

**Duration Materialised:
Investigating Contemporary Performance as a Temporal
Medium**

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ABSTRACT

Theatre and performance have historically been thought of in terms of the temporal while visual arts have been consigned to the field of spatial representation.

Performance's temporality, the fact that it happens in time, is highlighted in many discourses as performance's greatest asset. This thesis investigates what we can find out about performance's temporality by examining the material conditions of production and reception. By placing the focus off the event of performance and exploring issues around labour, work and leisure time; the art historical and economic relationship of performance and visual art; and the material remains of performance, the thesis seeks to reveal how performance's temporality functions within a capitalist society. The research sets performance's duration against different economies of time. It does this within a framework of cultural materialism and the materiality of performance while also situating the work art historically. It investigates the sites of negotiation between performance and the capitalist economy's temporal logic and interrogates how cultural understandings of time affect experiences of attending to performance's temporality.

In focusing on performance work of both extremely long and short duration, as well as more traditionally staged, theatrical performance, the thesis maps out a genealogy of performance interested in making its temporality visible and often tangible.

Placing different art forms alongside performance allows for a symbiotic relationship and thus facilitates new and productive ways of thinking about temporality and duration. Such an approach also makes it possible to identify any blind spots in the theorisations of the temporal in performance studies. The thesis thus proposes a re-evaluation of the terms used in discussion on temporality in performance with a focus on the social, economic and material relations within the production and reception of performance.

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Introduction

1 Begin to begin

The audience has arrived in the theatre in good time, no one wants to be late, to rush in the last minute. The audience goes in, takes their seats. The curtain rises. The stage lights come on gradually and reveal that the stage is littered with rubbish. Random objects, some of them indistinguishable. The light gets brighter and then a scream, after which the lights dim down again, the curtain falls. The audience get up from their seats and go home (or leave the theatre at any rate). The performance lasted 35 seconds.

The performers enter the performance area, set up in the gallery. They start performing, there are some spectators already. More spectators will arrive during the performance's six hour duration. Some of the spectators will stay for the whole duration while others will come in for an hour or two. Some of them will go out and come back in again. The performers perform according to the rules set up for them in the structure of their game. They get tired and ideas get scrambled in their heads. They get hysterical.

These two performances are Samuel Beckett's 1969 play *Breath* and Forced Entertainment's *12am: Awake and Looking Down* from 2003. Describing them here serves a few purposes. Firstly, to point out, perhaps slightly crudely, the obvious fact that theatre (and performance) is a temporal medium and that it is full of temporal markers. It is also to point out that despite (or because of) being at opposite ends of duration (one of them very short and the other very long when

compared to standard theatrical duration), both *Breath* and *12am: Awake and Looking Down* display an interest in playing with (and testing) time.

They of course offer different approaches to their temporal markers. In *Breath* we see a more conventional theatre where audience members know to arrive at the right time (that is to say, there is a right time to arrive) and experience the performance from its beginning (the curtain rising) to the end (the curtain falling). The scream is the middle, and also the climax, and the audience leaves knowing that the performance is over.¹ In *12am: Awake and Looking Down*, the audience members know when the performance starts and finishes but they also might know that they do not need to be there for the whole duration. They structure their own time while the performers structure theirs.

Secondly, I start with these performances because they represent a host of performance practices from different periods that show a shared interest in testing the conventions of theatrical duration. Describing them here serves to bracket the focus in the thesis in a specific period in contemporary performance practices and highlights the different sites of performance (from stages in theatres to gallery spaces and beyond) that this study discusses.

This thesis, then, is about time. At its heart are two central research questions: Firstly, what is the relationship between capitalist production and its methods from the 1960s onwards and the material conditions of performance's temporality during that time? And secondly, can a focus on the materiality of performance change the way we view the relationship between performance and time? In answering these questions, this study has the following main aims: 1. to

¹¹ *Breath* was originally written for an erotic revue show *Oh! Calcutta* directed by Kenneth Tynan and was therefore meant as a short sketch of a much longer show.

develop a new approach to understanding performance in terms of its wider material conditions; 2. to outline a diverse mode of engagement based on the historically developed relationship between labour and performance; 3. to make a distinct contribution to interdisciplinary research in performance studies that will enable performers and researchers alike to re-evaluate their position at the centre of a network of time, temporality and materials bounded by the ways in which performance is commoditised.

In her book *Performance: Live Art since the 1960s*, RoseLee Goldberg articulates a very common notion in performance studies when she asserts: ‘It is the element of duration, of time, that is at the heart of performance’.² That performance is a temporal medium is often considered one (if not the most important) of performance’s strengths. That performance happens in time means that one has to be there when it happens. Or to borrow from Adrian Heathfield, performance ‘brings us as spectators into a fresh relation: into the now of the enactment, the moment by moment of the present’.³ That performance happens in time has been taken to mean (by several performance studies scholars and theorists) that performance happens only in one time and then disappears. I do not dispute Goldberg’s statement about the inherent nature of performance’s temporality. What I am interested in doing in this thesis is to examine that temporality and to interrogate the claims that have been made about it.

In order to do so, I employ case studies from various practices. From a live art context, I discuss the work of Marina Abramović, Tehching Hsieh and Alastair MacLennan, among others. I also examine the more theatre based or traditionally

² RoseLee Goldberg, *Performance: Live Art since the 1960s* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 34

³ Adrian Heathfield, ‘Alive’, *Live: Art and Performance*, ed. by Adrian Heathfield (London: Tate Publishing, 2004), pp. 6-13, (p. 8).

staged work of Goat Island, Robert Wilson and Elevator Repair Service. In addition to performance practices, I use examples from visual art and sculpture, especially in Chapter 1 where I chart a connection historically made between sculpture and performance and discuss the work of Robert Morris and Bruce Nauman, as well as Andy Warhol and Barnett Newman. I will investigate how these artists employ different temporal frames and durations in inviting the audience to attend to the event and thus to its duration. This is a question of attunement to the assumption that performance time is different or in opposition to real time and thus demands that the spectators attune to it in a way that is foreign to ‘real time’ in our ‘real’ lives.

Furthermore, according to this logic, performance and its duration, is, if not in direct opposition to capitalism’s time, then at least able to escape the art market. In other words, performance resists commodification. I will examine how some performance practices approach time in a period of changing labour markets and during a cultural and economic shift beginning to take shape in the 1960s. To begin with, in this introduction I will examine some ideas around time and temporality, both in theatre and in general. I will then discuss the key terms and locate the area of research that the thesis focuses on.

2 Temporalities

I begin by considering approaches to and ways of thinking about time in the modern era more generally and how that is reflected in theatre’s temporality. Time has been and to some degree continues to be approached and felt differently in different cultures and in different times. In his essay ‘The Impossibility of the Present: Or, from the Contemporary to the Contemporal’, Steven Connor argues that, ‘modern

temporality... begins with the replacement, during the late medieval period in Europe, of the cyclical, recurrent, or sacred time of religion, with a form of linear, progressive and secular time centred not on God but on the State'.⁴ Increasingly time was measured not by natural signs or events but by clocks, a practice consolidated during the 17th century. The invention of more and more accurate clocks, especially in the 19th century, introduced rhythms that were wholly new. Punctuality became a part of good manners and more importantly, new inventions such as the railways and factories could function more efficiently as timetables started regulating structure and order. Time zones, too, were a part of the process of standardisation by modernity. And it was this regularisation that made capitalism able to develop rapidly.

For David Gross, the clock demythologized and historicized static notions of mythic or sacred time. Gross writes:

Mythic atemporality gradually came to be replaced by a sense of continual duration that never had to be confronted before. Moreover, this duration was experienced not as cyclical but as linear. Like a river that sweeps everything with it and lets nothing stand still, time began to be viewed as moving in only one direction: from a distant past to an unknown future with the present as a continuously vanishing moment in between.⁵

In other cultures, however, varying ideas of time still persisted. In his study of Balinese culture, Clifford Geertz describes the eternal present which dominates people's perception of time in Bali. In his essay 'Person, Time and Conduct in Bali', Geertz notes how the Balinese use a naming system for their fellowmen (dead and alive) which detemporalises the conception of time. Furthermore, their calendar systems 'mark and classify the qualitative modalities in terms of which time

⁴ Steven Connor, 'The Impossibility of the Present: Or, from the Contemporary to the Contemporal', in *Literature and the Contemporary: Fictions and Theories of the Present*, ed. by Roger Luckhurst and Peter Marks, (Harlow, Essex: Pearson/Longham, 1999), pp. 15-35 (p. 16).

⁵ David Gross, 'Temporality and the Modern State', *Theory and Society*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 1985, pp. 53-82 (p. 56).

manifests itself in human experience'.⁶ The lunar-solar calendar, then, does not 'tell you what time it is; they tell you what kind of time it is'.⁷ In 'The Attitude of the Algerian Peasant towards Time', Pierre Bourdieu writes about the Kabyle peasants' 'nonchalant indifference to the passage to time which no one dreams of mastering'.⁸ There are no timetables for either work or leisure time and no desire for productivity. However, when they are given an increase to their minimal wages during an experiment at a factory, the peasants' desire to work harder and to earn more money increased too. What takes place is a transition from event time to clock time.⁹ According to Bourdieu, what therefore shapes time and one's experience of it is economic and power relations.

In theatre, the subject of narrative is one of the more widely examined temporal markers. Erika Fischer-Lichte notes that,

The pursuit of a coherent plot – even if it does not unfold according to the 'classical' pattern of exposition, development, crisis, suspension, and denouement – and the psychological development of characters allow the audience to experience time as a meaningfully structured arch, in which everything that occurs is connected comprehensibly to one another. Effectively, everything from beginning to end is justified.¹⁰

Fischer-Lichte also points out the importance of rhythm in types of performance:

'Even in traditional drama where plot and character development provide the leading structural principles, rhythm will be of central importance in the succession of scenes, speech, movement, and within individual scenes themselves'.¹¹

⁶ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), p. 391

⁷ Geertz, p. 393

⁸ Pierre Bourdieu, 'The Attitude of the Algerian Peasant Towards Time', in *Mediterranean Countrymen: Essays in the Social Anthropology of the Mediterranean*, ed. by Julian Pitt-Rivers (Paris: Mouton, 1963), pp. 52-77, (p. 57-8).

⁹ Bourdieu, p. 71

¹⁰ Erika Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics* (London: Routledge, 2008), p. 132.

¹¹ Fischer-Lichte, p. 133

Repetition, too, is part and parcel of theatre's labour. The repetition begins at the very beginning, in the rehearsal process where the citation (often) of a text is repeated in the hours it takes to get it right. (In fact, the word 'rehearsal' in French is the same as 'repetition'.) After rehearsal comes the run of the production where the show is performed night after night. Repetition emerges here as a 'mechanism of remembering and retaining'.¹² Despite such repetition, theatre professionals are in pains to point out that each performance still manages to remain unique, that the same performance is never the same, but always different and you have to be there to witness it. Such logic in fact insists on a linear time frame where this time (this now happening at the very moment) will never return or repeat.

