Rani, the performers use their hands to create a mechanical sequence.

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578 Charmatz quoted in Ibid.
of movements, each part interlinks with that of the person beside them and flows across from one side to the other. Hands make movements back and forth along the floor, passing from one dancer to the next. Lee begins to say the same monologue recited by Rani earlier: ‘And there were gaps in experiences. Most people have never been through a revolution, and most people…’ The monologue continues, spoken sometimes by one performer, then by another, or by two at the same time, it continues:

Rani: have never witnessed the things that I…

Rani and Jessie: thankfully got to witness.

Jessie: Some of which have left me, um there’s some horrible things as well

Jessie and Dimitri: that happened,

Dimitri: it wasn’t just all inspiring. But there was this gap, you know,

Dimitri and Lee: between me

Lee: and the other girls in that they hadn’t had to go through that so recently. You know? What that means when there’s complete

Jessie: social and political upheaval, and people hoarding food from the supermarket, and you know, not being sure

Rani: if your parents were going to come home from the day. And riots breaking out

Rani and Dimitri: and the city burning around you, you know like

Lee: most of those girls have never been through that, and I wouldn’t wish that on them. But there was this

Lee and Dimitri: gap, you know

Dimitri: in experiences and

Rani and Jessie: formation of self.

All: Yeah.

The way in which dancers perform a sequence of movements choreographed by someone else, in this case not the artist but the choreographer Stephanie Lake, and deliver words as part of a script collectively written by them, in collaboration with a writer Anna Zagala; the way in which movements, sequences of action and dramatic narratives are executed, shared and repeated all point to the way in which bodies might act as vessels for shared words and deeds, or in other words complicated intersubjective relations.
Choreographed works explore processes of intersubjectivity-as-art in various ways: whereas in Brown’s work bodies move in and out of the same pieces of clothing, in Charmatz’ work they move in and out of choreographed actions, and in Rosetsky’s film they instantiate previously spoken sentences. Identity and boundaries are blurred by a confusion of where bodies begin and end in Charmatz’ *Magma* (2007). This work problematizes individual bodies, and almost literally illustrates the complexity of the subject-intersubjectivity relation by producing a very particular intersubjective configuration. Recalling Ono’s event score ‘Touch Poem’ from the introduction of this thesis, that instructs a group of people to touch each other, Charmatz’ *Magma* is a response to another instruction or provocation: ‘to touch every part of your teacher’s body with every part of your own body.’  

In the film there is a close shot of five dancers who are naked and lying horizontally, locked together according to Wood ‘in a tangled head-to-toe embrace’ (Figure 48). Momentum slowly builds as the group roll as a single interlocked body where individuality is indistinguishable in a melange of body parts, ‘they are bonded as a unit that nevertheless appears absurdly disjointed.’ Curator Catherine Wood summarises that:

> The singularity of the body as a field of exploration and the relations between bodies are broken down and elaborated, with a view to conceiving of the boundaries of the subject differently, and of new ways of physically relating.


581 Wood. 127.
Similarly in the film *It is raining and I am unconscious in the living room* (2012) by Auckland-based artists Juliet Carpenter and Dan Nash, identity and boundaries are blurred by a confusion of where bodies begin and end. The visual material of this work is made up of two performers Kaya Campi and Marina Anne-Fergusson engaging in contact-improvisation (Figure 49). In the film there are moments when the two performers bodies are so enmeshed and clothed in the same illusionistic black and white fabric that one cannot see where one body ends and the other begins. The two become an undifferentiated mass or assemblage. Reconsidering the ways in which figural relations can be staged through different imaginings of reciprocity and movement, in this video the figure is a shape whose boundary might be distorted and unbalanced; whose limits are open to question, open to negotiation and shaped by inner drives, peculiar capabilities and points of contact with others. For Sabisch, choreography can be used to critique the notion of separated bodies, positing contamination as the body’s power to assemble and be assembled.582 This thesis is realized in the moment of Carpenter and Nash’s film when one can no longer distinguish how many bodies are present. Via acts of filming, framing and contact improvisation, the boundaries between bodies are blurred so that as mentioned by Wood the singularity of the body, and the relations between bodies are broken down and elaborated so that intersubjectivity, ways of physically relating as well as boundaries might be re-conceived.

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582 Petra Sabisch *Choreographing Relations: Practical Philosophy and Contemporary Choreography* (Munich: e-podium, 2011)
Returning to Braidotti, the thesis of post-anthropocentrism has also been explored in various choreographed works. As part of German artist Ann Imhof’s work *Forever Rage* (2015) performed at Berlin’s Hamburger Bahnhof, six performers took turns introducing tortoises into the performance space.\(^{583}\) Walking slowly, they knelt and carefully placed each one onto the floor throughout the performance (Figure 50) until by the end nine tortoises were roaming around the gallery space amongst the six performers and their audience. In relation to Braidotti’s thesis, once the notion of species hierarchy is displaced, ‘in the ontological gap thus opened, other species come galloping in.’\(^{584}\) Imhof has introduced animals into her live performances before, as part of her exhibition ‘Parade’ at Portikus gallery in Frankfurt in 2013, a young woman led a donkey around the gallery space. For Braidotti, animals present other modes of embodiment, ones normally kept as a familiar, cherished ‘other’ or cast out on the side of ‘monstrosity and bestiality.’ The point is that such an intersubjective relationship is generally an unequal one, ‘framed by the dominant human and structurally masculine habit of taking for granted free access to and the consumption of the bodies of others.’\(^{585}\) Instead Braidotti posits a new intersubjectivity or mode of relation, one that has an ethical appreciation of what animal bodies can do, recognising the complexity of contemporary non-human animals with a ‘zoontology’ of their own.\(^{586}\) Braidotti wonders aloud whether the human-animal interaction

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\(^{584}\) Braidotti, 67.

\(^{585}\) Ibid., 68.

\(^{586}\) Ibid., 70.
might be deterritorialized and replaced with a recognition of a vital bond, one based on the reality of sharing a planet together.

Another instance of a choreographed work that demonstrates an intersection of dance with post-anthropocentrism is American film-maker Cameron Jamie’s *Massage the History* (2007-2009). This colour film, shot on 35mm film, depicts a private performance of two amateur dancers in a middle-class, suburban living room in Alabama (Figure 51). As part of their dance they explicitly engage with their surroundings, utilising the soft furnishings and living room furniture as partners in their eroticised and tender dances. In a ritualistic and trance-like way the dancers thrust their pelvises back and forth, straddle chairs, caressing table legs and plush carpet floors. In a kind of foreplay the young men seem to re-familiarize or perhaps de-familiarize themselves in tandem with the everyday objects. Completely uninhibited, they appear to react and take pleasure from the everyday domestic surroundings, the different textures and objects that

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surround them.\textsuperscript{588} Further de-centring their identities, their clothing is uniform and they take turns mirroring each other’s movements.

Figure 51 Cameron Jamie, \textit{Massage the History}, 2007-2009. (35mm film, colour, sound, 11 minutes).

The displacement of anthropocentrism can result in a restructuring of intersubjective relations between humans and animals as well as objects. Echoing Deleuze and Guattari’s theories of becoming-animal and molecularisation, Braidotti extends this thesis further, from becoming-animal, to becoming-object towards becoming-earth, that is a planetary, geo-centred perspective. A \textit{posthuman becoming-earth} involves reconfiguring and extending intersubjectivity as a relationship with complex habitat rather than mere nature so that humans are ‘geological agents.’ Conceiving of our planetary dimension, earth becomes a middle and common ground, a milieu for human and non-human alike. For Braidotti the scale of environmental issues activates the possibility for a change in perspective, one rich in alternatives for a renewal of subjectivity, hence intersubjectivity. The distinction between natural and human histories is questioned and once again the concept of monism is crucial as it indicates the way in which we inhabit a nature-culture continuum, which according to Braidotti is technologically mediated and globally enforced.\textsuperscript{589} Braidotti’s aspiration involves an enlargement of the frame and scope of subjectivity along transversal lines of post-anthropocentric relations. The idea is that subjectivity, or indeed intersubjectivity is not ‘the exclusive prerogative of \textit{Anthropos}’ it can be an assemblage that includes non-human agents. Braidotti entreats ‘We need to visualise

\textsuperscript{588} This engagement with objects also recalls theories of object-oriented ontologies and new materialism as described in Jane Bennett’s \textit{Vibrant Matter: A Political Ontology of Things} (2010). Such theories currently enjoy great popularity with contemporary artists.

\textsuperscript{589} Braidotti, 81-82.
the subject as a transversal entity encompassing the human, our genetic neighbours the animals and the earth as a whole.\textsuperscript{590} A posthuman and post-individualistic notion of the subject is marked by a monistic and planetary relational structure.\textsuperscript{591} This relates back to becoming-animal as well as the concept of the swarm, an intersubjective configuration utilised by flocking birds and foraging insects.

One strategy for involving critical distance from the dominant vision of the subject is the involvement of de-familiarisation, a loss of familiar habits of thought in order to make room for creative alternatives such as new intersubjectivities. This ties into what Guattari calls ‘pragmatic entrances into Unconscious formations.’\textsuperscript{592} According to this argument a choreographed work might act as ‘a poetic-existential catalysis’ one with the ‘capacity to promote active, processual ruptures within semiotically structured, signifigational and denotative networks, where it will put emergent subjectivity to work.’\textsuperscript{593} Dis-identification from the familiar as well as normative values is part of a move towards a process of becoming-minoritarian and transformation. For Braidotti with her accompanying thesis of monism, such a transformation, a becoming-earth implies ‘open-ended, inter-relational, multi-sexed and trans-species flows of becoming through interaction with multiple others.’\textsuperscript{594} Many aspects of Braidotti’s posthuman becoming-earth are realised in the choreography of Alicia Frankovich’s performance \textit{World is a Home Planet} (2016).\textsuperscript{595} Similar to the works by Brown, Charmatz, and Rosetzky, in Frankovich’s choreographed work, activities and words circulate through performers. It takes place in darkness as a way of discouraging hierarchies, then tableaux and situations are lit by a torch, a mechanism by which the gazes of audience members can be directed.\textsuperscript{596} The performance begins with a shared situation of darkness, oranges are circulated, these are eaten by the performers and some of the audience members anonymously in the darkness, so that juice drips and peels fall to the floor and their scent pervades the space. For Lepecki such darkness functions as ‘full potentiality,’ it allows a freeing of perception and is a means ‘by which a something else can be brought into visibility, audibility and sensation.’\textsuperscript{597}

\textsuperscript{590} Ibid., 82.
\textsuperscript{591} Yet crucially, it is not undifferentiated in terms of the social coordinates of class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity and race. Although the post-human as becoming-earth seeks to challenge oppositional structure of sameness and difference as pejoration, power differentials are still ‘enacted and operationalized through the axes of sexualisation/racialization.’ Questions of difference necessarily lead back to power, the politics of locations and the necessity of an ethical-political theory of subjectivity, one that resists the neutralisation of difference.’ Braidotti, 86–87.
\textsuperscript{592} Guattari. \textit{Chaosmosis}. 68.
\textsuperscript{593} Ibid., 19.
\textsuperscript{594} Braidotti, 89.
\textsuperscript{595} Alicia Frankovich \textit{World is a Home Planet} 2016 (Volkshaus Basel as part of Transcorporeal Metabolisms, The 12th Performance Project of LISTE Art Fair, Basel, curated by Eva Birkenstock)
\textsuperscript{596} Alicia Frankovich. ‘hi there!’ \textit{Email communication with the author. 30 September 2016.}, 2016. Web.
\textsuperscript{597} Lepecki. 55, 56, 57.
Figure 52 Alicia Frankovich, *World is a Home Planet*, 2016. (Live performance). Performed as part of ‘Trans-corporeal Metabolisms,’ Art Fair Basel 2016.

In the next sequence flashlights are used to illuminate performers holding up pieces of fabric dyed with natural juices from fruits and vegetables. One by one a performer is lit up, holding a piece of fabric for twenty seconds. Each provides a commentary: ‘This is a red apple… Das ist ein See… This is purple carrot’ however in each instance all that can be seen are what appears to be images of celestial landscapes. A series of ‘body images’ follow which are made up of all the bodies of the performers together. In perhaps the most pertinent moments in which intersubjectivity is enacted, the dancers create what is called ‘circle hands – global unity’ a pose in which one performer kneels and extends her hands before her to create a curved line. Four other performers extend this curve with their hands until it forms a circular, spherical, planet-like shape framing her face (Figure 52). The dancers also construct the shape of a house by making a negative space with their hands, it has a tilted roof, walls and a floor (Figure 53). The shape of the house creates a shadow. Just as in Rosetzky’s work, person by person they recite the words ‘World… is… Home… Planet.’ Planetary relations and forms are constructed in a myriad of ways in this work, in both subtle and explicit ways. The small spheres of oranges recall the shapes of planets, their vestiges in stains, pips and scattered peels on the floor of the space appear like a constellation. Each of the pieces of fabric makes a comparison between a galaxy and a much smaller entity, a vegetable or a lake. And the performers themselves make up the forms of a house, a place for dwelling as well as a planet with their hands and bodies.
Darkness as a technique that allows de-familiarisation and an interrogation of the subject-intersubjectivity relation is also utilised by Sehgal in his work *This Variation* performed in 2012 at Documenta 13 in Kassel, Germany. Contained within the Bode-Saal of the Grand City Hotel the work involved entering a dark room already populated with around a dozen performers. At first disorienting, eventually one’s eyes adjust and the shadows of performers along with other spectators can be seen. One critic described the way in which people created currents of air as they moved around and that they could be identified by their different smells. Vocalisations were made by the performers, at first short, then longer, playful, in call and response with each other. As the rhythm builds the sounds and rhythms intensify into a ‘concert.’ If spectators speak, their words can be taken up by the performers, repeated and riffed upon until they become scat-like songs. As the rhythm of sounds builds, movements are also made. Sometimes there are vigorous dances that jostle the spectators around. The voices make beat-box like sounds, imitating various instruments and re-creating pop-songs, unaccompanied by music. The performers dance around the space. At another point a performer uses a dimmer to illuminate the room and the music comes to an end. Discussion about economics ensues, a

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‘talking game,’ a pondering of income, production and consequences. This is repeated in English and in German, sometimes in other languages too. Personal, confessional anecdotes are also told by the performers. The discussion tends to be about money, income, consumerism and family relationships. A performer gives the title ‘Variation, January 2009,’ they then press their ears to the wall and slide to the ground.

