



Freie Universität



Berlin

INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

## Re-Constructing Performance Art

Processes and Practices of Historicisation,  
Documentation, and Representation (1960s–1970s)

30 NOVEMBER – 1 DECEMBER 2018



## Re-Constructing Performance Art

Processes and Practices of Historicisation, Documentation, and Representation (1960s–1970s)

The issues of documentation and representation of past performance art have dominated the debate over this art form, both in scholarly and museum-related contexts, for several decades. In recent years, the discussion has undergone a crucial shift, in that no longer is it concerned with whether a performance may or may not be reproduced and documented, but how multiple materialisations and representations in effect re-produce an artist's work over and over again in the course of its history. The symposium *Re-Constructing Performance Art*, while upholding this new approach, offers a new and original perspective within it. In **three panels** and **one roundtable**, international scholars will explore the practices of historicisation, documentation, exhibition, and archiving of performance art. The aim is not to evaluate specific techniques and methods for the preservation of this art form, but to examine how these practices construct its epistemic and aesthetic space. Thus, the question is not if or how performance art can be conserved but how different strategies of conservation and transmission shape its reception according to different agendas and strategies.

The **first panel**, *Defining the Boundaries*, explores modes of historicisation as enacted by artists, theorists, and scholars, both discursively and non-discursively, emphasising the deep interrelation between theorisation and artistic creation, on one hand, and their reciprocal performative power on the other. The **second panel**, *Documenting or Re-Presenting?*, focusses on performance documentation, investigating its phenomenological constitution, the specificity of certain mediums of documentary transmission, as well as interrogating modes of reception of performance histories through documentation. The **final panel**, *Spaces and Times of Performance Art*, examines the practices of archivation and exhibition of performance art, analysing how they take part in the processes of its re-presentation and reception. In addition, at the **roundtable**, scholars from various fields of research will discuss and compare their methodological approaches to performance-based art forms and their history.

### Disclaimer

The information and views set out here reflect only those of the author(s) and the Research Executive Agency (REA) and the European Commission (EC) are not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.

### Photo

Installation view of the exhibition 'Staging Action: Performance in Photography since 1960'. MoMA, NY, January 28, 2011 through May 9, 2011. Photographer: Thomas Griesel (copyright: The Museum of Modern Art, NY). Catalogue no.: IN2146.13. New York, Museum of Modern Art (MoMA).

In each panel, a recurrent yet shifting “centre” will resurface—the *document*—considered not as a mere medium or record of a performance, but as a juncture at which practices and strategies of historicisation, conservation, and representation are entangled. The symposium intends to contribute to the reading of this entanglement and to stimulate novel approaches to analysing its stratification. Performance documentation thus functions not only as instrument and source for historical re-construction, but also a device for the critical scrutiny of these same practices of re-construction.

The symposium is part of the research project *Between Evidence and Representation: History of Performance Art Documentation from 1970 to 1977*. The research is conducted by Tancredi Gusman as principal investigator at the Institute of Theatre Studies of the Freie Universität in Berlin, and supervised by Erika Fischer-Lichte. The project has received funding from the European Union’s Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement no. 747881.

## FRIDAY, 30 NOVEMBER 2018

### L115 Seminarzentrum, Freie Universität Berlin

13:30 Registration and Reception

14:00 Welcome – ERIKA FISCHER-LICHTE

14:15 TANCREDI GUSMAN (Berlin)  
*Toulouse-Lautrec at the Beach:  
Documentation and Its Role in Performance Art History*

#### PANEL 1

##### Defining the Boundaries: Performance Art Ideas and Historiography

Chair: TORSTEN JOST

15:00 HEIKE ROMS (Exeter)  
*Performance Documentation as Artistic Self-Historicisation  
in the 1960s and 1970s: Modalities of Performative Historiography*

15:45 Break

16:15 LORENZO MANGO (Napoli)  
*Historical Roots of “Performative Theatre”:  
The Italian Post-Avantgarde*

17:00 SYLVIA SASSE (Zürich)  
*Practical Aesthetics: Performance Art (as) Theory in Eastern Europe*

17:45 Break

#### ROUNDTABLE

##### Methodologies of Performance Art Research

Chair: TANCREDI GUSMAN

18:00 DOROTHEA VON HANTELMANN (Berlin), DORIS KOLESCH (Berlin),  
JAN LAZARDZIG (Berlin), and MICHAEL LÜTHY (Weimar)

## SATURDAY, 1 DECEMBER 2018

L115 Seminarzentrum, Freie Universität Berlin

09:30 Registration and Reception

### PANEL 2

#### Documenting or Re-Presenting? Media of Performance Art

Chair: ANDREJ MIRČEV

- 10:00 PHILIP AUSLANDER (Atlanta)  
*Performance Documentation and Its Discontents; or, Does It Matter Whether or Not It Really Happened?*
- 10:45 BARBARA BÜSCHER (Leipzig)  
*Easy Access? Book as Archive of Performance Art and as Source Material of Its History*
- 11:30 Break
- 11:45 SABINE GEBHARDT FINK (Lucerne)  
*Re-mediating and Remembering Performance Art and Activism in Collaborative Constellations:  
Some Thoughts about the Methodology of Performance Chronicle Basel*
- 12:30 Lunch break

### PANEL 3

#### Spaces and Times of Performance Art: Exhibition and Conservation History/ies

Chair: TANCREDI GUSMAN

- 13:30 ANNETTE JAEL LEHMANN (Berlin)  
*Exhibiting Performance Art of the 1970s:  
Outlining Central Questions in a Case Study*

- 14:15 BARBARA CLAUSEN (Montreal)  
*On the Interplay of the Archival and the Curatorial*
- 15:00 GABRIELLA GIANNACHI (Exeter)  
*How a Record Becomes Art:  
The Role of Documentation in the Preservation, Exhibition, and Experience of Performance Art*
- 15:45 Break
- 16:15 ADRIAN HEATHFIELD (London)  
*Recurring Imponderables*
- 17:00 Closing Remarks and Farewell

The event will be held in English. Detailed information on the speakers and their presentations is available in the supplemental *Book of Abstracts*.

## Registration

Admission is free. Registration is preferred.

Email: [symposium.performance2018@gmail.com](mailto:symposium.performance2018@gmail.com)

## Venue

Freie Universität Berlin  
Silberlaube (Ground floor)  
Seminarzentrum L115  
Otto-von-Simson-Str. 26  
14195 Berlin-Dahlem

## Contact

[symposium.performance2018@gmail.com](mailto:symposium.performance2018@gmail.com)

## Organised by

TANCREDI GUSMAN, Principal Investigator of the research project *Between Evidence and Representation: History of Performance Art Documentation from 1970 to 1977* (Marie Skłodowska-Curie IF, Horizon 2020, Project ID 747881)

## Website

<https://blogs.fu-berlin.de/performanceartdocumentation/category/symposium/>



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement no. 747881.