In an attempt to trouble such thinking, repetition has also become a technique in some contemporary performance practices – think, for example, of Pina Bausch's *Café Müller* (1978) where a couple repeatedly enact an embrace. The woman places the man's hands on her as they go through a movement pattern where the two stand and embrace, then the man holds the woman close to his chest, as if ready to carry her. He then lets go, dropping the woman on the floor from where she gets up and stands facing the man again. This little static dance happens repeatedly, getting faster and faster.

Or think of Claire Marshall in Forced Entertainment's *Spectacular* (2008) where she insists on doing her climatic scene over and over. Her attempt at the best stage death involves her falling to the ground and writhing, screaming and groaning. Robin Arthur's soliloquy is constantly interrupted by Marshall's histrionics and her subsequent failure to achieve perfection. She gives up each attempt, only to try

¹² Jane Blocker, 'Repetition: A Skin which Unravels', in *Perform, Repeat, Record: Live Art in History*, ed. by Amelia Jones and Adrian Heathfield (Bristol: Intellect, 2012), pp. 199-208 (p. 199).

again after a while – a repetition of a thing that cannot be achieved. Try as she might, she will not die. Neither do the spectators believe or feel that she will. But in her attempts she reveals something essential about theatre and its economy – that the difference between repetition, uniqueness and any variance in perceiving such notions is always shifting.

As theatre and its function and position has changed over its hundreds of years of history, so has its approach to duration. While ancient Greek theatre was a part of ceremonies and rituals lasting several days, the standard duration of two hours for a night at the theatre as we know it now is at least partly a product of modernity's drive for a regulated life, a life divided into work and leisure time. Jonathan Kalb argues that, 'Ours is an era of notoriously miniscule attention spans, when time has generally become more valuable than money for the social class that attends high-profile theatre'.¹³ Kalb's statement is an interesting one because he is actually conflating two separate but central issues. Firstly, the period that I cover in this thesis is indeed often called one of short attention spans where we are continually demanded to pay attention to several things at the time. Television, radio, internet, advertising, work life and leisure time activities are all increasingly taking more and more of our time. We can sit on the sofa with our laptops or smart phones while watching television and its fifteen second ads. Even if we cannot physically be in two places at the same time we can at least try and reach the gap between places thanks to tools like Skype. Secondly, and partly due to the first point Kalb highlights, time has become more sparse and therefore more valuable. Thus those with wealth can afford to have more free time. Time, in effect, has become a

¹³ Jonathan Kalb, *Great Lengths: Seven Works of Marathon Theater* (Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press, 2011), p. 16.

new status symbol. Whether it is the wealthy who attend high-profile theatre is debatable but Kalb's statement does open up a discussion about the economic implications of theatre and performance making. I address these issues and discuss the standard duration of theatre and its intricacies such as the interval in Chapter 3.

It might be useful here to trace some of those ways that the type of performance I discuss in this thesis has come to be. Peggy Phelan's account of the birth of performance art traces three different historical traditions that performance can be said to derive from.¹⁴ The first of the three narratives describing that history is that performance emerges from the history of theatre and begins as a counterpoint to realism. The second account states that performance emerges from the history of painting and gains its force and focus after Jackson Pollock's 'action painting'. And finally, the third narrative sees performance as representing a return to investigations of the body most fully explored by shamans, yogis and practitioners of alternative healing arts. It is the second one I trace in the first chapter as I examine how what Pamela Lee terms chronophobia¹⁵ describes a mood of the 1960s and how a concern over time traversed from visual art to performance. In all of these narratives, however, it is time which becomes a central concern to performance.

3 Early avant-garde and Gertrude Stein

In *Performance: Live Art since the 60s*, RoseLee Goldberg traces a history that anticipates Phelan's narrative which I discussed above. Goldberg traces the history of performance art back to the late 19th and early 20th century and to early avant-

¹⁴ Peggy Phelan, 'On Seeing the Invisible: Marina Abramović's The House with the Ocean View', in *Live: Art and Performance*, ed. by Adrian Heathfield (London: Tate Publishing, 2004), pp. 16-27, (p. 21).

¹⁵ Pamela Lee, *Chronophobia: On Time in the Art of the 1960s*, 2nd ed., (London: MIT Press, 2006).

garde practices from August Strindberg to the Futurists and Surrealists.¹⁶ In Goldberg's account of performance art's history performance was a way of animating the avant-garde movements' manifestos and an experiment in audience interaction. The early avant-garde interest in time is peculiar to its time. Futurism's fascination with the newly found speed made possible by the modern machine – cars, aeroplanes, trains – would seem to anticipate a current permeation of technology in our never sleeping society. But I would like to consider for a brief moment one of the avant-garde artists in particular.

In her lecture 'Plays', Gertrude Stein writes that the emotional time of the audience is different from the emotional time of the play and that this difference is endlessly troubling. It is troubling, Stein notes, because one doesn't know why this should be and also why this need not be. This 'syncopated time' of the theatre means that 'your emotion as a member of the audience is never going on at the same time as the action of the play'.¹⁷ Stein finds a nervousness in theatre and that nervousness is due to the different tempos and operations of time that are happening at the same time. The role of the arts for Stein is 'to live in the actual present, that is the complete actual present, and to completely express that complete actual present'.¹⁸ To this end, Stein turns to painting and in particular to landscapes. Stein called her plays landscapes where there were no stories but where 'the essence of what happened would be...what made what happened be what it was'.¹⁹ In other words, the temporal lag (or difference) between the play and the spectator does not matter when the play is a landscape 'because landscape does not have to make

¹⁶ RoseLee Goldberg, *Performance Art: From Futurism to the Present*, 3rd ed. (London: Thames and Hudson, 2011).

¹⁷ Gertrude Stein, 'Plays', in *Theater of the Avant-Garde 1890-1950: A Critical Anthology*, ed. by Bert Cardullo and Robert Knopf (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), pp. 450-465, (p. 450)

¹⁸ Stein, p. 455

¹⁹ Stein, p. 463

acquaintance'.²⁰ While in theatre narrative drives the spectators forward (or makes the spectators follow in linear fashion) and make acquaintance with the characters and to take time to get to know them, in landscape everything is present at once.

Jane Bowers argues that, 'in Stein's theater texts do not impel us forward in time'.²¹ Therefore, 'we can suspend our normal anticipatory response to theater and engage in the event in a meditative way, suspended in the experience of the thing in and of itself'.²² Bowers suggests that Stein's plays give the spectators a certain type of freedom or confidence to decide for ourselves when to enter the field of the text and to 'endow the landscape with multiple meanings—or none at all beyond our experience of it'.²³ As Bowers notes, Stein's plays create a space for a meditative way of thinking, a space where spectators are 'suspended in the experience of the thing'. Not only is there no narrative (the absence of narrative is surely a modernist staple), but the structure of the event is one of open-endedness. Stein's landscape theatre presents a canvas of events conveyed through language, a language that is perhaps seemingly not to be trusted (yet a language that makes perfect sense but one that has to be attended to differently). It is in fact the act/notion of attending to something that is of major importance in this study.

I mention Stein here because of two reasons. Firstly, I want to draw attention to the temporal experiments of the modernists associated with movements such as Futurism, Surrealism, Dadaism, Expressionism and Symbolism which Goldberg sees as the beginning of the genre of performance. Secondly I want to discuss Stein's approach to theatre as somewhat different from her contemporaries and more importantly as useful in terms of the type of temporal experiences I will be

²⁰ Stein, p. 463

²¹ Jane Bowers, *Gertrude Stein* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993), p. 20.

²² Bowers, p. 20

²³ Bowers, p. 20

examining in this thesis. In doing so, I wish to set the temporal framework around this study. The research starts in earnest in the 1960s when performance as an art form or a medium begins to be articulated. Although there are perhaps similarities and shared ideas in the work of the early avant-garde artists and practitioners discussed in this study, I suggest that the social, cultural, material and political contexts in which they make their work is markedly different. I trace these differences and examine the interests in time in these works.

4 Literature review and genealogy of terms

In *Live: Art and Performance*, Adrian Heathfield traces the same path for performance art as Goldberg does. He argues: ‘Performance’s birth within and against theatrical form is equally rooted in an engagement and its disruptive potential in relation to fictive or narrative time’.²⁴ Heathfield lists the ‘different experimentation with time’²⁵ that contemporary performance employs and discusses presence and the critique of capitalism through the use of time in performance. Heathfield notes how, ‘From its beginnings in modernist movements such as Futurism, Dada and Situationism, to its emergence through Happenings and correspondence with Minimalism and Conceptual art, performance has consistently replaced or qualified the material object with the temporal act’.²⁶

It was Michael Fried’s essay on minimal art which highlighted the temporal aspect of theatre and theatricality and which has remained a seminal piece of writing in performance theory. For Fried, writing in the mid-1960s, the new art of minimalism is inherently theatrical because it brings to the fore the temporal

²⁴ Heathfield, p. 8

²⁵ Heathfield, p. 8

²⁶ Heathfield, p. 8

relations between viewer and art work. The work, according to Fried, is theatrical as it makes the viewer aware of their position in the gallery and in relation to the work, unlike modernist art which absorbs the viewer and thus somehow stops or obliterates time. Fried's 'Art and Objecthood' is in some ways articulating the same distinction between art forms that the German art critic Gotthold Lessing articulated in his essay published in 1766, *Laocoon: An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry*. As Rosalind E. Krauss explains, 'Lessing asserts that sculpture is an art concerned with the deployment of bodies in space...this defining character must be separated off from the essence of those art forms, like poetry, whose medium is time'.²⁷ In *Passages in Modern Sculpture* Krauss tackles the assumption and argues that 'The history of modern sculpture is incomplete without discussion of the temporal consequences of a particular arrangement of form'.²⁸ Krauss discusses various artists from Auguste Rodin to Robert Smithson and notes: 'One of the striking aspects of modern sculpture is the way in which it manifests its makers' growing awareness that sculpture is a medium peculiarly located at the juncture between stillness and motion, time arrested and time passing'.²⁹ I analyse Fried's essay and Krauss' work in more detail in the first chapter which looks at temporality in 1960s art and culture.