In terms of intersubjectivity, rather than a direct, face-to-face, dyadic encounter between performer and spectator what is created by this choreographed work is what Sehgal has called a ‘vibe in the room.’ This Variation, like Frankovich’s World is a Home Planet uses darkness to evade processes of facial-recognition as well as the limited identification described by Levinas. Also evoking Levinas as well as what Joy called a ‘sensual counter-address’ is the way in which choreographies in the dark stress the importance of the approach and proximity in a way that is de-habitualising due to the fact that they cannot be seen. Such darkness also corresponds to the dis-individuation of the transindividual posited by Simondon. According to Sehgal, any connections made are not individualised, there is instead ‘a kind of collective reverberation of that movement, or a connection with yourself somehow.’ This variation has been referred to by the artist as an opening up to a particular ‘vibe-space,’ one that evades the dominance of the eyes and an accompanying sense of judgement and criticality. One aim was to activate ‘another modality,’ an entering ‘into something else.’

4.3 Post-internet or cyborg choreographies – Rebecca Hobbs, Joshua Rutter, Alexandra Bachzetsis,

It is night-time. A series of large concrete zig-zagging steps lead up to a row of three shops. They have old-fashioned painted signs and all three shop-fronts are covered with roller doors to prevent burglaries. The soundtrack of this film is a Reggae song with a distinctively Jamaican sounding male voice and a low-fidelity, synthesiser back-up track. A woman in very high-heeled shoes enters the locked-off frame, and steps up to the top level. Positioning herself in the centre of the frame, her back to the camera she begins to dance. Dressed as though she just came from a night club, she is heavily made-up and wears ftted leggings, a silver-sequinned top, elaborate jewellery and hoop earrings. While dancing she generally orients herself with her back to the camera or in profile, whatever angle affords the best view of a particular sequence of moves. This video work, Otara at Night (2011, Figure 54) by Auckland-based artist Rebecca Ann Hobbs’ runs for two minutes but is looped so that it appears continuous, with dancer Amelia Lynch entering just left of the camera and exiting to the right, only to enter at the left again.

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600 Sehgal. 2015.
601 Cutty Ranks ‘Limb by Limb’ from Reggae Anthology, VP Records.
Lynch’s nocturnal solo was filmed in one shot, on the Fair Mall stage in the suburb of Otara in South Auckland, an area with a high proportion of people identifying with at least one Pacific identity.\textsuperscript{602} \textit{Otara at Night} is part of \textit{South}, a series of works Hobbs made in South Auckland spaces influenced by dance cultures. This particular film was intended to be a celebration of the style of dance known as Dancehall and the way in which it has been interpreted by particular bodies and in specific sites in South Auckland.\textsuperscript{603}

The video is one an example of how choreographies can be self-taught following the examples of dance content uploaded to the internet from dancers and choreographers across the globe. In terms of the way in which such a choreographed work provides an exploration of processes of intersubjectivity-as-art, \textit{Otara at Night} ties into Pepperell’s arguments about artistic activity as a highly distributed process existing as a function of numerous minds, diverse materials, technologies, actions all of which occur in a socially structured environment such as an art gallery or museum. There are processes of research, mimicry, rehearsal and repetition as well as improvisation and public performance. The kinds of relations between those who conceive of particular movements or steps and those who might come to perform them is diffuse and complex, far from the authoritative relations between a singular choreographer and his dancers as previously described in Chapter One. These kinds of intersubjective relations hark back to Latour’s argument about the ways in which action is distributed, so any given interaction is affected by actors who might be faraway, both temporally and spatially. According to Latour’s thesis a dancer choreographing herself from various filmed dances viewed on the internet is a specific actor-network, a form of agency involving techno-bio-morphisms, one informally associated and connected with a wide range of other agents and entities.

Returning to the specific instance of \textit{Otara at Night}, Hobbs explains that the kind of dance it demonstrates, Dancehall ‘refers to a genre of music that originates from Jamaica, but it is also a term that indicates an entire culture in which music, dance, fashion and community collide.’\textsuperscript{604} Dancehall emerged at a time of political change which allowed Jamaicans to begin to advance from the confines of their previously prescribed socio-economic status. Hobbs points out that one of the manifestations of such increased mobility is the way in which a Dancehall ‘queen’ might maintain her own beauty-parlour business during the week, then perform at a Sound Clash.

\textsuperscript{602} According to the 2013 New Zealand Census, 7% of the total population identified with at least one Pacific identity, compared with 14.6% of people in the Auckland region, 45.7% in the Otara-Papatoetoe Local Board area and 60% in the Mangere-Otahuhu Local Board area. Statistics New Zealand, “QuickStats about Otara-Papatoetoe Local Board Area and Mangere-Otahuhu Local Board area: 2013 Census,” \url{http://www.stats.govt.nz/Census/2013-census/profile-and-summary-reports/qstats-place-posters.aspx#auckland}

\textsuperscript{603} Rebecca Ann Hobbs “Otara at Night Statement and Full Credits” \textit{Rebecca Ann Hobbs}, \url{http://rebeccaannhobbs.com/work/604 Hobbs, Ibid.}
event on the weekend, dressed in full regalia that her small business finances. At such events the more flamboyant and dexterous a Dancehall queen’s performance, the more she is able to represent her neighbourhood.

Figure 54 Rebecca Ann Hobbs, *Otara at Night*, 2011. (Single-channel HD Video, colour, sound, 2 minutes 9 seconds, looped).

One of the ways in which Dancehall culture made its way to New Zealand is through videos uploaded to video-sharing, on-line platforms like YouTube. Upon moving to the suburb of Otahuhu in South Auckland, Hobbs began going to Pasifika clubs such as Matafaga in Otara, places where Dancehall repertoire was known and performed. Those who participate in Dancehall, according to Hobbs are very ‘internet savvy’ using the platform ‘effectively and with clarity.’ According to Hobbs, South Auckland dance crews such as The Royal Family use Youtube for their research. *Otara at Night* was included within the exhibition *WWJD* at Fresh Gallery in Otara in 2012 for the same community it was made in and for. This engagement with the internet in order to create choreographed works recalls Frankovich’s use of images as choreographic prompts in *Defending Plural Experiences* as well as the way in which Cameron Jaimie’s *Massage the History* was initially inspired by dancers seen on Youtube.

### 4.3.1 Post-internet intersubjectivity

Just as prosthetics and bodily extension was embraced in the late twentieth century by performance artists such as Rebecca Horn with *Finger Gloves* (1972) and Egle Rakauskaite with *In Honey* (1996); during the past decade artists and choreographers like Hobbs, Frankovich and

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605 Sound clash - a musical competition where crew members from opposing dancehall sound systems pit their skills against each other.

Jaimie have utilised the internet in order to create choreographed works that explore processes of intersubjectivity-as-art and interrogate the subject-intersubjectivity relation. On-line networks have expanded the possibilities of art exponentially with their capacity to act as a tool for self-imaging, communication, research and archiving. As theorist Boris Groys points out, the internet offers ‘an alternative possibility for art production and distribution’ so that ‘anyone can put any texts or visual material of any kind on the internet and make it globally accessible’ and that the internet creates a vast field of ‘total visibility, accessibility and transparency.’ As media theorist Geert Lovink explained, the existence of the social web means that prosumers can upload and download content relatively easily and the existence of mobile devices means that they can do so almost anywhere and at any time. On-line networks mean that performances might easily reach large audiences across vast distances, although it is also important to remember that the social web is not accessible to all people everywhere, users or members of such networks require access to infrastructure, hardware, electricity, power as well as internet service providers. The proliferation of the internet has had an indelible effect on intersubjective relations. According to Lovink the ‘social no longer manifests itself as a class, movement or mob,’ instead it has ‘manifest itself as a network’ so that ‘the network is the actual shape of the social.’ Lovink explains how the internet as the social web or an ‘Empire of the Social’ was enabled by the neoliberal 1990s, facilitated by growing computing power, storage capacity, and internet bandwidth, as well as easier interfaces on smaller and smaller mobile devices. For Lovink a social network can be seen as an ‘empowering of loosely connected individuals in networks.’

The implications of the internet for both subjectivity and intersubjectivity relate to the concept of the ‘cyborg’ as theorised by Donna Haraway and instances of ‘post-human becoming-machine’ as argued by Braidotti. Haraway’s ‘Cyborg Manifesto’ first written in 1991 is an important text due to the way in which it seeks to undermine the opposition between bodies and machines with the aid of the concept of the cyborg as ‘a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality.’ Such a concept is an ‘imaginative resource,’ one that has the capacity to suggest ‘very fruitful couplings.’ Haraway explores and elucidates such a concept as a feminist exercise due to the way in which it might dissolve patriarchal foundations and challenge hierarchical oppositions such as man/woman as well as human/machine. At the same time her concept of the cyborg was prescient due to the way in

608 See Danny Butt, “Local Knowledge and New Media Theory” in (Brennan and Ballard 31.)
609 Lovink. 3.
which it explored subjectivity and intersubjectivity as shaped by technologies. Haraway pointed out:

By the late twentieth century, our time, a mythic time, we are all chimeras, theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism; in short, we are cyborgs. The cyborg is our ontology; it gives us our politics. The cyborg is a condensed image of both imagination and material reality.611

Crucially, Haraway explicitly argues for ‘pleasure in the confusion of boundaries’ as well as for responsibility in their construction.’ The distinction between organism and machine is complicated while at the same time the ubiquity of devices one uses to access the internet mean that machines are everywhere and at the same time invisible.612 Mind, body and tool are thus ‘on very intimate terms,’ a description that is very fitting for the kinds of relationships many people currently have with their mobile devices.613 Haraway summarises: ‘In so far as we know ourselves in both formal discourse and in daily practice we find ourselves to be cyborgs, hybrids, mosaics, chimeras.’614 As part of what she refers to as the ‘cyborg myth’ Haraway describes the way in which machines or prosthetic tools can become ‘us,’ as ‘intimate components,’ part of our processes and one aspect of embodiment so one becomes hybridized with communication devices.615 However it is also important to remember that cyborgs, like the internet are ‘the illegitimate offspring of militarism and patriarchal capitalism.’ Such communication technologies depend on electronics as well as modern states, multinational corporations, military power, welfare state, apparatuses, satellite systems and ‘political processes.’616

Haraway’s cyborg is ‘needy for connection,’ like the internet it has the capacity to be both ‘oppositional and utopian,’ and has the ability to confuse the polarity of public and private.617 Haraway describes ‘a polymorphous information system’ in which identities ‘seem contradictory, partial and strategic.’618 In terms of intersubjectivity, the cyborg is thus ‘a kind of disassembled and reassembled, postmodern collective and personal self.’619 Haraway’s cyborg world is ‘about lived social and bodily relations’ in which people are unafraid of joint kinship with animals, machines as well as partial identities and contradictory standpoints.’ It is a place

611 Haraway. 150.
612 Ibid., 152.
613 Ibid., 165.
614 Ibid., 177.
616 Ibid., 165.
617 Ibid., 151.
618 Ibid., 161, 155.
619 Ibid., 163.
where boundaries are transgressed, potent fusions take place and ‘dangerous possibilities are explored.\textsuperscript{620} Communications technologies are therefore tools that ‘embody and enforce new social relations, Haraway argues:

\begin{quote}
I prefer a network ideological image, suggesting the profusion of spaces and identities and the permeability of boundaries in the personal body and in the body politic. ‘Networking’ is both a feminist practice and a multinational corporate strategy – weaving is for oppositional cyborgs.\textsuperscript{621}
\end{quote}