That performance art is seen as a temporal medium (and thus separate from visual art) is reflected in the different terms used. Writing of the use of the term performance art in her book, *Performance: Live Art since the 60s*, RoseLee Goldberg states: 'In Britain there is a preference for the term "live art" because it is

²⁷ Rosalind E. Krauss, *Passages in Modern Sculpture* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977), p. 3

²⁸ Krauss, p. 4

²⁹ Krauss, p. 5

more directly descriptive and this is used as frequently as “time-based art”³⁰. According to Andrea Phillips, ‘Time based practice is closely linked with the development of new modes of technological innovation. As cameras, computer interfaces, hypertextual languages and new ways of manipulating sound are invented they are seized by artists in order to produce time based work that often involves a critique of (veiled) contemporary technological usage.’³¹ ‘Real time’ is a term employed frequently in live art and in conjunction with several of the artists’ work that I discuss here. It could be said that ‘real time’ is live art’s *raison d’être*. Real time is taken here as the opposite of fictional time, the time of narrative. Real time, then, is sometimes used as interchangeable with the term duration. In a recent issue of *Performance Research Journal* on duration, editor Ed Scheer writes: ‘For performance artists, duration refers to the time it takes to break away from the things that inhibit creativity, empathy and intuition, yet the extent to which performance develops its object in real time forms the basis of what we might call ‘the durational aesthetic’’.³² Scheer goes on to say that one of the seminal components of durational aesthetics is ‘the quality of time experienced in the doing of an action rather than simply the quantity of chronological time that a task might consume’.³³ This is why we might say (and, in fact, do quite often say when speaking of performance events) that an action takes as long as it takes, it has its own duration.

³⁰ RoseLee Goldberg, *Performance: Live Art since the 60s* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2004) (paperback ed.), p. 12

³¹ Andrea Phillips (ed.) *Out of Time: Hull Time Based Arts 1984-1998* (Hull: Hull Time Based Arts, 1997), p. 11

³² Ed Scheer, ‘Introduction: The end of spatiality or the meaning of duration’, in *Performance Research*, Vol. 17, No.5, 2013, pp. 1-3 (p. 1)

³³ Scheer, p. 1

For Goldberg, ‘By its very nature, performance defies precise or easy definition beyond the simple declaration that it is live art by artists’.³⁴ Goldberg (again) voices a common understanding of the conditions and strengths of performance when she writes, that ‘it is the very presence of the performance artist in real time, of live performers ‘stopping time’, that gives the medium its central position.’³⁵ Goldberg’s phrase ‘stopping time’ implies that the event of performance is somehow outside of normal time, indeed that being there is the crux of performance. Heathfield argues that, ‘In the hi-tech, spectacle-rich environments of the West, cultural production is now obsessed with liveness’.³⁶ In this study I examine these issues of liveness and presence and also look at the way discourses on performance’s duration talk about time. Indeed, what does Goldberg mean when she talks about *stopping* time?

One of the strategies used for bringing spectators ‘into the now of enactment, the moment by moment of the present’³⁷ (and thus ‘stopping time’) is to focus on the body, and on the body in pain in particular. In her book *The Show and the Gaze of Theatre: A European Perspective*, Erika Fischer-Lichte draws on Elaine Scarry’s research on pain and its essential capacity to elude words. Scarry argues that pain ‘cannot be denied and...cannot be confirmed’.³⁸ Indeed, by its very definition, pain cannot be communicated. Therefore, ‘[t]o perceive pain’, as Fischer-Lichte states, ‘means to perceive one’s own pain, never the pain of another’.³⁹ Fischer-Lichte argues that the gap between the spectator and the artist’s pain can only be crossed by

³⁴ Goldberg, 2011, p. 9

³⁵ Goldberg, 2011, p. 248-9

³⁶ Heathfield, p. 7

³⁷ Heathfield, p. 8

³⁸ Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Un-Making of the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 4

³⁹ Erika Fischer-Lichte, *The Show and the Gaze of Theatre – A European Perspective* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1997), p. 255

the use of the spectator's imagination. The sensation of pain (or 'merely' witnessing it) draws one into the now, or into real time. Such writing is sometimes related to notions of trauma and witnessing. Trauma theory maintains that the event (which is traumatising) is not registered fully by consciousness and thus cannot be experienced. Therefore, the event is played over and over repeatedly for that person afterwards. One cannot escape it. Dori Laub explains that, 'trauma precludes its registration'.⁴⁰ During the occurrence of the traumatic event, the witness is concentrating on surviving and thus 'testifies to an absence, to an event that has not yet come into existence'.⁴¹ Therefore the testimony can only be dealt with after the trauma has ceased. For some writers, performance is such an event.⁴² It cannot be grasped at the moment of its realisation and must therefore be repeated and repeated after the act.

For others, performance is a medium perfectly situated to attempt to capture the elusive present. Fischer-Lichte argues that, 'Performance is experienced as the completion, presentation, and passage of the present'.⁴³ She goes on to argue that the topos of simultaneous presence of actor and spectator is an old one. According to Fischer-Lichte, the issue was debated already in the 18th century.⁴⁴ Fischer-Lichte notes that theatre 'does not tell a story taking place at another time and place but portrays events that occur and are perceived by the audience *hic et nunc*'.⁴⁵ The presentness of theatre carries 'a highly effective potential for transformation' as it 'heals' the 'sickness' of passion, results in the loss of self-control, or can change

⁴⁰ Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History* (New York and London: Routledge, 1992), p. 57

⁴¹ Dori Laub, p. 57

⁴² See, for example, Tim Etchells and Peggy Phelan in Etchells, T. *Certain Fragments: Contemporary Performance and Forced Entertainment* (London: Routledge, 1999).

⁴³ Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power...*, p. 94

⁴⁴ Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power...*, p. 94

⁴⁵ Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power...*, p. 94

one's identity'.⁴⁶ The possibility for transformation has been taken on even more in live art where attuning to real time can affect a change. Marina Abramović's *The House with the Ocean View* (2002) is an attempt at just such transformation. Abramović wanted to initiate an 'energy dialogue' between her and the audience where their simple (but powerful) co-presence would in effect be the work. Abramović's purpose and aim during the piece was to be completely present, constantly in the now.

Despite performance being cited as the medium of time, research on duration and temporality has been lacking. It is only recently that a surge of interest has started to take place and research groups and conferences of all sizes have focused on the issue, *Performance Studies international* entitled 'Now Then: Performance and Temporality' which took place at Stanford University in 2013 being one of the most recent and biggest ones. What follows is a look at research on time in performance studies. Indeed, it seems that it is the incorporation of different media in performance which prompts discussion on the issue of time. Charlie Gere's book *Art, Time and Technology* is concerned with the accelerated time of contemporary society and questions the role of visual art 'in the age of real-time systems' by which is meant multimedia and telecommunication.⁴⁷ Gere argues that 'if art is to have a role or a meaning at all in the age of real-time technologies it is to keep our human relation with time open in the light of its potential foreclosure by such technology'.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power...*, p. 94

⁴⁷ Charlie Gere, *Art, Time and Technology* (Oxford: Berg, 2006), p. 1.

⁴⁸ Gere, p. 13

It is perhaps unsurprising that it is within research on technology that the issue of time is explored.⁴⁹ Steve Dixon's book (with contributions by Barry Smith) *Digital Performance: A History of New Media in Theatre, Dance, Performance Art, and Installation* offers, as its title suggests, a study of the history of Digital Performance, tracing it back to the early twentieth century. In its 24 page section on Time, Dixon discusses, after a brief look into the history of modern temporality, performances by Robert LePage, Richard Foreman, Uninvited Guests, among others, with reference to Sylviane Agacinski, Henri Bergson and Francois Lyotard. He goes on to stress the significance of thinking performance time in terms of extratemporality and notes: 'The contrapuntal elements of intense live performance and temporally altered digital imagery sparks a feeling, not of time standing still or going backward or forward, but of the extratemporal – of stepping to one side or outside of time'⁵⁰. The notion of being outside of time occurs in other writers' descriptions too. Heathfield and Tehching Hsieh's book on Hsieh's work is titled *Out of Now*, suggesting implicitly perhaps that it is possible to be out of time, as if time was a place, that is to say something to be out of.

5 Space and time

The surge of writings on time and duration in performance studies, which have grown in recent years, is following a trend on the focus on space in performance studies. Scheer notes that it 'may, as yet, be too early to adumbrate the end of the "spatial turn"'.⁵¹ However, it is clear that temporality is becoming more and more prevalent in discourses of performance. In his introduction, Scheer sets

⁴⁹ I will discuss the relationship between time and technology in more detail in Chapter 1.

⁵⁰ Steve Dixon, *Digital Performance: A History of New Media in Theatre, Dance, Performance Art, and Installation* (London: The MIT Press, 2007), p. 537.

⁵¹ Scheer, p. 1

‘topographical approaches that assert a politics of territoriality, the sociology of globalized cities and nation states’ in opposition to ‘an ethics of the subjective, the transitory and the privately experienced time of the body’.⁵² Of course such an opposition is only one facet of these issues; a focus on either time or space is not mutually exclusive.

In fact, some writing on space also ignores how space and time are interrelated. I would like to address a couple of instances where such an opposition is in play and point out the blindspots. In his book *Non-places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, Marc Augé describes places such as airports, shopping malls and motorways as non-places where people are constantly (only) passing through without ever feeling at home (or at anywhere) in them. He writes:

There is no room there for history unless it has been transformed into an element of spectacle, usually in allusive texts. What reigns there is actuality, the urgency of the present moment. Since non-places are there to be passed through, they are measured in units of time. Itineraries do not work without timetables, lists of departure and arrival times in which a corner is always found for a mention of possible delays. They are lived through in the present.⁵³

What Augé’s text does not consider is the ways in which spaces and places are negotiated and made by the relationships people have with them. An airport might seem like a place without history but people who pass through might have passed through it several times before. Thus, it is in the repetition of the encounter with a place that the place comes to mean and to have a meaning. Furthermore, the decision to build a new airport or a new motorway in most cases involves a process of destroying or removing something else that is at the time in that space. A construction of a new shopping mall might include a negotiation of what is the most

⁵² Scheer, p. 1

⁵³ Marc Augé, *Non-Places: An Introduction to an Anthropology of Super-modernity*, (London: Verso, 1995), p. 103-104.

convenient place for such a building, what is in that space now and how to include neighbouring areas in the change that the construction will effect. It is in these questions that the history of a space and its continuing relationships with people who use that space become apparent.

But what has all of this to do with theatre? I mention Augé here because his depiction of non-places has an echo of something more familiar to performance studies, Peter Brook's description of theatre and its empty space. Brook's seminal book *The Empty Space* begins with this now well-known passage: '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.'⁵⁴ However, similar to Augé, Brook does not consider that a place is never simply empty, that no place is ever completely without history. The stage is never empty but always a site of meeting between social, political and affective factors. Marvin Carlson takes Brook to task in his book *The Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machine*. Carlson notes, firstly, that a man walking across an empty stage does not yet constitute theatre, what is needed for that to happen is a contract between audience and actor, 'an agreement that this action will be 'framed' as theatre'.⁵⁵ Secondly, Carlson argues that, 'Brook's use of the term *empty* suggests a phenomenological ground-zero'.⁵⁶ Carlson draws attention instead to the notion of 'ghosting' whereby 'the 'something else' that this space was before...has the potential, often realized, of 'bleeding through' the process of reception'.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Peter Brook, *The Empty Space* (London: Penguin, 1990), p. 11

⁵⁵ Marvin Carlson, *The Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machine* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2011), p. 132.

⁵⁶ Carlson, p. 133

⁵⁷ Carlson, p. 133

Miwon Kwon's 2002 book *One Place after Another: Site-specific Art and Locational Identity* which is an account of site-specificity and the history of institutional art and its relationship to place has received similar critique. For example, Gregory Sholette has criticised the way 'Kwon has swept away the corporeal trace of history, politics and other ideological texts'.⁵⁸ However, what Kwon's book does is draw attention to the way in which site-specific practices and works of art are invested in time-specificity. As Kwon notes, 'the definition of site specificity is being reconfigured to imply not the permanence and immobility of a work but its impermanence and transience'.⁵⁹ When the work is taken out of the site it ceases to be the work (a sentiment expressed by Robert Barry in 1969 and echoed by Richard Serra fifteen years later).⁶⁰ Thus, Kwon's tracing of the genealogy of site-specific art and institutional critique is significant for the way in which it begins to make a shift from space to time. It has two broad implications here, the first of which is the importance of the history of site-specific sculpture in Minimalist art which I will discuss in Chapter 1. The second is the questioning of the marketing and selling of impermanent work that site-specific art poses. I will consider these issues in more detail in Chapter 3.

But one crucial point I want to make here via Augé, Brook, Carlson and Kwon is that we might think of the space of performance not as a palimpsest, a rewriting which partly erases what is left underneath it (as it has sometimes been read as⁶¹), but as flattened time. The concept, which I borrow from contemporary

⁵⁸ Gregory Sholette, 'Activist Art and After, a Report from New York', *Third Text*, Vol. 13, No. 45, 1998, pp. 45-62, (p. 47).

⁵⁹ Miwon Kwon, *One Place after Another: Site-specific Art and Locational Identity*, paperback ed. (London: MIT Press, 2004), p. 4.

⁶⁰ Kwon, p. 12

⁶¹ See for example Nick Kaye, *Site-specific Art, Place and Documentation* (London: Routledge, 2000).

archaeology, is one which replaces chronological time sequences with the idea of past and present being constituted in and by the present.⁶² Christopher Witmore argues that flattened time allows us to trace a succession of relations between people, things and landscapes and by so doing understand how things exert their own force in this network.⁶³ Witmore proposes a way of looking, then, which helps us see the simultaneous strands of negotiation between different agencies. Such an approach to looking will reveal a host of factors that make space not empty. Things such as where people sit in the (not empty) theatre, why they have come to this particular building or area (is it conveniently near their house? Did they have to drive or take public transportation?), where they are sitting having something to do, in most cases at least, with how much they can afford to pay for a ticket. And all of this, of course, matters when considering the material conditions of making performance.

6 Materiality, labour and precarity

In examining the material conditions of performance I take my cue from Ric Knowles' work on cultural materialism in *Reading the Material Theatre* in which he places meaning production as a result of a negotiation at the intersection between performance, conditions of production and conditions of reception. Knowles fleshes out the semiotics of a material theatre and the working conditions as well as the viewing conditions in the theatre. His reading of the spaces of performances and their neighbourhoods reveals the extent to which spectators and performance makers

⁶² See for example Gavin Lucas, 'Time and the Archaeological Event', *Cambridge Archaeological Journal*, Vol. 18, No. 1, 2008.

⁶³ Christopher Witmore, 'Landscape, Time, Topology: An Archaeological Account of the Southern Argolid, Greece', in *Envisioning Landscape: Situations and Standpoints in Archaeology and Heritage*, ed. by Dan Hicks, Laura McAtackney and Graham J. Fairclough (Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, 2007), pp. 194-225, (p. 218).

go to, and might not go to, for theatre. What the scope of Knowles' book does not cover, however, is consideration of the duration of performance, its limited activity or time-specificity.⁶⁴ It is one of the aims of this thesis to contribute to this area of research. My use of cultural materialism encompasses the way our material conditions and environments affect how we *do* culture and how, in the instances that I analyse, performance is made, produced, watched and paid for (or funded). These are the conditions which surround, make possible and affect theatrical production. Here, the materials in question range from how long it takes to make a piece of work and how much time watching a performance takes from an evening to how much the artist is paid and the factors affecting their work (do they have another job, where do they show their work, are they emerging or established artist, and so on).

In addition to examining the material conditions of performance, I also consider the materiality of performance. I will argue that the objects in performance allow us another way of looking at performance's multi-temporality. By materiality I mean objects and 'stuff', matter and materials that affect us as human beings, sometimes without us even noticing. I examine the possible connections between performance and material culture in Chapter 5 as I consider the remains and re-enactment of performance. In doing so, I follow Daniel Miller's perception of material culture. Miller asserts that 'much of what we are exists not through our conscious or body, but as an exterior environment that habituates and prompts us'.⁶⁵ Miller goes on to argue that objects 'determine what takes place to the extent that we are unconscious of their capacity to do so'.⁶⁶ I posit that it is unnecessary and at points impossible to distinguish between artefacts and natural objects and I include

⁶⁴ Ric Knowles, *Reading the Material Theatre*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

⁶⁵ Daniel Miller, *Materiality* (London: Duke University Press, 2005), p. 6.

⁶⁶ Miller, p. 6

all sorts of matter in my discussion. Thus, as my discussion moves from material conditions of labour to natural and man-made objects, everything is potentially included in this definition of materiality. In aligning this study with Miller's work, I am setting up material culture studies as a methodology.

Furthermore, I employ Marxist labour theory to investigate the structure of the relationship between the spectator as a consumer, the artist as a producer and the curating or producing organisation as a capitalist. I discuss what implications the duration of a performance might have when put into context of a working life. How do we structure time in our daily lives? How much of that time do we want or expect to use for leisure, or more specifically, for theatre? How might performance's duration subvert a preconceived idea of time? How does the theatrical economy function and what is duration's part in that economy? What kind of experiences of temporality do we look for (and get) in performance?

Employing Marx in attempting to answer these questions is useful in the ways it allows me to take the focus off the event (of performance) and look at the operations and materialities of performance. More specifically, it gives a clear account of capitalist production in which, I argue, theatre and theatrical production partake. Using Marx facilitates an examination of those labour relations that are more than reflected in theatrical production. However, there are limitations to using Marxist labour theory within this thesis. In addition to the material conditions to theatrical production, I also wish to consider the experience of time in performance. It is here that one must concede that Marx's theory of capitalist time and labour relations does not account for a more complex experience of time and temporality. While it describes in detail the conditions in which workers become alienated from the work they sell and how this process facilitates the development of new ways to

measure and compartmentalise time (work-leisure), it does not explain how time itself functions and is felt. In chapters 4 and 5 I examine work that has an interest in time rather than displaying chronophobia. In order to investigate that interest I employ Henri Bergson's philosophy of pure duration which sees time as a psychic process. Time, for Bergson, is quality, while space is quantity, and the difficulty in perceiving time comes from not being able to think or see time without relating it to space. Bergson's concept of pure duration considers what it means to experience time when we, for example, see a dancer move or when we are waiting for something to happen. It is this idea of time as a psychic process that becomes important in the second half of the thesis.

The focus here on labour and capitalism is also a focus on precarity and the temporal characteristics of a precarious life in post-Fordism. Issues of precarity in performance have been prevalent in performance studies for the last few years. The connections between theatrical labour, the service economy and precarity are rich ground for an examination of the ways in which the notion of work and its demands have changed. One of the most notable changes is the focus on the emergence of immaterial labour. In her article 'Just-in-Time: Performance and the Aesthetics of Precarity', Shannon Jackson writes about the 'turn to affective and immaterial labor in a post-Fordist economy'⁶⁷ which took place 'somewhere in the 1970s'⁶⁸ anticipated by shifts in the 1960s. Theoretical writings by authors such as Herbert Marcuse and new process based art practices began to articulate a mode of labour that was focused on relations around service. According to Jackson, during this

⁶⁷ Shannon Jackson, 'Just-in-Time: Performance and the Aesthetics of Precarity', *The Drama Review*, Vol. 56, No. 4, 2012, pp. 10-31, (p. 11).

⁶⁸ Jackson, p. 12

immaterial turn 'labor became more service orientated and engaged in the production and exchange of affect'.⁶⁹

The title of Jackson's article is an important one here as it draws attention to an aspect of flexible accumulation and late capitalism which will become central in the first chapter and in the argument of the thesis. Just-in-time production is one of the organisational shifts which facilitate the move from Fordism to flexible accumulation. I will give a more detailed account of the issues behind Fordist and post-Fordist labour practices in Chapter 2 but it is worth pointing out here that flexible accumulation is a term which David Harvey uses to describe the type of flexibility and the rise of new labour markets, such as the growth of the service sector which Jackson referred to above, that characterise late capitalism. Just-in-time production is an 'inventory-flows delivery system which cuts down radically on stocks required to keep production flow going'.⁷⁰ It therefore has the effect of decreasing turnover time which, when reduced considerably, results in higher and higher profitability. What is central to just-in-time systems is that they not only reduce turnover time in production but also reduce it in consumption. What this ultimately means is that the temporal gap between production and consumption is diminishing.

A recent issue of *The Drama Review* makes a considerable contribution to the area of precarity and performance. In their editorial for the issue, Nicholas Ridout and Rebecca Schneider point out (via Angela Mitropoulos) that rather than a temporary situation, precarity is life in capitalism 'per usual'.⁷¹ In his article on the

⁶⁹ Jackson, p. 12

⁷⁰ David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), p. 156

⁷¹ Nicholas Ridout and Rebecca Schneider, 'Precarity and Performance: An Introduction', *The Drama Review*, Vol. 56, No. 4, 2012, pp. 5-9 (p. 7).

precariat as a new class, ‘We Are All Precarious – On the Concept of the ‘Precariat’ and Its Misuses’ in *New Left Project*, Richard Seymour points out that a number of labouring groups were already precarious in the 1800s.⁷² What Seymour and Ridout and Schneider suggest is that the change that we see now is perhaps one where flexible accumulation decreasingly meets labour’s call for a liveable (Ridout’s and Schneider’s term) or sustainable life.⁷³

In examining performance work and its relationship with labour (dead and living, material and immaterial) I situate this study in a position of performance studies which comes out of the turn that Jackson points out. Thus, I do not follow Goldberg’s account of the history of performance art. Although I trace some of the interests in experiments in time in historical avant-garde performance, I make a distinction between that period and the work produced during it and the live art, performance, theatre, sculpture and visual art which I mainly focus on here. I posit that it is to some extent due to the immaterial turn that the performance from 1960s onwards has slightly different concerns from its previous forms. That is to say, performance during and after 1960s emerges out of a negotiation with the values of late capitalism. It is performance which is interested in making its temporality visible and often tangible. It is performance which is interested in the limits of the body, limits of duration and endurance. I examine how performance might or might not escape the art market. Harvey argues that, ‘Since money and commodities are entirely bound up with the circulation of capital, it follows that cultural forms are

⁷² Richard Seymour, ‘We Are All Precarious – On the Concept of the ‘Precariat’ and Its Misuses’, *New Left Project*, 2012
<http://www.newleftproject.org/index.php/site/article_comments/we_are_all_precarious_on_the_concept_of_the_precariat_and_its_misuses> (Accessed 23 May 2013).