Braidotti takes much from Haraway to furnish her own post-human theory of becoming-machine and as part of her attempt to theorise ‘a vision of the subject that is worthy of the present.’\textsuperscript{622} For Braidotti the contemporary context has witnessed a shift between the human and the previously ‘technological other’ to the point where there are ‘unprecedented degrees of intimacy and intrusion.’\textsuperscript{623} Similarly a complex political economy has connected bodies to machines intimately through a process of ‘simulation and mutual modification.’ Braidotti seeks a ‘sustainable ethics of transformations’ in the face of ‘techno-hype,’ what she calls a ‘posthuman notion of the enfleshed and extended relational self’ so that one can simultaneously harbour a ‘desire to be wired’ as well as pride in being flesh.\textsuperscript{624} Braidotti advocates \emph{becoming-machine} as a ‘playful and pleasure-prone relationship to technology that is not based on functionalism.’\textsuperscript{625} For Braidotti, the contemporary machines of information technology are ‘engines or devices that both capture and process forces and energies, facilitating interrelations, multiple connections and assemblages. They stand for radical relationality and delight as well as productivity.’\textsuperscript{626} Such devices allow \emph{a becoming-machine,} an actualization of ‘the relational powers of a subject that bears a privileged bond with multiple others and merges with one’s technologically mediated planetary environment.’ For Braidotti to be posthuman is to be part of a radical relationality on many levels, including the social. The way in which the contemporary context is globalized and technologically mediated is one more aspect of post-anthropocentrism.\textsuperscript{627}

### 4.3.2 Post-internet practices and choreography

Aside from its effect on constructions of subjectivities and the way in which intersubjectivity unfolds, the internet has also greatly affected the creation of art so that certain art practices are

\textsuperscript{620} Ibid., 154.
\textsuperscript{621} Ibid., 170, 164.
\textsuperscript{623} Braidotti, 89.
\textsuperscript{624} Ibid., 90.
\textsuperscript{625} Ibid., 91. This kind of relation seems to have been anticipated in Allen’s \textit{Poetry for Chainsaws} (1976).
\textsuperscript{626} Ibid., 92.
\textsuperscript{627} Ibid., 102.
sometimes referred to as post-internet or post-digital. Art historian Tim Gentles posits that the term post-internet was first used in an art context in 2006 by US artist Marisa Olson to describe ‘a process of making art after using the internet.’ According to Gentles, post-internet art responds to the ‘banality of the internet’ as a ‘feature of everyday life’ and art. Similarly, the heterotopic space of the internet has become important as a distribution context for art and the ubiquity of computing technology has re-oriented the art world around the screen. Art writer Michael Sanchez pointed out that ‘Art is no longer discovered in biennials and fairs and magazines, but on the phone.’ Post-internet art is ‘consciously created in a milieu that assumes the centrality of the network’ and is ‘art that reflects an internet state of mind.’ Crucially it is also a reaction to and identification with the communicative conditions of global, networked capitalism. As summarized by Gentles it is ‘a way of thinking about art in ‘broadly technologically deterministic terms.’ Theorist Florian Cramer argues that the term ‘post’ can be used to mean a ‘continuation of’ but also ‘beyond’ as part of the label post-digital. Cramer argues that the term post-digital describes ‘either a contemporary disenchantment with digital information systems and media gadgets, or a period in which our fascination with these systems has become historical.’ Additionally dance has always enjoyed a special relationship with the internet, indeed one of the first videos to become immensely popular or ‘go viral’ at the end of the 1990s was an animated, dancing baby known as ‘Baby Cha-Cha.’

Hobbs’ Otara at Night is just one work that reflects networked choreography, or the way in which artists and choreographers are currently influenced by dances that have become available to view on the internet. Curator Hans Ulrich Obrist recently observed that ‘Whenever I talk to choreography or dance students, I notice that a big part of their education comes from YouTube where you can find a whole history of dance from Isadora Duncan to Jérôme Bel.’ Similarly Berlin-based, New Zealand choreographer Joshua Rutter takes this concept of the internet as ‘the first public library for dancers’ a step further, writing: ‘I often find myself watching a video on YouTube.com with the desire to somehow emulate or reproduce its contents, faithfully or not, for the purpose of a staged performance.’ Rutter describes this propensity as a ‘remote voyeurism (of people, animals and things in action) oriented towards exhibitionism.’

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For Rutter, YouTube in particular is ‘a kind of archive, a reservoir of potential mass-culture or potential physicality.’ Such content can act as choreographic fodder as ‘anything recorded and uploaded to YouTube has the potential to be mass-produced as it is now available to anyone (or any algorithm).’ Rutter views such material as ‘found movement’ similar to the *objet trouvé* in Surrealist sculpture. Such a process, for Rutter involves ‘the act of copying or learning a movement with one’s own body,’ the choreographer ‘hosts the movement object in their body’ before a subsequent re-contextualisation of a found movement, a re-performing or display as part of a presentation in a theatrical stage-space in the presence of an audience. Importantly, for Rutter any repetition or iteration of movement found on-line might be permuted as an ‘imperfection or unconscious alteration and conflation of form, feeling or rhythm may occur. An artist busy with found movements will likely generate unexpected and novel movement artefacts.’ Rutter demonstrated his co-opting of found movement as a choreographic device in a recent performance which included what appeared to be a beheading, a dog video, an energetic

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633 Rutter, 3.
dance step, robotic movements in slow motion as well as yoga positions. Throughout the performance Rutter indicated:

This is from the internet… and this… is also from the internet. This was from the internet. But I changed it, yeah… This is on the internet… because I uploaded it. This will be connected, soon enough. I like to think, and the sooner the better.  

Obrist’s reflection and Rutter’s desire to reproduce what he sees online ties into a broader argument made by Lepecki that returning to the performances of past dancers ‘paradoxically becomes one of the most significant marks of contemporary experimental choreography.’

Lepecki introduces heavily loaded arguments from performance studies and philosophy about the implications of re-enactment and the concept of the archive. However some important points to be taken from Lepecki include his proposition that responding to prior movements or choreographies in the present indicates ‘a capacity to identify in a past work still non-exhausted creative fields of “impalpable possibilities.”’ Rutter’s will to re-perform what he sees in online archives of movement recalls a description by Martin Nachbar, another Berlin-based choreographer of his attempts to ‘visit the storehouse’ of the archive as well as his attempt to push his body into it, Lepecki describes this as a process of:

pushing the body into the archive and pushing the archive into the body—a mutual metamorphosis conjuring up, creating, secreting, excreting, inflecting critical points where virtuals and actuals exchange place.

It must be pointed out that one way in which the internet departs from the archive as described by Derrida is that its practice of storing, housing and retaining is no longer a matter of a commanding force or ‘patriarchal conservatism’ that archives. As Groys explains, one of the reasons why the internet is so likable is because ‘it is not selective- or at least much less selective than a museum.’

This phenomenon is articulated by Berlin-based artist Hito Steyerl who describes the way in which images, including moving images are circulated. For Steyerl, the internet is a circuit for ‘image circulation,’ one that multiplies possible points of transfer. Images are therefore:

nodes of energy and matter that migrate across different supports, shaping and affecting people, landscapes, politics and social systems.

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634 Joshua Rutter, SoDa 202 Research showing 16.04.2015, as part of a Master in SODA at HZT Berlin, 2015.
635 Lepecki, 2016, 117.
636 Ibid., 120.
637 Lepecki, 127.
638 Myriam Van Imshoort “Rests in Pieces: On Scores, Notations, and the Trace in Dance” in (Solomon 41.)
They acquired an uncanny ability to proliferate, transform and activate.\textsuperscript{640}

Contemporary information technology as \textit{becoming-machine} means that the relationship between subjectivity and intersubjectivity is even more entangled. Images and videos can be ‘copied and dispersed at the flick of a finger’ and ‘data, sounds and images are now routinely transitioning beyond screens into a different state of matter’ such as being copied, learnt and re-performed by performers. Steyerl anticipates this when she describes the way in which images might become ‘incarnate,’ they ‘materialise’ and ‘spread through and beyond networks, they contract and expand, they stall and stumble, they vie, they vile, they wow and woo.’ When images ‘walk off-screen’ as described by Steyerl, when they are iterated, copied, learnt and re-performed as part of a choreography they ‘become real’ and are ‘substantially altered. They get translated, twisted, bruised and reconfigured.’ They are ‘twisted, dilapidated, incorporated and reshuffled.’ All of these active verbs utilised by Steyerl point to the ways in which artists and choreographers, as part of an immense intersubjective network, utilise movements taken from on-line sources. Rutter takes this a step further arguing that:

the artist will probably be affected by the movement as they choose, learn and consider it, as the medium of expression is her own body, and changes or actions in the body can affect one’s immediate appearance, felt experience and self-perception.\textsuperscript{641}

Thus the internet allows access to a wide range of material that can be co-opted by choreographers creating networked, ‘cyborg’ or postinternet choreographies and in doing so allow for various different kinds of intersubjective exchanges. Material is extracted from the internet and incorporated into \textit{Mangere Mall}, another work by Hobbs from 2011, demonstrating the way in which choreographed works are affected by information shared on-line. In this work, six dancers from the Waikato-based VOGUE dance crew were filmed by five locked-off cameras, dancing beneath the canopies of the Mangere Town Centre and amongst the columns painted with coconut palms (Figure 56). Art historically, Hobb’s \textit{Mangere Mall} art harks back to Gillian Wearing’s \textit{Dancing in Peckham} (1994, Figure 55). Indeed Wearing recently revealed a practice version \textit{Rehearsing for Peckham} which filmed on VHS in her bedroom. Wearing herself even reflected ‘When I look at the work now it feels like a film on YouTube.’\textsuperscript{642} Also playing with the idea of privately rehearsing, then dancing in public, \textit{Mangere Mall} is heavily edited, presenting multiple viewpoints so that the various members can be seen from the most

\textsuperscript{640} Steyerl. 31.
\textsuperscript{641} Rutter. 2.
advantageous viewpoint and shot times are dictated more by the accompanying music.\footnote{Located near an industrial area, Mangere Mall was a development instigated by the New Zealand government during the 1970s as part of a state housing program, a time when there was an influx of migrants from the Pacific Islands who came to work in the surrounding areas. Rebecca Ann Hobbs “Mangere Mall Statement and Full Credits” Rebecca Ann Hobbs, \url{http://rebeccaannhobbs.com/works/video/}} This time the style of dance is that of Voguing, one that originated in the ballrooms of Harlem, New York City during the 1980s and since then disseminated on-line.

Based on the live balls that happen in New York and the communities that develop around them, Voguing is more associated with queer minorities where Dancehall is more heteronormative, celebrating the power of a heterosexual woman.\footnote{In terms of decolonizing and queer choreographies it is important to note that another Auckland-based artist Tanu Gago with whom Hobbs used to visit Pasifika clubs, has since formed FAFSWAG a collective that holds Voguing balls as part of a larger project that celebrates and documents emerging Queer Pacific Culture within New Zealand’s urban landscapes and creates a community and platform for young gay Pacific people navigating their unique identities.} The VOGUE crew performing in Hobbs’ video were one of the first to perform Voguing in New Zealand and the internet is a crucial resource for them.\footnote{See \url{https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ofa8i249YZA}}

Another example of a choreographed work providing an exploration of processes of intersubjectivity-as-art informed by the internet is Swiss artist Alexandra Bachzetsis’ live performance \textit{From A to B via C} (2014) which has been performed in Central America, the United States as well as at the Tate Modern where, somewhat appropriately, it was streamed on-line as part of the BMW Tate Live performance room, an initiative that allows audiences from all over
the world to watch a livestream of performances as they take place in the gallery. Previous live-
streamed performances have been watched by audiences of up to 330,000 people. Bachzetsis
explains that From A to B via C ‘is a work composed from a set of online tutorials. All the
existing material in the piece was learned from the internet, appropriated, and finally embodied
on stage.’ Like Hobbs, Bachzetsis is interested in the ‘structures and mechanisms of
established systems’ such as dance genres as well as on-line formats and the way in which such
gesture vocabularies and styles are chosen and realised. Like Hobbs, Bachzetsis interrogates the
ways in which various dance genres might be learnt from the internet or the ways in which
choreographic instruction takes place via uploaded videos. Just as the museum was described as
performing a pedagogical function for those who visited it, such on-line choreographic
instruction is a novel intersubjective relation. Bachzetsis explains: ‘I’m interested in how you
can educate yourself with these new forms of learning online, where instructions are shared with
a wide audience.’

Figure 57 Alexandra Bachzetsis, From A to B via C, 2014. (Live performance, multi-media).

Explicitly repeating the form of the online tutorial, at the beginning of the performance one
performer stands in front of a camera and speaks to camera so that her face appears on a monitor
facing the audience (Figure 57). She enthusiastically reads her script aloud from a pile of paper

646 http://www.tate.org.uk/join-support/corporate-support/sponsorship/bmw
647 Alexandra Bachzetsis in David Everitt Howe “Dance in the Ruins: Tajal Harrell, Adam Linder and Alexandra
Bachzetsis on their work, its institutionalization, and the art world” Mousse, no. 50, October, 2015, 85.
and her utterances are quickly repeated by the two other performers, placed centre stage. A mediated intersubjective relationship of viewing and mimicking, call and response is set up: ‘For the next little while, it’s going to be you and me together alone. I want you to lock the door and turn the phone off and really concentrate on what we’re going to do. We’re going to start with some of my favourite exercises.’ *From A to B via C* covers a wide range of movement styles taken from online tutorials from tennis manoeuvres, sign language, to classical ballet to hip-hop (Figure 58).