⁷³ Ridout and Schneider, p. 7

firmly rooted in the daily circulation process of capital'.⁷⁴ Indeed, it is art's (and here I also mean performance) relationship to the intensification or rise of just-in-time production that distinguishes it from the historical avant-garde.

7 Chapter outlines

I start this study in the 1960s as I examine a chronophobia peculiar to that era. I link this chronophobia to the rise of just-in-time production, the eradication of the gap between production and consumption, and a rise of technology and media. I argue that the 1960s are crucial to understanding the developments of the performance and art practices that demonstrate an invested interest in the issue of time and duration. I examine some of the key texts from the period which debate the issue of temporality and time which puts the work I discuss into context. In this chapter I wish to highlight some of the instances of time becoming a central issue in art and examine how the theorisation of time in visual art can be said to have started during the 1960s. In order to do so, I launch a detailed reading of Michael Fried's essay 'Art and Objecthood' in tandem with a discussion of examples from Minimalist art, such as the work of Robert Morris and Donald Judd. I also examine different articulations of time in the work of Andy Warhol and Barnett Newman before moving on to performance work by Bruce Nauman and Yvonne Rainer. Discussing and examining various examples of both visual art and performance, I aim to map out a genealogy of art, and more particularly performance, in the 1960s interested in making its temporality visible and discuss how thinking about performance as ancillary to visual art has put performance in its historiographic place. Chapter 1 thus frames the subject matter and scope of this thesis and sets a jumping off point

⁷⁴ Harvey, p. 299

for further queries into performance's engagement with temporality and experiences of duration.

From the chronophobia of 1960s the thesis moves on to the present day and its always open, 24 Hour Society. I examine the speed of our never stopping consumer driven culture and ask how the temporality of performance interrupts or succumbs to the way we perceive and use time in our daily lives. I do this through engaging with durational performances, or performances of (fairly) long duration. I discuss four case studies, *LABOUR* (2012), *Marina Abramović Presents...* (2009), *GATZ* (2012) by Elevator Repair Service and two one-year long performance from Tehching Hsieh (one of them made with Linda Montano). I have chosen to examine these examples because each of them, either implicitly or explicitly, places the act of labour in focus. Through Marxist labour theory, I argue that the demand that durational performances make in an age of post-Fordist work practices is not a straight-forward one but a negotiation of how to approach different temporalities. I consider key terms such as duration and endurance and place them in context.

From labour time in durational performances I move on to short performances and their material conditions. Employing my own experience as a participant of Brian Lobel's project *Carpe Minuta Prima* (2011), I examine how short duration of performance work might present a problem to the economy of theatre which, I argue, is invested in what we might call its standard duration. That duration frames the event of theatre as a consumable product which nonetheless insists on its own ability to evade the art market. I focus on performances that are a few minutes in length to question the assumption that theatrical labour is immaterial. I also examine one to one performances in this chapter as an example of a duration that questions or problematises theatre's investment in its own standard duration. I

also employ examples from visual art practices as such the work of Martin Creed to examine how the service economy is a fitting place to start for looking at both performance and visual art.

Chapter 4 presents a shift in the thesis from a focus on economy, quantity and Marxist theory to quality and Henri Bergson's philosophy. In this chapter I discuss a certain type of experience of time in performance and investigate how the work of Goat Island and Robert Wilson respectively might be read as pure duration as theorised by Bergson. I compare Wilson and Goat Island because they seem to share a common approach to time and slowness where information is withheld from the audience who are left (for want of a better word) to navigate their way through the work. I argue that despite appearances, their work is in fact very different from each other. In using Bergson's philosophy of time, I also examine the difficulty of thinking about time without thinking about space and why a purer definition of duration might be beneficial.

Chapter 5 continues with the emphasis on quality and moves from Bergson to Deleuzian philosophy. I will focus on the material objects of performance and argue for their temporality. Performance's emphasis on the temporal act over matter has been turned into a fetishisation of its in-timeness which can be seen in debates such as that on performance's remains and documentation. The most enduring one of these (somewhat ironically) is Peggy Phelan's account of performance's ontology in her 1993 book *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance*. Phelan positions the immateriality of performance in opposition with the material objects valued in cultural production and advocates the emptiness of performance as a political argument. For Phelan, performance cannot be recorded or captured. The way 'live performance plunges into visibility – in a maniacally charged present – and

disappears into memory'⁷⁵ is, according to Phelan, the basis of performance's efficacy. Furthermore, rhetoric around the body's presence and bodily transmissions inherent in theatre and performance often results in writing that equates performance's time with the time of death. Kalb argues:

Because theater confronts us with the physical, real-time presence of toiling performers as well as fellow audience members, it provokes a greater awareness of the body – and of the ticking clock of mortality – than recorded performances can.⁷⁶

Or, in other words, performance, in its limited time frame and with slowly dying and decaying human bodies, always pertains towards death and mortality. Alan Read notes that, 'In countering [a] proclivity for the metaphoric and the dramatically disempowered, performance studies has become more interested in the ontological *a priori* of theatre: its liveness'.⁷⁷ Read goes on to argue that performance studies is invested in its own 'extinction theory',⁷⁸ which can be seen in performance's emphasis on failure, a point of focus gathering momentum in recent years.⁷⁹

I think through some ideas around decay and ruins as pertaining to lasting rather than disappearance and discuss the materiality and the material remains of performance. I do so through various case studies such as the work of Alastair MacLennan, *The Dust Archive*, a book project by Annie Lloyd and Alexander Kelly from 2008, and Doris Salcedo's *Shibboleth* (2007) which was (and, I argue, still is) an installation at Tate Modern. I also discuss re-enactments and photography with reference to the work of Performance Re-enactment Society. While Phelan's troubling of the focus on materiality is useful and valuable in discourses on

⁷⁵ Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 148.

⁷⁶ Kalb, p. 17

⁷⁷ Alan Read, *Theatre, Intimacy and Engagement: The Last Human Venue* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 59.

⁷⁸ Read, p. 61

⁷⁹ See Sara Jane Bailes, *Performance Theatre and the Poetics of Failure: Forced Entertainment, Goat Island, Elevator Repair Service* (London: Routledge, 2011).

performance's political power, I instead would like to trouble the linearity of time and think about the multiple time frames that are at work in performance.

Chapter 1

From Phobia to Philia: Debating Time in the Art of the 1960s

1 Beginning time

The 1960s have remained in the popular imagination as the decade that brought with it a whole new world and it is by now an oft-repeated cliché that the 1960s were a time of radical change. An enduring symbol of the urgency of that change and the whole decade is of course the revolution. As Alvin Toffler, a popular futurologist and social critic, wrote at the end of the decade, the 1960s were ‘simultaneously experiencing a youth revolution, a sexual revolution, a racial revolution, a colonial revolution, an economic revolution, and the most rapid and deep-going technological revolution in history’.¹ Furthermore, the 1960s saw a proliferation of writings and debates on the issue of time as several writers, not to mention both the counterculture and mass entertainment, tackled the notion of the temporal. It could be said the decade was experiencing a sense of an end and at the same time looking to the future. On the one hand the threat of nuclear war and the actual reality of the Vietnam War brought a sense of an end; the end, to be exact, of the world, while the space programme with its promise of a hopeful future and infinite stretches of light years proclaimed an endless time. And all the while future studies that became institutionalised in the mid-1960s revealed a marked anxiety about the present.

In this chapter I wish to highlight some of the instances of time becoming a central issue in art and examine how the theorisation of time in visual art can be said to have started during the 1960s. Discussing and examining various examples of

¹ Alvin Toffler, *Future Shock* (London: The Bodley Head, 1970), p. 166.

both visual art and performance, I aim to map out a genealogy of art, and more particularly performance, in the 1960s interested in making its temporality visible and often tangible and discuss how thinking about performance as ancillary to visual art has put performance in its historiographic place. Furthermore, looking at 1960s art and its involvement and interest in the theorisation and experience of time facilitates a way of highlighting a series of leads and stepping-off points for later work discussed elsewhere in this thesis. Thus the 1960s are crucial to understanding the developments of those practices that demonstrate an invested interest in the issues of time and duration.

But before focusing on the specificities of art, I would like to outline the broader popular debates and concerns around temporality at the time. Toffler's 1970 book *Future Shock* was not only a best-seller but also 'exhaustively reviewed and debated'.² In it, Toffler argues:

We have in our time released a totally new social force – a stream of change so accelerated that it influences our sense of time, revolutionizes the tempo of daily life, and affects the very way we “feel” the world around us. [...] And this is the ultimate difference, the distinction that separates the truly contemporary man from all others. For this acceleration lies behind the impermanence – the transience – that penetrates and tinctures our consciousness, radically affecting the way we relate to other people, to things, to the entire universe of ideas, art and values.³

For Toffler, 'Transience is the new “temporariness” in everyday life. It results in a mood, a feeling of impermanence'.⁴ This temporariness which affects, among other things, our human relationships which are increasingly shorter in duration, is the main characteristic of what Toffler calls a throw-away society.

One of Toffler's supporters and fellow enthusiasts was Marshall McLuhan who, in 1964, argued in his book *Understanding Media: Extensions of Man*:

² Lee, p. 265

³ Toffler, p. 18

⁴ Toffler, p. 42

During the mechanical ages we had extended our bodies in space. Today, after more than a century of electric technology, we have extended our central nervous system itself in a global embrace, abolishing both space and time as far as our time is concerned.⁵

For McLuhan, the slowness of the mechanical age meant that ‘the reactions were delayed for considerable periods of time. Today the action and the reaction occur almost at the same time’.⁶ Automation, McLuhan argues,

ends the old dichotomies between culture and technology, between art and commerce, and between work and leisure. ... As the age of information demands the simultaneous use of all our faculties, we discover that we are most at leisure when we are most intensely involved, very much as with the artists in all ages.⁷

What we see in Toffler’s throw-away society and MacLuhan’s automation is, in fact, the rise of just-in-time production. A throw-away society is one which is focused on consumption rather than production, demanding, through its very structure, faster and faster production and shorter durability of goods. The abolishing of time and space and ensuring that action and reaction happen almost simultaneously is the closing of the gap between production and consumption.