4.4 Queering choreography: val smith, Mark Bradford and Pablo Bronstein

One question central to this thesis is whether or not it is possible to evade authoritative structures in any way, how might one summon the courage to disobey, misbehave or find other ways of moving? Such intersubjective relations produce normative concepts subjecthood, ones that might be explored by choreographed works that enact intersubjectivity-as-art. As argued above, one way of escaping such disciplinary structures is to challenge their foundation upon

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648 This deadpan quotation and repetition of the kinds of movement seen in hip-hop music videos ties into Bachzetsis earlier video work *Gold* (2010) in which the artist performs hip-hop moves as well as the kinds of dance performed by strippers in a gold bikini, filmed from the neck down and using her trademark technique of providing crudely written on pieces of paper piled high so that are revealed to the camera one by one as a kind of commentary. In this work Bachzetsis performs the movements over-enthusiastically and often violently so that she often seems to be injuring herself in the process.
humanism, or ‘man as the measure of all things.’ Central to the universalistic posturing of the museum and its ordering of things and bodies is a cultural logic of identity and otherness or difference as pejoration and it is this that needs to be questioned. An association of difference with inferiority brands others as sexualised, racialized and naturalised so that they might be assessed, regulated and allotted to specific locations or activities. The first part of this chapter argued for the importance of the possibility of dismantling unitary and partitioned identities. Once the unit of the human, or ‘man as the measure of all things’ is interrogated, contaminated by muscular bonding, or making up part of a swarm, frenzy or multitude; identities, actions and utterances can flow in and out of bodies. They become indistinguishable, assembled in the darkness it is impossible to discern who is who, where they begin and end. The final part of this chapter turns to choreographies performed by those categorised by the museum and its binary logic as sexualised and naturalised: choreographies that are queer, de-colonizing or counter-hegemonic. Such counter-hegemonic choreographies also present their own particular permutations of intersubjectivity in ways that can affect new intersubjectivities. Such choreographed works offer a reply to Ginot’s thesis mentioned earlier, that somatic practices might situate complex bodies in relation to their specific environments involving processes of decolonization or queer practices rather than dominant, so-called natural and organic bodies which are in fact homogenized, ahistorical and occidental.

Further interrogating normative relations between subjectivity and intersubjectivity, according to Braidotti’s summary of the way in which the cultural logic of humanism situates difference as pejoration, there are sexualised others, as well as those branded as others due to their sexual orientation. Queer theory, a field that emerged in studies of the humanities during the 1990s, focusses its attention on practices that might be considered to be ‘other,’ namely sexual and gender practices that cannot be reduced to either homosexuality or heterosexuality. In this field the term queer is not a shorthand for ‘lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered.’ Instead “queer” names or describes identities and practices that foreground the instability inherent in the supposedly stable relationship between anatomical sex, gender and sexual desire.

Accordingly, the category of queerness can be said to reject the humanist notion of the subject and instead embrace ‘non-normative forms of identity’ or what humanism with its limited structures of sameness/difference denigrates to the ‘other.’ Queerness takes up such otherness or strangeness, deliberately and wilfully appropriating the term and its position. A crucial

650 Ibid.
concept to queer studies is that of *heteronormativity* or ‘the set of norms that make heterosexuality seem natural or right and that organize homosexuality as its binary opposite.’

Binary logic is undermined by queer studies scholars who claim that desires, practices and identities do not line up as neatly as lesbian and gay studies scholarship previously implied. For these scholars, lesbian and gay identities are provisional and contingent, rather than fixed and coherent.

This begs the question of how such *queerness* might be performed, choreographed and received. As discussed in the third chapter of this thesis, accounts of intersubjectivity taken from dance studies, emphasise somatic attention, kinaesthetic empathy and affect. For Rothfield any attending to or with the body has always-already been politically constituted and culturally patterned and this needs to be taken into account. One possibility is that such attending has been structured by heteronormativity. In terms of kinaesthetic empathy it is important to remember Randy Martin’s point that kinetic experience and cultural values are connected. Therefore any given movement repertoire, such as that of attending a performance has implicit politics and has been shaped by religious, gendered or symbolic systems. Ginot criticised somatic practices for their ideological construction and the normativity they champion, arguing for their interrogation so that the complexity of various physical, symbolic, social, economic and political environments can be taken into consideration and somatic modes of attending to and with queer bodies can be found.

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Figure 59 Mark Bradford, *Niagara*, 2005. (DVD video, colour, 3:17 minutes, looped).

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651 Ibid., 4.
The way in which Xavier Le Roy attempted to evade or undermine the privileges he enjoys as a white, cis-gendered, male, solo performer through transformation, in particular his techniques of effeminisation is one example of performing queerness. Self-Unfinished is just one example of a choreographed work that produces complex and special forms of social relations which actually interrogate what it means to be a subject. Le Roy used theatrical or illusory means such as costume and perspective in order to present an-other body and assume a subordinate relation to a male majority utilising the minoritarian feminine as an active medium of becoming. An earlier and similar example could be the way in which Andy Warhol (1928-1987) performed in a feminine or dandified manner which he referred to as ‘acting swish.’ Warhol’s equivocal self-imaging, his combination of wigs and make-up that could be read as feminine with conservative masculine suiting or leather jackets were, according to the artist, part of an overall strategy of un-hinging the dominant, Pollock-like masculine figure of the action painter. A more kinaesthetic evocation of the swish can be seen in Mark Bradford’s 2005 film Niagra in which the camera follows a young, African American man with a particular bounce in his step as he saunters down a dilapidated pavement in South Central Los Angeles (Figure 59). The title of the work alludes to a film in which the camera lingers on a view of Hollywood actress Marilyn Munroee (1926-1962) from behind as she walks away. Bradford has described the film as a protest piece involving the swishing and swaying back and forth by a particular kind of man taking public space, ‘owning it for himself, using it as a runway.’ Niagra relates back to the Vogue dancer’s in Hobb’s Mangere Mall who also take turns performing swish and walking as though on a runway. Additionally Bradford was inspired by a ‘walker’ in his own neighbourhood, one known ‘for his fearless embodiment of flamboyance within an especially tough public sphere.’

Pablo Bronstein, an artist mentioned earlier, combines mechanisms of dance with architecture and queer politics with a focus on the impacts and significance of social codes and stereotypes. As part of the performance that accompanies Bronstein’s installation Magnificent Triumphal Arch in Pompeian Colours (2010, Figure 60), an architectonic arch is placed in the centre of the gallery. The arch has a disruptive effect, when performers step through it their movement changes from the pedestrian or apparently every day to something more grandiose and mannered. The arch politicises space, standing in for the neoclassical architecture favoured by imperialist and colonial buildings such as art museums. An element taken from greater structures

of power, such built structures ‘are comparable to learnt codes of behaviour that are perceived as natural – ‘normal’ gender-specific behaviour or mannerisms.’ Bronstein’s choreographed work provides an exploration of processes of intersubjectivity-as-art with a body that performs affectation, echoing the ways in which it might be affected by intersubjective structures of architecture, dance conventions and decorum.


The movements of Bronstein’s dancers span a history of movement, from the Baroque to contemporary dance. The kinds of seemingly natural, prosaic and everyday movements they begin with have been favoured by dancers since the postmodern dance of choreographers such as Yvonne Rainer and Steve Paxton. However the flourishes they go on to perform, after passing through the arch, belong far back in the history of dance, dating back to aristocratic deportment of courtiers in the sixteenth century. Elegant courtly attitudes or sprezzatura conform to a canon of precise rules yet also aim to seem natural and uncontrived. The contrast of these two forms of movement activates the tension between what appears to be natural or artificial, mannered and contrived and demonstrates how such judgments are constructed and arbitrary. According to Bronstein, the swish, affectation or ‘body politics of sprezzatura would be codified as queer politics now.’ According to Stephanie Rosenthal Magnificent Triumphal Arch serves to give choreographic form to wide manipulative strategies. For Rosenthal the arch is a threshold, it marks a transition from one form of behaviour to another, it is an ‘indicator of change or being different.’ A disruption in action is triggered by the power of an architectonic form. Both Bronstein and Bradford contribute performances of walking, behaving or transitioning that is queer, beginning to create a kinaesthetic queerness.

As part of their final duotones (2014) performance, Auckland-based choreographer val smith played a recording of a seductive-sounding disco song. In a distorted and deep voice they repeatedly intoned the word ‘Forward… Forward… Forward’ into a microphone whilst making a beckoning gesture with one raised hand, which seemed to say ‘come forward, towards me.’ Audience members obeyed, they got up from their seats and slowly moved towards the artist, paying close attention to the ways in which smith altered hand movements like a police officer on point duty directing traffic. smith literally manipulated audience members around the room, herding them like sheep, dividing them into groups, beckoning with their hands to make them to crouch, kneel, sit, jump. At one point smith had coerced the audience out of the gallery into the foyer while remaining inside the central space, only the artist’s arm was visible from the doorframe, still signalling, as if to say ‘move back.’ At that moment we were all huddled together by a wall as far back as we could possibly go. Appealing through strange verbal cues, confusing hand gestures and sometimes more direct bodily intervention, smith moved participants, commanding, separating, dividing, controlling and directing. A particular body,  

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659 Barry White, Can’t Get Enough of Your Love, Babe’ (1974). val smith Duotones performed at Artspace, Auckland as part of the exhibition ‘to and fro’ curated by Amelia Hitchcock, July-August, 2014. val smith prefers for her name to appear in lowercase letters and that masculine/feminine pronouns not be used.
one that enjoyed a certain amount of authority manipulated the bodies of others. The aim was to give an indication or suggestion of a possible movement, manipulating spectatorship through instructions and gestures to the point where such instruction becomes confusing for audience members as well as for the artist.  

smith’s instruction, direction and domination ties into the main points about subjection, docile bodies, surveillance, self-regulation and control covered in Chapter One. The way in which smith positions themselves intersubjectively as a choreographer demanding the obedience and acquiescence of their audience members echoes the authoritative relations between art institutions and those who visit them; between choreographers and dancers and between performers and participants. *Duotones* is therefore a choreographed work that explores very specific processes of intersubjectivity-as-art, ones that are manipulative as well as arbitrary. It is also worth reiterating that historically art museums have presented very specific bodies, ones positioned within certain configurations of imperialist power, to be viewed by those at the summit of an exhibitionary order of things, in other words the dominating gaze of a white, bourgeois, metropolitan and male eye. An examination of the choreo-political relations between choreographer and dancer indicates a traffic of bodies and ideologies, the command of docile bodies and subjects who must yield to instruction of a previously decided sequence of actions. Choreographic commands can be perpetuated by religious, salutary, professional, psychoanalytic as well as artistic authoritative structures in order to dictate action and behaviour. smith repeatedly performed instruction until such authoritative structures seemed absurd, even arbitrary. As someone who attended the performance I found myself becoming fatigued, exasperated, even a little bored. I began to wonder how long I was expected to obey the instructions and what would happen if I ceased to. When smith finally stopped moving us around and the performance ended, I felt an immense sense of relief that the ordeal was over, as well as a certain pride in the fact that I managed to support the artist by obeying them and helping to make the performance a success.

Bradford, Bronstein and smith begin to create kinaesthetic queerness that is also spatialized, echoing Sara Ahmed’s argument about the subject-intersubjectivity relation, orientations and the ‘spatiality of sexual desire.’ For Ahmed orientation is a matter of ‘how one inhabits spaces and who or what one inhabits spaces with.’ Summarising her phenomenology of bodily orientations, Ahmed argues that each body is a ‘point from which the world unfolds,’ and uses Husserl’s attendance to the lived body and the intimacy of touch. The importance of ‘hands that

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661 (Ahmed 543-545.)
662 Ibid., 551-553.
reach’ is stressed as well as proximity, what or who can be sensed and touched. Bodies make and leave impressions, bodies are something touching which is touched. Orientations are therefore tactile, they involve at least a two-way approach or the ‘more than one’ of an intersubjective encounter. Ahmed surmises that bodies take shape through being oriented towards each other so that an orientation may be experienced as the cohabitation or sharing of a space. Taking this a step further, bodies are shaped by contact with others, who is near enough to be reached, tendencies are important, as these dictate what kinds of bodies one might tend towards.

Thus orientations are ‘the effects of what we tend toward.’ To be oriented sexually, according to Ahmed is to dwell on something, to linger, orientations take time. An atmosphere of compulsory or dominant heterosexuality necessitates an orientation around. For Ahmed, a queer subject within straight culture has no choice but to deviate. From this point of view, the queer body is a ‘failed orientation.’ For Ahmed, to be queer is to challenge the normative line or axis, heteronormativity is a straightening device, one that encourages a very specific trajectory. To be out of line is to de-stabilise these axis, to be oblique or slanted. Ahmed posits ‘queer moments’ as moments of dis-orientation.’ When things come out of line the effect is ‘wonky’ and Ahmed embraces these queer or wonky moments.

Due to the way in which the dominant structures of the world, include heteronormativity are already in place, queer moments occur when things ‘come out of line,’ or are ‘fleeting.’ According to Ahmed, ‘the “what” that fleets is the very point of disorientation.’ Ahmed makes explicit that she utilises the term queer to describe non-straight sexual practices, in particular lesbianism as a form of social and sexual contact. An appeal is made to the root of the word which is from the Greek for cross, oblique or adverse and extended to mean odd, bent or twisted. Ahmed highlights the queer potential of the oblique to make things queer is ‘certainly to disturb the order of things.’ To point out the contingency of bodies, coming into contact with bodies creates a disorientation in how things are normally arranged, even a series of uncanny effects. In summary, a queer politics for Ahmed involves a commitment to a certain way of inhabiting the world ‘at the point at which things fleet.’ Ahmed’s concepts of queerness as dis-orientation, the oblique, slanted, wonky and fleeting have the possibility of being choreo-political and contributing towards a conception of queer choreography.

663 554
664 Ibid., 562.
665 Ibid., 565.
666 Ibid., 566, 569.
Figure 61 val smith, *Gutter Matters*, 2014. (Live performance) Performed at Artspace, Auckland as part of ‘to and fro,’ July 11, 2014.
Smith’s *Gutter Matters* performances from 2014 apply many of Ahmed’s such concepts including an emphasis on orientation and a disturbance in the order of things. *Gutter Matters* (Figure 61) begins with the artist lying face down in the gutter outside of an art gallery ‘as a kind of dance practice.’\(^{667}\) A helper stands above the artist with a sign that says ‘Gay Shame Parade’ and invites passers-by to lie on the footpath with Smith in order to observe what is in the drain below with the aid of a torch. The way in which Smith lies in the gutter provokes all different kinds of empathy including, motor, cognitive and emotional empathy. The first part of the performance investigates gutters as places of lowness, channels of detritus and waste. It is an inhabitation of spaces for what is abject, forgotten and discarded from the city. Smith has written of their interest in ‘mapping a politics of queer pride and shame.’\(^{668}\) An affectivity of shame is used as something familiar to those persecuted within an intersubjective environment of compulsory heterosexuality as well as a methodology for creating choreography, the aim is to ‘make friends with shame’ in order to take the power out of it. A deliberate initiation is made to activate intersubjective relations involving shame. Smith deviates, performing a low and failed orientation, they challenge verticality, de-stabilising the normative axis of the upright figure. The artist is horizontal in an effort to be placed as low as possible, before crawling, maintaining horizontality in order to enter the gallery space in an unusual way.

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The next phase of the performance involved crawling up two flights of stairs from the street up to the pristine white cube of the art gallery. According to smith ‘This is a Pride Parade of my own design. I finish with a slow motion pompom routine on the floor.’ Throughout the performance the artist is dressed in gold, wearing a long shaggy wig with gold tinsel wrapped around her neck and gold and blue foil pompoms. Once inside they perform what appears to be a cheerleading routine, a manipulation of pompoms whilst lying on their back on the floor (Figure 62). smith summarises that Gutter Matters ‘investigates the relationship between city drainage systems, ecological thinking, and a queer politics of pride and shame.’ smith evokes the convention of the very public pride parade with its relations of spectacular display and exhibitionism, though this is choreographed to be oblique or off-line, performed with the artist lying horizontal on the gallery floor whilst others are standing upright.

In the first chapter of this thesis the possibility of activating an ‘other space’ was posited. A space that is heterotopic, a place for an individual whose behaviour is deviant in relation to norms. Such a space, one that is matrixial or formed by intersubjective relations becomes a complex topology. A more customary, masculine, Newtonian and measured space is complicated even queered so that instead there could be a heterotopic space of becoming and affect. Ahmed also stresses the importance of space, stating that ‘orientations matter’ as they affect what bodies can do and where they might do it. Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner describe the queer world as ‘a space of entrances, exits, unsystematised lines of acquaintance, projecting horizons, typifying examples, alternate routes, blockages, incommensurate geographies.’ Ahmed points out that being oriented in different ways matters, because of the ways in which spaces are already oriented around the straight body. Intersubjectivity produces certain forms of subjecheid, the ‘repetitive performances of hegemonic asymmetrical gender identities and heterosexual desires congeal over time to produce the appearance that the street is normally a heterosexual space.’ Perhaps even more so than the street, public toilets are facilities that reinforce such identities and desires. Such spaces have become something of an obsession for smith, part of their research has been examining ‘bathroom experiences for transgender, non-binary and gender non-conforming folks.’ This also ties into wider concerns

669 Ahmed. 565.  
670 Ibid., 563.  
671 val smith “Mapping queer experiences: Caroline Plummer Fellowship – Week 1,” valvalvalsmithsmithsmith, last modified Feb, 8, 2016, https://valvalvalsmithsmithsmith.blogspot.co.nz/2016/02/mapping-queer-experiences.html! As part of her Caroline Plummer Fellowship smith hosted an evening entitled ‘This Cloud is Queering’ on June 19 2016, Under Market 177 George Street, Dunedin. One component of the event was a series of gender-inclusive composting toilets illuminated by disco lights.
about laws being proposed in the United States which would make it a crime for a person to enter a single-sex public restroom that does not match the person’s ‘biological gender.’

Figure 63 val smith (with Kristian Larsen), *Meiosis*, 2016. (Live performance, 4 hours)

Interrogating the ways in which spaces are oriented around straight bodies, it was on a wooden bench is outside the public toilets of Te Uru Waitakere Contemporary Gallery that smith chose to stage *Meiosis* (2016) with fellow dancer Kristian Larsen (Figure 63). Similar to works previously mentioned by Charmatz, Rosetsky, Carpenter and Nash, *Meiosis* involved a process enacting intersubjectivity as an attempting to commingle, or dissolve identities. In the words of smith, the aim of the performance was to engage in a four-hour process ‘of comprehensively transitioning to become each other.’ A disclaimer was added: ‘val smith and Kristian Larsen are in no way stable identities, rather they are in a constant and fluid state of reinterpretation of themselves through daily acts of sexual repetition.’ Both smith and Larsen were dressed in a similar way, both sported short-cropped haircuts and wore plaid shirts, crudely-cut blue denim shorts, white sneakers and a wrist-watch. smith noted that prior to the performance they anticipated the need for an ‘embodied listening practice,’ a ‘drawing on a kinaesthetically focused practice of empathy to comprehend the subjectivities’ of Larsen. smith also conjured the notion of osmosis and the possibility for the identification of impressions that ‘might emerge through an osmotic process of sensing, listening and tuning.’ The performance itself involved:

sensing and talking. Sensing through touch, closeness, being-with; talking through noticing, awareness and the sharing of insights and embodied experiences.


673 val smith and Kristen Larsen *Meiosis* (2016) performed 13 February, 2016 at Te Uru Waitakere Contemporary Gallery, Titirangi as part of the exhibition ‘They Come from Far Away: A Performance Series.’
Parts of the performance involved touch, smith and Larsen mapped or touched parts of each other’s bodies, sometimes with the same parts, wrist on wrist, elbow on elbow, in a kind of tactile mirroring or correspondence in close proximity. However there were a lot of non-touch interactions such as closeness, conversation, shared experiences of the space and relations with people who sat with them in the gallery. On reflection, smith noted that although they entered the performance with the belief that they could actually become Larsen, afterwards they became concerned about the ethical implications. smith and Larsen moved through the various spaces of the galleries, from outside the toilets to the exhibitions, café and participating in various other performance which were occurring simultaneously. smith wrote of the experience

> Unfortunately, I truly failed to become Kristian, yet I feel like I know him in my body a little more microperceptually and intimately, which I think is, in itself a small success ;)

smith reiterated ‘I failed the brief. I failed it utterly,’ and reflected that even though they failed to become Larsen, in the attempt they had managed to feel more of themselves through the process. Similar to Ahmed’s conception of queerness as something wonky or off-line is a concept of *queer failure*. Failure, like shame is an intersubjective relation smith deliberately courts in their choreographies.

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675 This concept of *queer failure* is explored in performances by Keith Hennessey and his West Coast Dance Company Circo Zero, see http://circozero.org/.
Homoshamanism is a series of performances in which smith dresses in a costume constructed from wigs that covers their entire face and body. In early iterations the wigs were naturally coloured brown and blonde hair. In a later iteration they were crafted from bright-red, clown like wigs, evoking the artist’s grandmother who was a red-head, as well as the ‘mysterious power’ red-heads are meant to possess. Smith has referred to this costume as a form of drag, but rather than a form of drag altering the appearance of gender, it is instead a drag in which she might become more of herself. Similar to Le Roy, smith utilises costume in order to allow a transformation to take place and to create a body that is de-familiarised. The invocation of the word ‘shaman’ also indicates the techniques of transformation utilised by such figures. Homoshamanism (2016) was performed outside the public toilets within the Gus Fisher Gallery at the University of Auckland (Figure 64). There were two pieces of furniture, a whiteboard and a chair. The performance began with smith writing the heading ‘Homoshamanism’ upon the white board. The artist then undressed and put on the bright-red costume. Once attired they performed a series of actions, each delineated by a heading written on the whiteboard beforehand. The headings read ‘Faux Falls, Contemporary Dancer, Artist Talk, Energy Healing, Gay Shame Parade, Femme Realness and Single Fitted Pink Sheet.’ At the end of the performance smith made two columns beside the headings, one reading ‘real’ the other ‘fake.’ They set up an intersubjective relation of evaluation, beckoning to the audience to decide whether each component was ‘real’ or ‘fake,’ and perhaps also ‘failure’ or ‘success,’ marking each with either a tick or a cross. The personage of smith’s homoshaman appears without gender and of indeterminate humanity like a yeti or abominable snowman. It has no real face, undermining the intersubjective systems of facial recognition and empathy discussed in the second chapter of this thesis. Appearing as a body, but without a face it challenges Deleuze and Guattari’s argument of facialisation, the very human system of organisation that bestows subjectification. In the last section of the performance the homoshaman sits upon a chair and cocoons itself inside a pink-fitted sheet so that all that can be seen is an ovular pink cocoon shape with a hairy red centre. In making itself object-like there is no doubt that the homoshaman is an utterly posthuman figure. Although it is de-familiarising it is also completely entertaining, activating intersubjective relations that are light and comical, in contrast to the very important issues it engages with.

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677 This ties into Valentina Desideri’s practice of ‘fake therapy.’ This involves a series of twenty cards, easily available on-line which detail somatic instructions to be performed in twenty minutes sessions in which people take turns trying to ‘heal’ each other. See https://faketherapy.wordpress.com/
678 (O’Sullivan 190.)190.
As part of their queer choreographies, smith utilises instruction and commanding actions in order to expose the arbitrariness of obedient behaviour within the space of an art gallery. Self-consciously exposing themselves to alternating intersubjective relations of pride and shame, smith performs actions that are lowly as well as celebratory, inviting participation and complicity. An openness perhaps even resignation to fakery and failure is made manifest along with their accompanying positions of queerness, deviancy and dis-orientation. Strategically situating themselves in places that spatialize straightness and determine specific gender identities, smith uses devices of disguise, drag and transformation in order to interrogate sexual difference, unitary identities and the machinations of power.

4.5 De-colonising choreography: Angela Tiatia, Kalisolaite ‘Uhila and Shigeuki Kihara

The camera is fixed upon the corner of a white-walled space. A pair of black women’s high-heel shoes has been placed within the frame. A woman walks in from the left, her legs are adorned with Samoan women’s tatatu known as the malu, she wears a black leotard and a gold ring on the ring finger of her left hand. This is Auckland-born, Sydney-based multimedia artist Angela Tiatia. She steps into the tall shoes, adjusting them as they cling to the skin of her bare feet. For a moment she stands in profile so that the shoes, her tatau and the black costume can be seen. She then slowly turns around, towards the back of the cornered space. She deliberately positions herself, facing the side wall. She slowly approaches it until her hip-bones and pelvis make contact. Keeping her knees touching the wall, she bends and leans backwards, her weight on her hands, placing her body so that the tips of her feet touch the wall, her legs are bent and she lies on her back upon the floor. Tiatia looks straight ahead at the ceiling above her. She then inches forwards with her hands and buttocks until she is close enough to place one foot in its high-heel shoe upon the wall. The artist turns her head so that she looks directly into the camera and begins to slowly walk her feet vertically up the wall. When she has walked as far as she can whilst simultaneously lying on her back, Tiatia proceeds to slowly walk her feet back down again, usually taking five steps up and five steps down, before placing her feet on the ground again. This action is relentlessly repeated for around twelve minutes during which time the artist gradually gets fatigued and her movements become more weighted and less precise. Finally failing to trace the careful steps up the wall, Tiatia rolls onto her side and then again onto her back, breaking her gaze with the camera, she looks at the ceiling above her. She kicks off the shoes one by one and lies supine with her legs bent and bare feet on the ground. Breathing heavily, for a moment she is still. She slowly gets up without looking at the camera and exits to the left.
In Tiatia’s Walking the Wall (2014, Figure 65), the film just described, a simple everyday action, that of walking is re-performed with a change in orientation, a switch from a horizontal to a vertical plane.679 Harking back to Brown’s 1971 work Walking on the Gallery Wall and her Forest Floor (1970), Tiatia’s film is an endurance exercise that consists of the repetition and re-orientation of a simple and isolated action as well as a ludic engagement with the architectural device of the white cube exhibition space. It is a personal and intimate presentation and portrayal of a very specific kind of body in a public space, one that is female, dressed in high-heeled shoes and the modish, intimate-wear of a black leotard. Tiatia presents herself to viewers in a sexualised manner, her legs and upper chest are exposed. Additionally she is slender and youthful, as a former model, actress and television presenter, her body is one that would generally be considered to be physically attractive. Tiatia’s upper thighs with her distinctive adornment or malu signify a body that is female as well as Samoan. Malu is the name given for women’s tatau which is less elaborate than those for men and appears on the legs, starting at the knee and finishing at the top of the thigh.680 The malu together with the high-heeled shoes are potent cultural signifiers of femininity, such signifiers point to the way in which intersubjective relations help to produce subjecthood. Tiatia’s hair and skin-tone also signify a female Pacific


As Auckland-based artists Lana Lopesi and Louisa Afoa point out, ‘throughout the Pacific, our hair is big and our skin is dark.’ The small steps she makes also evoke the steps a dancer makes in Siva Samoa or Samoan dance. The locked-off camera, with its frame fixed upon a corner, construct a box-like space or square. This compositional form, together with Tiatia’s walking recalls Nauman’s Dance or Exercise on the Perimeter of a Square (1968). Although Nauman occupies the particular private working space of an artist’s studio and Tiatia most definitely inhabits a public, white cube gallery space. The implications of the presentation of such a body within a white cube space, inside a contemporary art museum, relate specifically to my wider thesis of the ways in which artworks utilise simple choreographies in order to evade or subvert the authoritative relations and hierarchies perpetuated within and by such institutions.