Technology might not have become the seamless extension of man that McLuhan claims it to be but its permeating effect in society had certainly become apparent. According to the Marxist philosopher Herbert Marcuse, ‘In the face of the totalitarian features of this society the traditional notion of the ‘neutrality’ of technology can no longer be maintained’.⁸ In his book *One-Dimensional Man*, also from 1964, Marcuse argues that technology has come to dominate not (just) through physical labour and production but on the level of an internalized principle. ‘The

⁵ Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964), p. 3.

⁶ MacLuhan, p. 4

⁷ MacLuhan, p. 346-7

⁸ Herbert Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1968), p. xvi.

technological society’, Marcuse writes, ‘is a system of domination which operates already in the concept and construction of techniques’⁹ and thus, ‘domination is figured into administration’.¹⁰ Technology then, as Lee elucidates, cannot be understood as merely ‘the stuff of invention’ or ‘operating from the usual bases of political authority’.¹¹ Instead, technology, which is now organized around an administrative logic,¹² is itself organising us. Moreover, this administrative logic has its implications for higher culture. Marcuse claims:

Today’s novel feature is the flattening out of the antagonism between culture and social reality through the obliteration of the oppositional, alien, and transcendent elements in the higher culture by virtue of which it constituted *another dimension* of reality. This liquidation of *two-dimensional* culture takes place not through the denial and the rejection of the cultural values but through their wholesale incorporation into the established order, through their reproduction and display on a massive scale.¹³

Some of the decade’s art could be seen as a response to the challenge Marcuse is articulating here.

Writing of kinetic art, Willoughby Sharp stated: ‘The new age, the electric age, has created an environment that has reconfigured our senses’.¹⁴ For Sharp, kinetic art was responding to a world where seeing has lost its importance as ‘the primary means of knowing’.¹⁵ Instead, ‘Our five senses are rapidly becoming more completely integrated’.¹⁶ For Susan Sontag ‘the conflicting tastes and odors and sights of the urban environment that bombard our senses’¹⁷ calls interpretation of an art work into question as the sensory experience that was once the basis of

⁹ Marcuse, p. xvi.

¹⁰ Marcuse, p. 32

¹¹ Lee, p. 28

¹² Lee, p. 28

¹³ Marcuse, p. 57, original emphasis

¹⁴ Willoughby Sharp, ‘Luminism and Kineticism’, in *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology*, ed. by Gregory Battcock (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1968), pp. 317 – 358 (p. 317).

¹⁵ Sharp, p. 317

¹⁶ Sharp, p. 137

¹⁷ Susan Sontag, ‘Against Interpretation’[1964], in *Against Interpretation*, (London: Vintage Books, 2001), pp. 3 – 14 (p. 13).

interpretation cannot be taken for granted anymore. ‘What is important now’, Sontag wrote in her 1964 essay, ‘is to recover our senses’¹⁸ and consequently re-evaluate the task of the critic.

In his 1964 book *The Fall into Time*, E. M. Cioran writes:

From abstraction to abstraction, time shrinks because of us, dissolving into temporality, the shadow of itself. Now it is up to us to revive it, to adopt toward time a clear-cut attitude, without ambiguity. Yet how can we, when time inspires such irreconcilable feelings, a paroxysm of repulsion and fascination?¹⁹

This grappling with time, which Cioran calls ‘a paroxysm of repulsion and fascination’, manifested in Minimalism, Pop, Op and Kinetic art as they were in their different ways concerned with newly articulated ideas of temporality and duration. It was with a type of impermanence that art responded to the demands of the throw-away society. For example, kinetic art, as Sharp argues, ‘is immaterial or disposable. Consequently, much of it is uncommercial’.²⁰ Similarly, Happenings that had already started in the 1950s insisted on their ephemerality. Sontag wrote in 1962:

One way in which the Happenings state the freedom from time is in their deliberate impermanence. A painter or sculptor who makes Happenings does not make anything that can be purchased. One cannot buy a Happening; one can only support it.²¹

And while some, such as Andy Warhol, embraced time in all its literalness, others displayed a considerable, in Michael Fried’s case even genre-defining, mistrust in it. Michael Archer argues that, ‘All of this work of the 1960s challenged the modernist account of art history most particularly identified with the US critic Clement

¹⁸ Sontag, p. 14

¹⁹ E. M. Cioran, *The Fall into Time*, trans. by Richard Howard (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1964), p. 176.

²⁰ Sharp, p. 318

²¹ Susan Sontag, ‘Happenings: ‘An Art of Radical Juxtaposition’[1962], in *Against Interpretation* (London: Vintage Books, 2001), pp. 261 – 274 (p. 266).

Greenberg'.²² At the core of the challenge was the proposition that 'the meaning of an artwork did not necessarily lie within it, but as often as not arose out of the context in which it existed'.²³ Often, and especially in the case of Minimalism, that meant that the context was the heightened durational nature of the encounter between the spectator and the artwork. 'To look at art is not to 'consume' it passively', Archer contends, 'but to become part of a world to which both that art and the spectator belong'.²⁴

In her 2004 book *Chronophobia: Time in the Art of the 1960s* Lee considers 'the ascendant technocracy in the 1960s' in terms of 'an attitude peculiar to that moment, an attitude internalized socially, culturally, and politically, whose consequences stood in dramatic excess of technology's literal representation'.²⁵ Lee 'traces the ubiquity of the chronophobic impulse, considering how artists implicitly, even inadvertently, wrestled with new technologies'.²⁶ In addition to Lee's book, 2004 saw the publication of another book on time in the art of the 1960s. In *The Infinite Line: Re-making Art after Modernism*, Briony Fer takes as her main interest the mapping of aesthetic strategies that shifted in the late 1950s. Fer sees this shift as one from 'collage aesthetic to a serial one'.²⁷ Serial systems in art were prevalent in the 1960s and in 1967 artist and critic Mel Bochner organised, together with Elayne Varian, an exhibition in New York called *Art in Series*. For Fer, the turn to a serial aesthetic equals a 'focus onto the problem of temporality'²⁸ dramatising the temporal as it does 'through animating and transforming the most everyday and

²² Michael Archer, *Art Since 1960* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1997), p. 7.

²³ Archer, p. 7

²⁴ Archer, p. 7

²⁵ Lee, p. xix

²⁶ Lee, p. xii-xiii

²⁷ Briony Fer, *The Infinite Line: Re-making Art after Modernism* (London: Yale University press, 2004), p. 2.

²⁸ Fer, p. 3

routine habits of looking'.²⁹ And it is the attempt at redefining of the relationship between an art work and the viewer's body that comes to mediate the concerns around temporality in 1960s art.

Lee begins her preface with a quote from Cioran's book *The Fall into Time*: 'Defenseless, with no hold on things, we then face a peculiar misfortune: that of not being entitled to time'.³⁰ And with that last line, for Lee, Cioran 'gave voice to the acutely contemporary phenomenon of noncontemporaneity'.³¹ Lee contends that the experience of not being entitled to time is 'historically specific to the 1960s'.³² Stressing the emergence of communications and information technologies during that time, Lee sets out to discuss the decade where time and technology become 'twinned phenomena'.³³ Claiming that 'time becomes both a thematic and structural fixture, an obsession'³⁴ within the art of the decade, the task Lee sets herself is to trace what she terms 'a chronophobic impulse' in the decade's art. Lee states: 'I treat the obsession with time in 1960s art in tandem with two *indissociable* shifts in the culture following World War II: the alleged waning of the 'Machine Age' on the one hand, and the concomitant advent of computer technologies, on the other'.³⁵ However, although Lee makes a strong and convincing case for discussing the operations of time in the decade's art in tandem with technocratic rationality, her reasons for using the term chronophobia are left unclear. Lee chooses the word over chronophilia although admitting that 'there is a fine line between a phobic obsession

²⁹ Lee, p. xi

³⁰ Lee, p. xi

³¹ Lee, p. xi

³² Lee, p. xi

³³ Lee, p. xi

³⁴ Lee, p. xi

³⁵ Lee, p. xiii, emphasis added

with time and almost perverse fascination with its unfolding'.³⁶ However, for Lee, the artists on whom the book focuses 'remain suspicious of the conjunction of time and technology in sixties culture, some denying altogether the application of technology in their work'.³⁷ That may be so but phobia about technology does not equate phobia about time. Continuing her rhetoric that technology and time are indissociable Lee thus concludes that to be suspicious of technology is to be suspicious of time.

The first section of this chapter focuses on Minimalism and Michael Fried's (in)famous essay 'Art and Objecthood'. Fried's argument against minimalist sculpture and its endless duration is of course a problem of the temporal but what I will discuss here are Fried's three terms: temporality, theatricality and stage presence. By looking at how he used these terms that make up his argument this chapter begins to trace the terms in which temporality was theorised during that decade. The second section discusses Andy Warhol in tandem with an artist often associated with a different era, Barnett Newman. Teetering on the border between chronophobia and chronophilia, Warhol's work encompasses seriality, repetition, mass production and even time capsules. I will discuss Warhol's literalism on holding on to the passing of time with reference to his early silent films and screen tests. By placing Warhol side by side with Newman, who gained fame in the 1960s but who has been characterised 'as an artist rooted in older Abstract Expressionist concerns',³⁸ I discuss how Warhol and Newman seemed to address similar concerns around time by using very different approaches. I suggest that while in Warhol's work we see just-in-time in action (although he also manages to subvert it)

³⁶ Lee, p. xiv

³⁷ Lee, p. xiv

³⁸ Sarah Rich, 'The Proper Name of Newman's Zip', in *Reconsidering Barnett Newman*, ed. by Melissa Ho (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2005), pp. 96 – 114 (p. 97).

Newman's work displays an important connection with Fried's ideas on presence and duration. I will outline what this comparison between these two artists can contribute towards thinking about temporality more widely in the decade's art. In the last section I take up the discussion on how performance has been theorised in art history as secondary to visual art and as a tool for examining sculptural problems. I will also examine how performance in the 1960s became a tool for grounding the experience of the body and how different experiences of time in different art forms were negotiated through performance. By looking at the performance work of Bruce Nauman, Robert Morris and Yvonne Rainer I locate a useful meeting point of varying approaches to shared enquiries. I will also investigate how different dimensions and shapes of time began to emerge and how artists employed temporal frames in their work and to what end.

Finally, it is worth pointing out here that the 1960s as a period are elusive themselves as the definition is not really a decade. Instead, different periodisations have emerged. For example, Steven Watson argues that, 'In the popular imagination the Sixties are a semi chronological period that began in the wake of Kennedy's assassination in November 1963 and continued until the Vietnam War wound down in 1972'.³⁹ Arthur Marwick, on the other hand, postulates a 'long sixties' that started in 1958 and didn't end until 1974 when 'the mass of ordinary people *began* to feel the effects of the oil crisis' and the anti-war movement was finally 'achieving victory'.⁴⁰ Although most of the work discussed in this chapter was made during the calendric decade of the 1960s, the developments that created that decade are never far away in the distance.

³⁹ Steven Watson, *Factory Made: Warhol and the Sixties* (New York: Pantheon, 2003), p. xv.