Tiatia alters her orientation as a de-familiarising tactic, it is important to note that she ‘misbehaves’ and in doing so confronts, as a subject, the intersubjective conventions and stereotypes placed upon the Pacific female body. By openly displaying her sacred malu, an act of cultural taboo for Samoans, Tiatia confronts what is usually forbidden and in doing so exposes herself to criticism. According to the artist, ‘I fix my body in states of conflict between the sacred and the uninhibited.’ Part of being a Samoan woman living in the diaspora involves contradictory expectations placed upon her body by minority, indigenous cultures as well as Western, mass global culture. Hence the pressure to ‘uncover and cover my body at the same time’ and the highly feminized cultural signs of black stiletto shoes and the malu. For Tiatia, the action in Walking the Wall is absurd, reflecting the ridiculousness of such expectations. On the one hand Tiatia embraces, to the point of exhaustion, symbols of female sexuality and its commodification in mass consumer culture. On the other hand Tiatia protests, openly revealing the sacred malu, highlighting the double standards within Samoan culture when it comes to revealing the male and female tatau as men are free to openly display their tattoo or pe’a with pride in public, while women are not. Walking the Wall is therefore a protest against patriarchal power, both Samoan and Western. Performing her frustration, Tiatia demonstrates the way in

681 Tiatia’s mother ‘Lusi, was part of a generation from across the Pacific encouraged to migrate to New Zealand in the 1950s and 60s to form a much-needed labour force. These people were considered ‘overstayers’ through the 1970s when the economy began to slow, leaving an enduring negativity toward Pacific communities.’ Tarun Nagesh “The Social Medium” in Gallery of Modern Art, Queensland Art Gallery. The 8th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art. Brisbane: Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, 2015. Print. 146.
684 http://www.tautai.org/artist/angela-tiatia/
which such expectations are ‘driving her up the wall.’ Tiatia’s weariness is comparable with that of Laderman Ukeles as she warily performs the labour of washing the art gallery steps.

In contrast to her former employment, Tiatia reflects that presently ‘I finally have gained control over my own body and image after years of being weighed, measured, dressed and silenced.’ Instead her body has become a ‘site for protest,’ one that exposes ‘the changing landscape of globalisation and neo-colonial politics on the public and private body.’ According to Tiatia such politics ‘sit on the body like a blanket’ and create confusion and a lack of clarity. Like smith, Tiatia explores the multiple dimensions of the intersubjective relations of shame, as the shaming of women demonstrates the ‘sexism and Christian pathology’ embedded within diasporic Samoan cultures:

I wanted to convey the implications of contemporary times and issues on the body, identity and communities… I am empowering young women with the malu (to not shame them and to confront reasons why they think it’s so wrong to show it.)

By staring defiantly into the camera, Tiatia is resistant, she returns the gaze of those who look upon her, challenging the ‘dusky maiden’ stereotype of ‘sexually uninhibited and free-loving’ Pacific women perpetuated in eighteenth century written accounts from European explorers, nineteenth century ethnographic and touristic photographs to twentieth century Paciflicks. Tiatia’s insertion of herself into the space of the white cube recalls the way in which bodies have historically been displayed within what Bennett refers to as the ‘exhibitionary complex.’

It is important to note that within the space of nineteenth-century museums the bodies of artists were often present and visible as they studied or copied works within the galleries. Tying into what it means to be a subject, within the imperialist and colonial ‘order of things’ made manifest by museums and exhibitions, Samoan bodies were represented as other and belonging to ‘non-civilised peoples upon whose bodies the effects of power were unleashed.’ There is no doubt about the position of Pacific bodies within the master/slave dialectic of the museum. The discipline of anthropology at the time separated races into the civilised and the ‘primitive’ who occupied a ‘twilight zone between nature and culture.’ One example of such framing is the

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686 This point is deeply indebted to a conversation with art historian Caroline Vercoe.
687 Tiatia quoted in Forrest “8th Asia Pacific Triennial Q&A: Angela Tiatia’s Body Battles,” Ibid.
688 Ibid.
689 Ibid.
691 Museum Bodies, 8.
692 Bennett, 67.
693 Bennett, 77.
sexualised and derogatory parading and display of Khoikhoi woman Saartjie Baartman (c. 1770-1815) as a curiosity in Paris and London.\(^{694}\) Even after her death intimate parts of her anatomy were studied then presented to the French Academy which arranged for their display in the Musée d’Ethnographie de Paris. Her body was displayed until 1974 and her remains were finally repatriated to South Africa and buried in 2002. Thus the implied, exhibition-going public, the white citizenries of the imperialist powers were merged into an undifferentiated unity as well as the ‘just beneficiaries, of the processes of evolution and identified as a unity in opposition to the primitive otherness of conquered peoples.’\(^{695}\) A system of organization was created in which the construction of a radically different Other and the exhibition of so-called other peoples became a vehicle for imperialist edification.

This system of ordering or organization was reflected in the Crystal Palace as part of the Great Exhibition of London in 1851. The palace adhered to principles of classification based on nations as well as supra-national constructs of empires and races, actualised in the form of national courts and display areas.\(^{696}\) Pavilions were developed for each participating countries which were then zoned into racial groups. Crucially, within this system of organization ‘black peoples and the black peoples and the aboriginal populations of conquered territories, denied any space of their own, being represented as subordinate adjuncts to the imperial displays of the major powers.’\(^{697}\) Bennett argues that the exhibition of non-white peoples themselves and not just their remains or artefacts, they became mere ‘object lessons of evolutionary theory.’ One example is the colonial city within the 1889 Paris Exposition which was populated by Asian and African peoples in simulated ‘native villages.’ The exhibition of people presented them as ‘living demonstrations of evolutionary theory.’ Non-white peoples were thus arranged, as though they were objects into ‘a sliding scale of humanity, from the barbaric to the civilized’ and that relations of knowledge and colonial power continued to be invested in the public display of bodies. It could be argued that any insertion into art museums of bodies indigenous to the South Pacific can be read in the context of such a history and the way such imperialist, colonial, intersubjective relations produced certain forms of subjecthood.

It is in the context of such a history, a history of exhibiting certain bodies as curiosities, monstrosities that were deemed radically other, as well as inferior and primitive, that Tiatia inserts her body. She enters the white cube exhibition space, scantily clad, a sexualised Pacific


\(^{695}\) Bennett, 79.

\(^{696}\) The remnants of such organisation can still be seen in the national pavilions at the Biennale di Venezia.

\(^{697}\) Bennett, 82-83.
woman defiantly bearing the adornment that signifies she is Samoan. The actions she performs are simple, entering, slipping into high heel shoes, lying down and walking in a way that hints at Siva Samoa. The simple pedestrian act of walking is dis-oriented, she walks upon the walls instead of the floor and does so to the point of exhaustion. The way in which her gaze is directed towards the camera and those who view her is unflinching and relentless. *Walking on the Wall* enacts a very particular type of intersubjectivity, highlighting its oppositional, embodied, spatial, affective and emotional dimensions. Tiata defies those who view her as an eroticised other, challenging those who might prefer for her to feel shame and demonstrates strength for those who identify with her position.

Another example of a performance that enacts a critique of art institutions by an insertion of a Pacific body in and around the art museum is New Zealand, Tongan artist Kalisolaite ‘Uhila’s *Mo‘ui Tukuhausia* 2014 (Figure 66). The title of the artwork can be translated as ‘to be absolutely stranded; to be left destitute and friendless.’ In the most recent iteration of this performance ‘Uhila lived homeless in and around Auckland Art Gallery for the roughly three-month duration of an exhibition. Prior to the conception of this work ‘Uhila conducted a series of experiments in which he slept rough, spending the odd day or night being unkempt and living on the street which contrasted with his employment at the time, working as a security guard in Auckland’s central business district. One particular day ‘Uhila attempted to enter Auckland Art Gallery, only to be denied entry and ushered out. This incident was pertinent due to the fact that ‘Uhila himself was often required to move homeless people off the private properties he was guarding.

As a former student of dance, ‘Uhila’s living as though homeless was the execution of a simple plan, score or choreography, yet its actualisation would prove complex, at the outset there was no way of knowing what would actually take place when the artist exposed himself to serious vulnerability and risk. The task chosen by the artist was immensely difficult and demanding, both physically as it took place over winter months but also psychologically as he was separated or exiled from his family and friends.

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699 The first iteration of this performance occurred as part of the 2012 exhibition ‘What do you mean, we?’ curated by Bruce E. Phillips at Te Tuhi Centre for the Arts in Pakuranga, an eastern suburb of Auckland. The duration of this iteration was two weeks.


Complex intersubjective relations were activated, a significant burden was also placed upon the infrastructure of the art gallery as the curatorial, security and management staff either worked extra hours or were on-call in order to ensure ‘Uhila’s safety. *Mo’ui Tukuhausia* bears a resemblance to an earlier work, *One Year Performance 1981-1982* by Taiwanese artist Tehching Hsieh, in which he attempted to stay outdoors for one year without going inside in his adopted city of New York. Hsieh and ‘Uhila are both immigrants to the cities and countries they perform within. However an important difference is that throughout his performance, during business hours ‘Uhila used the gallery as a shelter and personal sanctuary, storing possessions and writing reflections upon the walls. But outside of these hours ‘Uhila, like Hsieh, slept outside, making alliances and building relationships with a community of rough sleepers in the same area who taught him about survival in the urban environment with its ‘safe’ areas and dangerous ‘dead zones.’ The position ‘Uhila takes up is that of an artist and dancer as immigrant, exile, untouchable as well as one who is dependent for his very life, security and well-being, upon an art institution. Such a position unravels the embodied, kinaesthetic, spatial, affective and interrogative dimensions of the intersubjectivity produced by his choreographed work.

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Like Tiatia, ‘Uhila inserts his body into an art institution in a very strategic and subversive way. Yet the way he dwells just outside of it is also important. Art historian Nina Tonga discusses ‘Uhila’s work in reference to the Tongan concept of ‘tu’a, a social and spatial outside,’ the ‘back; space or place; time behind or beyond; space outside’ or ‘exterior.’ Tonga summarises the term as connoting a ‘physical, social and temporal periphery.’ Indeed ‘Uhila activated the peripheral spaces of the gallery, its thresholds and environs, its inside and outside, lingering and roaming around its exhibition spaces as well as sleeping beneath the shelter of its external overhanging eaves and resting upon its steps. Another concept discussed in relation to this work by Tonga is that of haua, an act of wandering, to be beaten about by wind or rain, ‘continually wandering about as if more or less insane.’ In relation to such a concept, ‘Uhila’s wandering in and around the art museum whilst continuously performing or creating an artwork challenged the physical and conceptual limits of the institution, activating its boundaries and liminal spaces and extending its exhibition space into its social, political and urban context. Such wandering and simply ‘being,’ was part of a simple, yet radical strategy of passivity, a steely, yet gentle endurance. ‘Uhila’s roaming between exhibition space, the in-between spaces of the gallery as well as its surroundings raised questions about where exactly art, performance and choreography might take place.

The intersubjective relations activated or enacted by Mo’ui Tukuhausia included the relations between those who sleep rough and those who come to the city and the gallery to live, work or merely visit. Similar to val smith, ‘Uhila deliberately assumes a position of lowness, perhaps even shame in order to make visible the plight of those who continue to occupy such a position in the daily order of things and people within the city of Auckland. This was not the first time that ‘Uhila took up an unusual inter-subjective relation as part of a performance. Echoing Braidotti’s concerns with post-anthropocentrism, in an earlier endurance-based work Pigs in the Yard from 2011 ‘Uhila cohabitated with a piglet named ‘Colonist’ in a shipping container made into an open straw pen for eight days. The container was located in Aotea Square in the middle of central Auckland and for the duration of the performance ‘Uhila mimicked the behaviour of Colonist in full view of the public and exposed to the elements. The appellation of the pig firmly situates ‘Uhila’s practice in reaction to colonisation of the Pacific by European settlers and missionaries from the eighteenth century onwards. Similar to Mo’ui Tukuhausia the work involves simple acts of subsistence: sheltering, sleeping and eating.