⁴⁰ Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, c. 1958 – 1974* (Oxford: Oxford University press, 1998), p. 7, original emphasis.

2 Temporality, theatricality and stage presence

‘Art and Objecthood’, Michael Fried’s article in the June issue of *Artforum* in 1967 is perhaps the most famous and the most debated remnant of 1960s art criticism when it comes to the issue of time and duration. Not only was the essay’s reputation central to postwar art, as Lee notes, but ‘the importance of its reception within postmodern theories’ is also significant.⁴¹ Fried was certainly not the first to address the notion of temporality in art but was the most convincing to condemn it.

Although, as Fer argues, ‘the critical field was already steeped in the idea of duration’⁴² in the reception of art, what Fried achieved in ‘Art and Objecthood’ was in fact to transform ‘a hitherto contentious field into a coherent entity’.⁴³ James Meyer contends that ‘Fried’s essay more or less invented ‘minimalism’ for later critics’.⁴⁴ Up until Fried’s intervention, the visual art of the day was variously called ABC Art or Primary Structures, titles taken from exhibitions of new work. In defining a whole movement, Fried certainly went further in his analysis of the new art than his contemporary art critic and mentor Clement Greenberg who had the patience to merely call Minimalism ‘Good Design’ and ‘retain hope’.⁴⁵ Fried’s argument against minimal art is, by now, well known and extensively debated. But for all his anti-minimalist attitude Fried, as Hal Foster argues, understands minimalism.⁴⁶ In particular, he understands it as a threat to modernism and this threat is embodied in the notion of temporality. What is so objectionable to Fried

⁴¹ Lee, p. 38

² Briony Fer, ‘Some Translucent Substance, or the trouble with time’, in *Time and the Image*, ed. by Carolyn Bailey Gill (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 69-78 (p. 72).

⁴³ James Meyer, *Minimalism: Art and Polemics in the Sixties* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001) p. 229.

⁴⁴ Meyer, p. 229

⁴⁵ Clement Greenberg, ‘Recentness of Sculpture’, in *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology*, ed. by Gregory Battcock (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co, 1968), pp. 180 – 186 (p. 186).

⁴⁶ Hal Foster, *The Return of the Real: The Avant-Garde at the End of the Century* (London: The MIT Press, 1996) p. 53.

about Minimalism is its inherent theatricality, how the duration of the experience of viewing goes on and on unlike in modernist painting and sculpture which is instantaneous in a way that ‘*at every moment the work itself is wholly manifest*’.⁴⁷ The time that the work of Robert Morris and other minimalists exists in is literal, banal time, not the sublime time of high art which makes the viewer forget herself and allow her to be lost in the art.

But what exactly is behind Fried’s three main terms: temporality, theatricality and stage presence? Lucy Lippard wrote in 1964:

There is a growing tendency, even in ‘straight painting’ exhibitions, to surround the spectator, whose increased physical participation, or immediate sensorial reaction to the work of art, often operate at the expense of the more profound emotional involvements demanded by New York School painting in the fifties.⁴⁸

Morris’ work is an accurate example of this, with its emphasis on the simple shape of the new work, the regular and irregular polyhedrons which he called unitary forms. They allow for the experience of a gestalt, indeed are ‘bound together as it is with a kind of energy provided by the gestalt’.⁴⁹ For Morris, this emphasis on shape is not a diminution of the art object to a mere object. In fact, ‘Unitary forms do not reduce relationships. They order them’.⁵⁰ What, then, becomes important is the relationship between the viewer and the work. Morris asserts:

The object is but one of the terms in the newer aesthetic. It is some way more reflexive because of one’s awareness of oneself existing in the same space as the work is stronger than in previous work, with its many internal relationships. One is more aware than before that he himself is establishing relationships as he apprehends the object from various positions and under varying conditions of light and spatial context.⁵¹

⁴⁷ Michael Fried, *Art and Objecthood: Essays and Reviews*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998) p. 167, original emphasis.

⁴⁸ Lucy R. Lippard, ‘New York’ in *Artforum*, Vol. 2, No. 9, 1964, pp. 18-19 (p. 18).

⁴⁹ Robert Morris, ‘Notes on Sculpture’, in *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology*, ed. by Gregory Battcock (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co, 1968), pp. 222 – 235 (p. 228).

⁵⁰ Morris, p. 228

⁵¹ Morris, p. 232

And since the viewing is made up of several relationships, the ‘experience of the work necessarily exists in time’.⁵² Similarly, Annette Michelson wrote of Morris’ work:

Cognitive in its fullest effect, then, rather than ‘meaningful’, its comprehension not only demands time; it elicits the acknowledgment of temporality as the condition or medium of human cognition and aesthetic experience.⁵³

Focusing on the cognitive element and anticipating Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology, Michelson places the body in the centre of the experience of time. And for Morris too, ‘it is the viewer who changes the shape constantly by his change in position relative to the work’.⁵⁴ When one views a six-foot cube, like that of Tony Smith’s *Die* (1962), for example, its invariable shape is that which is ‘held in the mind but which the viewer never literally experiences’.⁵⁵ Thus the shape ‘is an actuality against which the literal changing, perspective views are related’.⁵⁶

Alex Potts argues that, ‘Any viewing of a three-dimensional work involves some form of repetitive *looping*’.⁵⁷ Furthermore, ‘A Minimalist work tends to foreground the sense of looping because there are not many variegated incidents in the circuits one traverses’.⁵⁸ As the viewer moves around the work or closer to it, she is moving along routes that have very little variance. And yet, one is constantly aware that one is never seeing the same thing from the same position. Such looping is built into Morris’ work, for example his L-beams in *Untitled* from 1965. The three L-shaped beams are all placed in different positions in the space, one lying on

⁵² Morris, p. 234

⁵³ Annette Michelson, ‘Robert Morris – An Aesthetics of Transgression’ in ex. cat. *Robert Morris* (Washington, DC: Corcoran Gallery of Art, 1969), p. 23.

⁵⁴ Morris, p. 234

⁵⁵ Morris, p. 234

⁵⁶ Morris, p. 234

⁵⁷ Alex Potts, *Sculptural Imagination: Figurative, Modernist, Minimalist* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000) p. 196, emphasis added.

⁵⁸ Potts, p. 196

its side, one standing on the floor in the shape of an L and one with its angle up in the air. The viewer thus sees and comprehends three similar shapes but is always unable to see them as such. Instead they only present different sides, caught in the perpetual reappearance of unity. This indeed marks its crucial difference from the non-unified but singular condition of Modernist sculpture, such as that of Anthony Caro.

Barbara Rose contends that an increasing amount of artists during that period were interested in ‘find[ing] variety in repetition where only the nuance alters’.⁵⁹ And it is this subtle change of looping, bound in the duration of the experience, which Fried understood as ‘time both passing and to come, *simultaneously approaching and receding*’.⁶⁰ The endlessness in the literalist work, its ‘one thing after another’⁶¹, was evident in its attitude towards space. Eschewing rationalism and *a priori* systems, Donald Judd advocated ‘specific objects’, three-dimensional work positioned somewhere between painting and sculpture. Furthermore, for Judd, three dimensions obliterate the problem of literal space and illusionism because they ‘are real space’.⁶² Quick to do away with ‘a sculptural illusionism which converts one material into the signifier for another’⁶³, it was seminal to Judd that ‘Actual space is intrinsically more powerful and specific than paint on a flat surface’.⁶⁴ In an essay titled ‘Excursus: Some Modernist Painting’ Stanley Cavell argues that in his method of painting, his all-over trailing lines, Jackson Pollock discovered

⁵⁹ Barbara Rose, ‘ABC Art’, in *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology*, ed. by Gregory Battcock (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co, 1968), pp. 274 – 297 (p. 289).

⁶⁰ Fried, p. 167, original emphasis

⁶¹ Donald Judd, ‘Specific Objects’, in *The Complete Writings 1959-1975* (Halifax: The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1975) p. 184.

⁶² Judd, p. 184

⁶³ Krauss, p. 266

⁶⁴ Judd, p. 184

not exactly that a painting is flat, but that its flatness, together with its being of a limited extent, means that it is *totally* there, wholly open to you, absolutely in front of your eyes, of your eyes, as no other form of art is.⁶⁵

The fact that Cavell's reading of the consequences of flatness in Pollock's painting is in accordance with Fried's thoughts on modernist art is not surprising considering that Cavell and Fried acknowledge each other's contribution to their own work. However, I propose that reading Fried and Cavell in tandem will open up useful ways to think about Fried's use of the term theatricality.

Fried's idea on time as simultaneously approaching and receding reveals a thinking of temporality that spatialises time, considering it in terms of a solid thing that moves around on its own accord. I will come to this issue of shapes of time in the last section when discussing 1960s performance. For now it would be useful to consider how space and time seemed to be intimately connected for Fried. Fried claims that 'it is above all to the condition of painting and sculpture – the condition, that is, of existing in, indeed of evoking or constituting, a continuous and perpetual *present* – that the other contemporary modernist arts, most notably poetry and music, aspire'.⁶⁶ Fried notes that this is especially difficult for music which shares with theatre the convention that is duration and, furthermore, 'the physical circumstances of a concert closely resemble those of a theatrical performance'.⁶⁷ What Fried is suggesting here then is that the space is crucial in the experience, the darkened auditorium of theatre and concert halls being theatrical.

⁶⁵ Stanley Cavell, *The World Viewed: Reflections on the Ontology of Film* (New York: The Viking Press, 1971), p. 109, original emphasis.

⁶⁶ Fried, p. 167, original emphasis

⁶⁷ Fried, 172, n. 23

In fact, Fried contends: 'It may have been the desire for something like presentness that, at least to some extent, led Brecht to advocate a nonillusionistic theater'.⁶⁸ He goes on to note, however:

But just as the exposed lighting Brecht advocates has become merely another kind of theatrical convention (one, moreover, that often plays an important role in the presentation of literalist work, as the installation view of Judd's six-cube piece in the Dwan Gallery shows), it is not clear whether the handling of time Brecht calls for is tantamount to authentic presentness, or merely to another kind of "presence" – to the presentment of time itself as though it were some sort of literalist object.⁶⁹

In his essay on King Lear, 'Avoidance of Love', Cavell compares Shakespeare's mode of drama to music and points out how the notion of development in music that started with Monteverdi has two obvious facts; 'first, that one hears its directness; second, that one hears only what is happening now'.⁷⁰ For Cavell, 'perhaps it is this continuous presentness which we miss most in the difficulties of post-tonal music, more than its lack of tunes and harmony and pulse rhythm'.⁷¹ It is to be marked how Cavell associates presentness with music as well as theatre whereas Fried's use of the term is only linked to painting. Cavell continues:

It is as if dramatic poetry and tonal music... are made to imitate the simplest facts of life: that life is lived in time, that there is a now at which everything that happens happens, and a now at which for each man everything stops happening, and that what has happened is not here and now, and that what might have happened then and there will never happen then and there, and that what will happen is not here and now and yet may be settled by what is happening here and now in a way we cannot know or will not see here and now. The perception or attitude demanded in following this drama is one which demands a continuous attention to what is happening at each here and now, as if everything of significance is happening at this moment, while each thing that happens turns a leaf of time. I think of it as an experience of *continuous presentness*.⁷²

⁶⁸ Fried, 172, n. 23

⁶⁹ Fried, 172, n. 23

⁷⁰ Stanley Cavell, *Must We Mean What We Say? – A Book of Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976) p. 321.