Taking into consideration ‘Uhila’s œuvre as a whole, one can read Mo’ui Tukuhausia in relation to the colonisation of the Pacific. He engages with the art museum whilst simultaneously

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704 Tonga, Ibid.
challenging its very boundaries. Such a place is, as previously mentioned, an institution that bears a legacy of imperialist power and a history of desecration of Pacific cultures, bodies and remains. Tiatia refers to her work as a protest, indeed another way of reading her work and that of ‘Uhila is that they posit themselves within a specific relation to intersubjective structures of power, performing a function that is de-colonizing, echoing Arendt’s thesis that action can have the ability to produce change. In her discussion of decolonizing research methodologies, Maori academic Linda Tuhiwai Smith (Ngati Awa, Ngati Porou) theorises about what de-colonising practices might do with important implications for art-making and choreography. Referring back to theorist Edward Said, via Tuhiwai Smith, important questions become ‘who is making art? For whom is the art being done? And in what circumstances?’ As a woman indigenous to New Zealand, Aotearoa, Tuhiwai Smith makes the important definition of de-colonizing practices for indigenous peoples as being ‘amongst ourselves, for ourselves and to ourselves.’ Decolonization is therefore about centring indigenous concerns and world views before ‘coming to know and understand theory and research from our own perspectives and for our own purposes.’

Accordingly, decolonization is a long-term process, one that involves a divestment of colonial power. Crucially Tuhiwai Smith also writes of spaces that need to be claimed, perhaps such spaces could be that of the white cubes of the contemporary art museum. One concept crucial to processes of decolonization is self-determination, though Tuhiwai Smith cautions it is a much more dynamic and complex movement which incorporates many dimensions, some of which are still unfolding. It involves a revitalisation and reformulation of culture and tradition, an increased participation in and articulate rejection of Western institutions, a focus on strategic relations and alliances with non-indigenous groups.

For Tuhiwai Smith, self-determination is a research agenda as well as a political goal of social justice that can be expressed across different terrains including cultural ones, but it must involve ‘processes of transformation, of decolonization, of healing and of mobilization as peoples.’ To imagine self-determination involves, for Tuhiwai Smith, ‘to imagine a world in which indigenous peoples become active participants.’ A focus upon and situation of a broader indigenous agenda and framework that includes ‘acts of reclaiming, reformulating and

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706 Ibid., 19.
707 Ibid., 39.
708 Ibid., 98, 104.
709 Ibid., 110.
710 Ibid., 116.
711 Ibid., 124.
reconstituting indigenous cultures and languages. Indeed, if the term *indigenizing* centres around a politics of ‘indigenous identity and indigenous cultural action,’ then perhaps this term, or even re-indigenising is more positive than that of de-colonizing. Importantly for artists, Tuhiwai Smith argues that representation is a project for all those who are attempting ‘to express an indigenous spirit, experience or world view,’ one that might counter dominant society’s images of them. Tuhiwai Smith stresses the importance of the provision of alternatives for each other as well as ‘the ability to create and be creative.’ This can involve *reframing*, in which ‘indigenous people resists being boxed and labelled according to categories which do not fit.’ Tuhiwai Smith describes twenty-five indigenous projects as part of her broader thesis of decolonizing methodologies, crucially for artmaking and choreography these are almost all in the present continuous tense, they are: claiming, testimonies, story-telling, celebrating survival, remembering, indigenizing, intervening, revitalizing, connecting, reading, writing, representing, gendering, envisioning, reframing, restoring, returning, democratizing, networking, naming, protecting, creating, negotiating, discovering and sharing. It is in reference to Tuhiwai Smith’s thesis that I argue certain choreographed works provide an exploration of processes of intersubjectivity-as-art that perform a *decolonizing* function though it is important to note that all of the artists discussed in this section are indigenous to one Pacific nation, whilst dwelling in another.

The art museum can be considered what Tuhiwai Smith would call a particular ‘site of struggle’ for indigenous peoples. And it is within this county’s most prominent museum, the Museum of New Zealand, Te Papa Tongarewa in the capital Wellington, that the next performance took place. *Taualuga: The Last Dance* (2006) was first performed in New Zealand on February 22, 2012 in a gallery within Te Papa (Figure 67). Shigeyuki Kihara, a New Zealand artist of Samoan and Japanese descent performed her dance atop a platform raised approximately thirty centimetres from the ground and covered in black cloth. For her costume, she chose Victorian mourning dress, a full-length, high-neck, black gown complete with a corset and hooped petticoats. Such a style of dress communicates a sense of loss, the way in which struggles for

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712 Ibid., 140-142.
713 Ibid., 146.
714 Ibid., 151.
715 Ibid., 158, 105.
716 Ibid., 153.
717 Ibid., 142-161.
718 Ibid., 191.
719 The performance was presented as part of the opening for the exhibition ‘Collecting Contemporary’ which included a video of the work which was gifted to the museum by the artist in 2011. Previously *Taualuga: The Last Dance* was performed at Haus der Kulturen Der Welt, Berlin, Germany, the Musée du Quai Branly, Paris, France and at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA. Megan Tamati-Quennell, “Taualuga: The Last Dance,” *Museum of New Zealand, Te Papa Tongarewa*, last modified March 9, 2012, [http://blog.tepapa.govt.nz/2012/03/09/taualuga-the-last-dance/](http://blog.tepapa.govt.nz/2012/03/09/taualuga-the-last-dance/).
power play out, upon and within bodies, how they behave and what they wear. Kihara’s ‘re-dressing’ also alludes to earlier colonial encounters and the material effects of missionisation and assimilation. Such dress was introduced to Samoa by the German colonial administration in the 1900s and for Kihara it is a ‘signifier of colonialism.

With that dress, I mean it’s just so tight and so awkward to move, so it’s basically designed to contain your movements rather than be free with it. But I was very interesting in a way that I could use this colonial structure that bondages me and finding a new language, a danced language through this bondaged state.

Kihara performs elevated, slightly raised above her audience, placed upon a kind of pedestal or stage, again in a position of display. A kind of queering also takes place in this performance due to Kihara’s gender identity. Born a man, Kihara is a woman by gender or fa’a fafine which translates as ‘like a woman,’ that is living as a woman in terms of her dress and mannerisms and occupying a liminal ream between man and woman. The choice to perform the graceful Taualuga in such attire was inspired by a studio portrait of a Samoan woman who wears such dress with a sense of elegance, comfort and confidence. For the past decade and a half Kihara has been responding to ethnographic and touristic images of Samoans in museum archives. Upon studying a variety of historical photographs taken by New Zealand photographers in Samoa, Kihara reflected ‘The more I wanted to know about these people, the more I wanted to be them, by putting myself in the photograph. I wanted to unlock the photograph to free the soul.’ Part of this process of putting herself within ethnographic photographs involved an exploration of the Biblical character of Salome and her dance as interpreted by Samoans. Taualuga: The Last Dance is a syncretic work, one that explores for Kihara ‘what dance could be when these two distinctive ideologies come together.’ Additionally Salome, a Samoan woman in nineteenth century mourning dress, has become a ‘muse and an alter-ego’ for Kihara, which she continues to perform in multiple artworks. Recalling the previous section on post-internet choreographies, the phenomenon of creating choreographies taken from the internet also ties into Kihara’s Taualuga for which she watched YouTube videos of the Japanese Onnagata specialist Bando Tamasaburo (b. 1950) Tamasaburo was a Kabuki actor who

Vercoe. 45.


Vercoe, 45-46.

Thomas Andrew Portrait of a Samoan Woman 1865. Andrew lived in Samoa from 1891 to 1939 and many of his photographs are included within the museum’s collection.

Maia Nuku “Standing on the edge of the abyss: Shigeyuki Kihara, catalyst for change” in Broadsheet, Summer, 2015, 10. Works performed as Salome include: Siva in Motion (2012), Where do we come from? Where are we going? (2013) and Invocations (2016). One of the earliest appearances of this persona was in Lisa Taouma’s Pasifika Divas in Performance, 14 September, 2002 at the Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, Queensland Art Gallery.
specialised in playing women’s roles and known for his willowy physique and haughty demeanour, and Kihara sought to apply the same logic to her characterisation of Salome.725


Echoing Tiatia’s de-familiarising position and misbehaviour as well as ‘Uhila’s occupation of the gallery as a place in which to live, Kihara considered her dance to be a decolonizing action that resisted the set of behaviours generally expected to be adhered to by gallery visitors:

there is a set of behaviours that the audience is expected to abide by in the gallery space policed by the gallery attendants. We can’t spontaneously dance as a response to the artwork or else we get told off or get kicked out of the gallery/museum. So I like the idea of introducing dance in the gallery/museum as a way to disrupt the rules to how we are supposed to engage in art. These situations are no different to missionaries and colonial officers i.e. gallery attendants who ban Pacific Islanders from dancing their culture.726

Kihara’s choreography utilises the principles of the classical Samoan dance of Taualuga, a culminatory or finishing dance, in order to tell a story and pay tribute to many leaders and people

of Samoa in their struggle for independence. It is also a lament that acknowledges the change and loss suffered by Samoan culture through processes of colonisation. Kihara summarises that her intention

was to talk about the aftermath of colonialism. After you’ve gone through all this violence and pain, you need this space of reflection to mourn. For us Samoans, we constantly negotiate the past and the future in the present.

The song Kihara dances to is sung in Samoan by a choir of voices that welcomes a new era of independence after German as well as New Zealand colonial rule. According to art historian Caroline Vercoe, the taualuga is a ceremonial dance traditionally performed at the end of an important occasion or celebration. Performed by the taupou or daughter of a Samoan chief who plays an integral and highly respected role in her culture, the dance is meant to demonstrate beauty, skill, grace as well as a myriad of symbolic references to fa’a Samoa or the Samoan way. According to Sydney-based dancer Mary Jane McKibbin-Schwenke the taualuga is meant to be ‘dream-like’ and ‘mesmerising.’ She moves her feet as though she is a spirit floating along the ground, and draws spectators in with her hand movements and eye contact. Other qualities displayed within such a dance include pride, strength, dignity, stateliness as well as an ability to hold oneself well. Central to the dance is an emphasis upon soft and gentle hand movements combined with a control and balance. Kihara developed her own choreography based on that of the Taualuga, with each movement alluding to ‘social, political, economic, spiritual and ancestral matters:’

the basic movements of the Taualuga still remains with an emphasis on the movements of the arms, hands, stately posture and dancing as if to float between the beats rather than dancing towards the destination of the beat which creates an unnerving feeling for the spectators.

Dance theorist Randy Martin posited a connection between a ‘decolonized worldview’ and a preference for decentralised movement and it is interesting to note how this coincides with Ahmed’s thesis of queerness as a kind of wonkiness and dis-orientation. Indeed both Tiatia and ‘Uhila challenge the vertical behaviours of looking and walking within the art museum: Tiatia walks

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727 It also references the Mau movement, established in 1908, through which Western Samoan’s began to assert their claim to independence and also to New Zealand’s occupation and to the history of New Zealand’s role as colonial power within the Pacific. Tamati-Quennell, Ibid.
728 Kihara, Ibid.
731 Kihara, Ibid.
upon the walls and ‘Uhila sleeps beside them. A theory of choreography that is decolonizing according to Tuhiwai Smith’s thesis is one that involves some of her verbs in the present continuous such as: claiming, indigenizing, intervening, representing, gendering, reframing, creating, and negotiating within the site of struggle that is the contemporary art museum. Kihara ties into this thesis with her elegant colonial attire, elevated position from which she performs a dreamy tautluuga, simultaneously negotiating the past, celebrating those who protest and resist as well as looking towards the future. Holding herself in a stately manner her arms and hands alternate between softness and sudden surprising movements whilst floating between the beats of the music to disquieting effect.

4.6 Conclusion

Goumarre’s Pinocchio represents an entity who might evade authority and challenge intersubjective relations that constrain and produce subjection. Choreographed works enact intersubjectivity, producing it for the duration of the work and in ways that can affect new intersubjectivities. Once emboldened it is possible to see more examples of artworks that seek to evade and exceed the disciplinary structures so omnipresent in contemporary exhibitions spaces in order to encourage criticality and to choreograph subjectivity-as-newness. Rather than being unitary and partitioned, subjects might instead be situated and distributed in art environments, through muscular bonding they can swarm, participate in a collective frenzy or form part of a provisional multitude. Such artworks encourage subjectivities that are not pre-formatted, though an important question then becomes how such methods and techniques might avoid becoming the new premeditated. Striking various poses, forming clusters, grouping and re-grouping they form alliances or a-personal force fields performing actions that confuse instruction and obedience, leading and following.

Once the unit of the human, or man as the measure of all things is interrogated, bodies become contagious so that identities, actions and utterances flow in and out of them. They become indistinguishable, assembled in the darkness it is impossible to discern who is who, where they begin and end. A monistic, planetary and relational structure is realised by performances of processes of de-familiarisation and transformation. Performers might hop in and out of unitary identities like changes of clothes; movements might circulate through a collective of bodies, appearing and disappearing; reflections and narratives might be actualised by multiple voices, separately, together, fragmented or in unison. The boundaries between bodies might be blurred, through contact bodies collide and enmesh, enacting sequences of movement in which one

733 See Braddock.
cannot tell where someone ends and another begins who initiates and who follows in an
intersubjective indistinguishability. Tortoises, donkeys and pigs might appear beside performers
and dancers within an exhibition space, interacting with them and challenging prior conceptions
of what makes an artistic subject as well as playing with hierarchies and relations between
species. Amateur dancers perform within their living rooms, caressing and gyrating with objects
and furniture, taking their cues from banal everyday surroundings in order to dance. Another
perspective of what Guattari would call social ecologies might be presented via choreographies.
Conceiving of intersubjectivity as a planetary relation or one that is even cosmic as part of a
choreography might involve the de-familiarisation tactic of darkness, one that stresses the
importance of speculation and erodes familiar techniques of recognition, identification and
categorisation, stressing instead the affects of specific gatherings, conversations and sequences
of words, song, action and dance.

Solace and inspiration might be taken from prior choreographies that have been shared with the
aid of contemporary information technology. Various dance genres, each with its own stories
and struggles can be re-visited and re-embodied in order to create novel choreographies. The
archive of on-line videos and tutorials might be utilised in order to learn new ways of moving
and engage with responses to struggles from a whole range of different peoples around the
world. Cyborg-subjects that enjoy an intimacy of mind, body and tool have the ability to connect
with others confusing the polarity of public and private and participating within highly
distributed forms of knowledge and art. Amateurs can then learn from each other as well as
more practiced performers from the past and present, they can then test or try out various
choreographies and ways of moving, permuting them and re-enacting them for their own ends.
In a never ending oscillation of voyeurism, repetition, edification, rehearsal, presentation and
exhibition a multitude of identities with their accompanying sets of knowledge and particular
histories can be re-visited, re-performed and re-choreographed.

Counter-hegemonic choreographies are performed by those categorised by the exhibitionary
complex as sexualised and naturalised. Disobedient, what is promoted by such actions is
misbehaviour, other ways of moving and being, ways that deviate. Various different
permutations of intersubjectivity are explored, ones that dis-orient and are queer. Challenging
the heteronormative environments of exhibition spaces and museums that create modes of
address directed towards nuclear families or those who wish to participate in an experience
economy of self-display and promotion, queer choreographies present identities that are
provisional and contingent, rather than fixed and coherent. Effeminisation might be presented
as well as ‘swish,’ embodiments of flamboyance and contrived or artificial ways of moving.
There might be a toying with audiences, a manipulation that begins to unravel the choreo-
political policing of bodies within exhibition spaces. What is stressed is the ways in which particular spaces are gendered and oriented as well as ways in which such spaces might be performed so that they become confused, queered, un-canny or seen from a different slant. Positions are taken up strategically, involving lowness or challenging vertical and normative axis. Intersubjective relations of pride and shame are activated so that they might be interrogated and diffused. Through small movements, actions and contact, the stability of identities is challenged and through the donning of costumes might be evoked creatures that are indeed queer and posthuman, ones that successfully enact failure and in doing so create lightness and entertainment in the face of the machinations of power.

Very simple acts of inserting particular bodies within and around art institutions can create counter-hegemonic choreographies that might also be considered to be de-colonising. Shifting perspectives and orientations by again challenging verticality and performing pedestrian acts of walking, sheltering and sleeping can take place. Bodies can be defiant as well as sexualised, repeating movements from customary Pacific dances and exposing bodily adornment in order to fight against intersubjective relations of shame and stigmatisation. Making such specific bodies visible and exhausted draws attention to their artistic labour, histories and exploitation within the architectural edifices of museology. The very thresholds of institutions, disciplines and colonial structures are activated and interrogated, such sites of struggle are occupied so that choreographies might take place within them. Counter-dominant ideologies are performed and presented in acts and dances that are indigenizing and protesting, recounting prior events by presenting dances that are then re-oriented towards a future that might continue to re-negotiate the spaces and disciplines of colonial power.
CONCLUSION

To conclude, in this thesis I have argued that choreographed artworks enable intersubjective encounters that bring into fluid contingency, subjectivity and art and in doing so problematize the very structures they take place within. This proposition corresponds to Lepecki’s argument that choreography, as a task always-already in dialogue with critical theory and philosophy, involves re-thinking the subject in terms of the body. My argument also follows from a point made by Bourriaud, that artworks can ‘engineer intersubjectivity,’ becoming social relations rather than being the mere products of social relations regulated by political and economic systems. Even when it may not have been the explicit intention of an artwork to engineer intersubjectivity, my critical focus on the phenomenon has operated as a way of making explicit the effects of the intersubjective relations produced by choreographed works. A piece of choreography might be: a plan or score; parameters set up by one party in order to regulate the movements of others, for a certain period of time; a prescription of movement or a suggestion as to a possible cause of action. The live and recorded performances discussed in this thesis involve the choreography or execution of planned movements and actions as part of an encounter between various individuals.

Reflecting Sabisch’s thesis that choreography is a relational assemblage, the choreographed works examined in this thesis can be interpreted as producing complex and special forms of social relations which actually interrogate what it means to be a subject, as well as providing important opportunities to examine and explore processes of intersubjectivity-as-art. Intersubjectivity helps to produce subjecthood and in the other direction, subjects produce forms of intersubjectivity. This subjectivity-intersubjectivity relation has been explored in philosophy, sociology, psychology and cognitive science, as examined in detail in the third chapter of this thesis. I have argued that aspects of each of these theories go some way to give an account of what might take place as part of an intersubjective encounter with a choreographed work. Although, however rigorous, such theories also have their limitations when attempting to unravel the subject-intersubjectivity relation. I have posited that choreographed works such as Curham’s Gentle Lying on the Bonnet of a Popular Car (2016) produce specific instances of intersubjectivity that highlight its more experiential, affective, political, somatic and kinaesthetic aspects, as well as its transformative potentiality.

By choreography, what is also meant in this thesis is what Cvejić would call a method of posing problems, a particular form of organisation as well as artificially staged actions and situations. Such artificial or manipulated patterns of behaviour are enabled by external powers that control physical, psychological and spatial aspects of action. These mechanisms of manipulation may
be art institutions, artists or choreographers. The first chapter of this thesis examined histories of the kinds of places and spaces within which choreographers have recently chosen to present artworks. An account was given of museums as art institutions and the precedent they form for more contemporary art museums, institutions, dealer galleries and exhibition spaces. The kinds of relations created by such institutions with those who visit and perform within them were explored, as were the way in which such relations have an impact upon subject-constitution. The choreographed works discussed in this chapter each produce complex and special forms of social relations which actually interrogated what it means to be a subject as well as subject-to. As part of this chapter, an examination of the concept of choreography discussed the kinds of relations created between choreographers, those who perform their works and those who encounter their works. Aspects of Bronstein’s *Interim Performance* (2010) have important consequences for intersubjectivity. This work utilised municipal stacking chairs to create aggressive choreographic prompts for gallery visitors. Even though each chair offered the possibility for physical rest, the sheer number and configuration pointed to the ways that museums and their staff guide the bodies of their visitors through certain paths, allowing or preventing the flow of motion. Bruguera’s *Tatlin’s Whisper #5* (2008) produced social relations involving physical power, and coercive control, enacting an intersubjective relation in which museum visitors were physically corralled and manipulated in space by those in a position of authority. The intersubjective relations realised by Harvey as part of his *Political Climate Wrestle* (2013) enacted forms of intersubjectivity highly affected by neoliberalism, setting up relations of solicitation, contractual agreement as well as argumentation and physical, adversarial confrontation. Untangling the ways in which intersubjectivity helps to produce subjecthood, and in the other direction, subjects produce forms of intersubjectivity, the Bouillon Group’s *Religious Aerobics* (2010), Menzies’ *Peloha* (2009) and Linder’s *Choreographic Services* (2013) re-produced particular types of intersubjective relations. This was achieved by re-producing social relations with religious, salutary, professional and choreographic authority that create relations of subjection by the dictation of movements.

In Chapter Two I examined solo performances by cis-gendered male artists and choreographers as part of a broader argument about artworks as experiments in subjectivity in general and more specifically choreographed works that help to produce complex and special forms of social relations which have the culminating effect of revealing what it means to be a subject. With the aid of Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of becoming, I argued that Le Roy’s *Self-Unfinished* is a choreographed process of non-identitarian transformation that conceives of the possibility of experimental practices that might go some way in destabilising authoritarian structures. As part of an exploration of the ways in which intersubjectivity as spatio-subjectivisation helps to
produce subjecthood, and performance by artistic subjects produces forms of intersubjectivity. I argued that Le Roy temporarily escapes the restrictions of spatio-subjectivisation via choreographed movements that present ‘becoming-animal’ or even a body stripped of meaning. Each performance of ‘becoming-woman’ by artists like Le Roy as well as McCarthy and Acconci before him, assumes a subordinate relation to a male majority utilising the minoritarian as an active medium of becoming. I also examined ways in which experimental practices such as Le Roy’s choreographed work involve particular kinds of transformation that enact intersubjectivity in such a way as to destabilise the authoritarian structures of the kinds of fields of power described in Chapter One and in ways that might affect new intersubjectivities.

Chapter Three examined discipline-based theories of intersubjectivity in order to provide a critical framework for understanding the structure, effects and exchanges produced by choreographed works such as Sehgal’s *Instead of allowing some thing to rise up to your face dancing bruce and dan and other things* (2000). Looking further into the reception of performed choreographies, I explored the central concept of intersubjectivity, with a view to a more critical analysis of what kinds of relations might be created by various artworks. Taking into consideration the unfolding of intersubjectivity into multiple dimensions, this chapter examined theories of intersubjectivity taken from philosophy, cultural theory, psychology and cognitive science which go some way to provide insights into the chiasmic subject-intersubjectivity relation. However the concepts taken from affect theory, dance studies and Althusser’s philosophy of the encounter give more of an insight into the ways in which choreographed works offer embodied, embodied, somatic, kinaesthetic, spatial, affective, artistic, interrogative and experimental dimensions to this discourse. Concepts of somatic and kinaesthetic empathy as well as affect are more representative of lived, multi-sensory and innovative aspects of intersubjectivity.

As mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, Jenn Joy posited that choreographic engagement involves a positioning of oneself in relation to another as well as participation within a scene of address that anticipates and requires a mode of attention. For Joy, choreography involves a counter-address that is precarious and sensual, a dialogic opening involving art that might be looked at but that also looks back and is intersubjective. The fourth and final chapter of this thesis involved choreographed works that enact intersubjectivity in such a way so that new intersubjectivities might be produced. This chapter examined choreographies that challenge, subvert or even evade the assumed cultural authority which plays a part in the formation of a citizen, subject or identity, particularly by creating spaces where privileged kinds of intersubjectivity are performed such as the art institutions described in Chapter One. Whereas the cultural authority of art institutions and exhibition spaces regulates the performance of
subjectivity and intersubjectivity, choreographies discussed in this chapter suggest some freedom from or improvisation with the scripts provided by these prior structures. A central question addressed was how posthumanism reconceives intersubjectivity. I argued that works in which a choreographer or artist such as Sehgal or Frankovich manipulate a crowd or multitude of performers complicates unitary or machinic concepts of subjectivity and intersubjectivity, and re-imagine relations between subjects, animals, objects and even the planet. Works by artists like Rutter, Hobbs and Bachzetsis involve choreographies that are self-taught from material uploaded to the internet by dancers and choreographers across the globe. Works such as Hobb’s *Otara at Night* and *Mangere Mall* both from 2011, enjoy complex relations between those who conceive of choreographed actions and those who perform them so that there is a departure from the authoritative relations between a singular choreographer and her dancers. Lastly, I examined choreographed works performed by those who have historically been ostracised by museums; choreographies that are queer, de-colonizing or counter-hegemonic. Artists such as smith, Tiatia, ‘Uhila and Kihara each presented their own particular permutations of intersubjectivity choreographed, or choreographed works that enact particular forms of intersubjectivity with the possibility of affecting new intersubjectivities. This final chapter suggested some important ways in which a general discussion about subjecthood, intersubjectivity and choreography can be made specific and particular to Aotearoa, New Zealand. Subjectivity and intersubjectivity emerge as a complexity within specific cultural formations, as choreographies initiated in the South Pacific. Such local and regional choreographed works is a fitting way to end the thesis as it acknowledges where it was written and the ways in which these works may be seen to contribute specific cultural nuances to discourse on intersubjectivity.
APPENDIX

Office of the Vice-Chancellor
Finance, Ethics and Compliance

UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE (UAHPEC)

19-May-2015

MEMORANDUM TO:
Dr Gregory Minissale
Art History

Re: Application for Ethics Approval (Our Ref. 014408): Approved with comment

The Committee considered your application for ethics approval for your project entitled Choreographies of intersubjectivity in contemporary art.

Ethics approval was given for a period of three years with the following comment(s):

1. Please amend the following sentence on the consent form: 'I agree / do not agree for information given in this interview to be included in the doctoral thesis, journal articles and/or conference papers.', to say: 'I understand information given in this interview will be included in the doctoral thesis, journal articles and/or conference papers.'

The expiry date for this approval is 19-May-2018.

If the project changes significantly you are required to resubmit a new application to UAHPEC for further consideration.

In order that an up-to-date record can be maintained, you are requested to notify UAHPEC once your project is completed.

The Chair and the members of UAHPEC would be happy to discuss general matters relating to ethics approvals if you wish to do so. Contact should be made through the UAHPEC Ethics Administrators at ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz in the first instance.

All communication with the UAHPEC regarding this application should include this reference number: 014408.

(This is a computer generated letter. No signature required.)

Secretary
University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee

c.c. Head of Department / School, Art History


Ahmed, Sara. "Interview with Judith Butler." Sexualities 0.0 (2016) Print.


Frankovich, Alicia. 'Defending Plural Experiences' Email Communication with the Author. 18 November 2015., 2015. Web.

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