⁷¹ Cavell, p. 352

⁷² Cavell, p. 321-2, emphasis added. Cavell's reference to music here is an interesting one and there could be further investigation into the relationship between musicality and time but the topic falls

Cavell's use of the term continuous presentness locates the tragedy of Shakespeare in the same category as modernist art, a moment of sublime time where *everything of significance is happening*. However, Cavell argues that in *King Lear* 'we are differently implicated'.⁷³ Placed into a world neither like or unlike ours, we are 'somehow participating in the proceedings – not listening, not watching, not overhearing, almost as if dreaming it'.⁷⁴ And yet, we are 'participating, as at a funeral or marriage or inauguration, confirming something; it could not happen without us'.⁷⁵

This, then, seems to imply that this mode of tragedy somehow demands us to be there since *it could not happen without us*. It awaits us just like, according to Fried, minimalist work does. Here it would appear that the term theatricality as that which refers to the situation of theatre is in fact present in both minimalism as well as modernism, since, following Cavell, everything that happens happens now and yet could not happen without its audience. Moreover, Cavell states that, 'A character is not, and cannot become, aware of us. Darkened, indoor theaters dramatize the fact that the audience is invisible'.⁷⁶ For Cavell, 'There is a fictional existence with a vengeance, and there is the theatricality which theater such as *King Lear* must overcome, is meant to overcome, shows the tragedy in failing to overcome'.⁷⁷ The way to overcome it is by acknowledging the other, by 'put[ting] ourselves in another's presence'.⁷⁸ This is done '[b]y revealing ourselves, by allowing ourselves

slightly outside of the scope of this chapter. In Chapter 4, however, I discuss Steven Reich and Philip Glass and their approaches to music and time.

⁷³ Cavell, p. 326

⁷⁴ Cavell, p. 326

⁷⁵ Cavell, p. 326

⁷⁶ Cavell, p. 332

⁷⁷ Cavell, p. 333

⁷⁸ Cavell, p. 333

to be seen'.⁷⁹ However, we cannot approach a character because 'they and we do not occupy the same space; there is no path from my location to his'.⁸⁰ However, we 'occupy the same time. And the time is always now; time is measured solely by what is now happening to them, for what they are doing now is all that is happening'.⁸¹ Therefore, we need to 'find the character's present'.⁸² 'When we do not', Cavell argues, 'when we keep ourselves in the dark, the consequence is that we convert the other into a character and make the world a stage for him'.⁸³

In this case theatricality appears as something that must be overcome by acknowledging another's presence by breaking the boundaries of darkened audience spaces. Theatricality, then, is something that confronts the audience as in fact Brechtian theatre does. Therefore, is not the kind of theatre both Cavell and Fried call theatrical the kind that shows everything at once, makes the space or the situation of the actual viewing disappear and does not account for the presence of the spectator in the way minimalist sculpture does? Nicholas Ridout argues that,

Fried offers an account of theatricality that stresses distanciation and interaction over illusion and absorption, suggesting, I think very helpfully (and in almost complete accordance with the thinking of Bertolt Brecht), that the prevalent notion that theatricality can subsist under conditions of illusionism is an historical misunderstanding of the form. One implication of Fried's account of theatricality that does not seem to have been followed through in this context is the possibility that the absorption he sees in modernist painting is the partner (rather than some kind of paradigmatic replacement) of theatrical realism. By this account, both modernist projects (realism and American abstract painting) seek to eliminate the spectator from the set-up, to hide the full extent of "the entire situation".⁸⁴

Similarly, in 'Excursus: Some Modernist Painting' Cavell speaks of a quality in painting after Pollock which he terms as 'openness achieved through

⁷⁹ Cavell, p. 333

⁸⁰ Cavell, p. 334

⁸¹ Cavell, p. 334

⁸² Cavell, p. 337

⁸³ Cavell, p. 334

⁸⁴ Nicholas Ridout, *Stage Fright, Animals, and Other Theatrical Problems* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 10.

instantaneousness'⁸⁵ which, for Cavell, 'is a way of characterizing the *candid*'.⁸⁶

The opposite trait of the candid is 'that it must occur independently of me or any audience, that it must be complete without me, in that sense *closed* to me'.⁸⁷ Cavell continues:

This is why candidness in acting was achieved by the actor's complete concentration within the character, absolutely denying any control of my awareness upon him. When theatrical conventions lost their naturalness and became matters of mutual complicity between actor and audience, then serious drama had to deny my control openly – by removing, say, any "character" for the actor to disappear into (Beckett), or by explicitly wedging the mutual consciousness of actor and audience between the actor and his character (Brecht).⁸⁸

This would seem to suggest that the conventions of natural theatre are indeed a partner of modernist painting, since in the experience of literal art, '[e]verything counts – not as part of the object, but as part of the situation in which its objecthood is established and on which that objecthood at least partly depends'.⁸⁹

The fact that everything counts in the situation in which literal art is experienced is evidenced, according to Fried, in Tony Smith's account of his drive on the unfinished New Jersey Turnpike in the early 1950s:

It was a dark night and there were no lights or shoulder markers, lines, railings, or anything at all except the dark pavement moving through the landscape of the flats, rimmed by hills in the distance, but punctuated by stacks, towers, fumes, and colored lights. This drive was a revealing experience. The road and much of the landscape was artificial, and yet it couldn't be called a work of art. On the other hand, it did something for me that art had never done. [...] I thought to myself, it ought to be clear that's the end of art. Most paintings look pretty pictorial after that. There's no way you can frame it, you just have to experience it.⁹⁰

⁸⁵ Cavell, *The World Viewed*, p. 111, original emphasis

⁸⁶ Cavell, p. 11

⁸⁷ Cavell, p. 11

⁸⁸ Cavell, p. 11

⁸⁹ Fried, p. 155

⁹⁰ Tony Smith, in Samuel Wagstaff, Jr., 'Talking with Tony Smith', in *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology*, ed. by Gregory Battcock (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co, 1968), pp. 381 – 387 (p. 386).

Smith's night drive on the endless road is like the endless, inexhaustible experience of 'literalist' or minimalist art, 'of being able to go on and on'.⁹¹ It does away with painting and anything pictorial and places the viewer in the middle of the situation, aware of her place. After all, there is no way of framing it; experience is everything.

For Fried, Smith's night drive, therefore, 'bears witness to theater's profound hostility to the arts and discloses, precisely in the absence of the object and in what takes its place, what might be called the theatricality of objecthood'.⁹² In effect, the presence in literalist art is like 'the silent presence of another *person*'.⁹³ Waiting for its audience, its presence is never full until the viewer enters the room.⁹⁴ In fact, not only does literalist art exist in time but, according to Fried, 'the experience in question *persists in time*'.⁹⁵ Its duration is endless, resulting in a presence which is not the presence, or presentness, of Modernist art but 'a kind of *stage presence*'.⁹⁶ Taking Judd's comment that the new art work only needs to be interesting, Fried opposes interest with conviction when he states that, 'the concept of interest implies temporality in the form of continuing attention directed at the object whereas the concept of conviction does not'.⁹⁷ The looping, which constantly but gently jolts the viewer out of her place, is in deep contrast to the modernist sculpture of Anthony Caro which Fried champions throughout the essay. Speaking of Caro's work Fried states:

It is this continuous and entire *presentness*, amounting, as it were, to the perpetual creation of itself, that one experiences as a kind of *instantaneousness*, as though if only one were infinitely more acute, a single

⁹¹ Fried, p. 165

⁹² Fried, p. 160

⁹³ Fried, p. 155, original emphasis

⁹⁴ Fried, p. 163

⁹⁵ Fried, p. 166, original emphasis

⁹⁶ Fried, p. 155, original emphasis

⁹⁷ Fried, p. 155

infinitely brief instant would be long enough to see everything, to experience the work in all its depth and fullness, to be forever convinced by it.⁹⁸

Here the modernist work convinces the viewer in an instant where everything is present at once.

Fried's argument is further complicated by employing such a historically contingent term as stage presence. Indeed, how does the notion of stage presence fit into Fried's thinking of absorption and conviction? In suggesting that Minimalist sculpture not only has the presence of a person but the presence of a stage performer who controls the space and situation, Fried seems to concur with the basic idea that, as Jane R. Goodall notes, 'Command over the time and space of performance marks out the performer with presence'.⁹⁹ Fried posits stage presence as a form of continuing attention and as an event that needs the presence of a viewer whereas conviction is a brief instant. However, as Patrice Pavis argues, 'To have presence' in theatrical parlance, is to know how to capture the attention of the public and make an impression'.¹⁰⁰ Pavis continues that, 'it is also to be endowed with a *je ne sais quoi* which triggers an *immediate* feeling of identification in the spectator, communicating a sense of living elsewhere and in an eternal present'.¹⁰¹ This definition of stage presence, then, would seem to correspond more with Fried's idea of Modernist painting's conviction, or absorption, which is instantaneous.

Furthermore, Fried's emphasis on the notions of theatricality and stage presence carries the suggestion of the added notion of illusion. This is despite Judd's call to get rid of 'sculptural illusionism' and the fact that presence can often be thought of as perhaps the only real, or non-illusionistic, aspect of theatre or

⁹⁸ Fried, p. 155, original emphasis

⁹⁹ Jane R. Goodall, *Stage Presence* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), p. 15.

¹⁰⁰ Patrice Pavis, *Dictionnaire du Theatre* (Paris: Messidor, 1987), p. 301.

¹⁰¹ Pavis, p. 301, emphasis added

performance. Finally, quoting Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, who in the early 19th century stated: ‘an actor standing alone on stage should remember that he is called to fill out the stage with his presence’,¹⁰² Goodall contends that experience of stage presence is in effect the experience of the stage as ‘full’.¹⁰³ But considering the work of Morris and Judd, for example, it would seem that rather than filling a space the Minimalist sculptures were aiming at leaving an empty space where the viewer then becomes self-aware.

3 Present and future in the work of Andy Warhol and Barnett Newman

If there is one figure emerging in the 1960s who could be said to embody the decade’s preoccupation with time, it is Andy Warhol. His mass production of silk screens, his fascination with consumer culture as evidenced by the subject matter (Coca Cola bottles, Heinz soup cans) of his prints and the fast changing world of celebrities and fame find their opposite in Warhol’s early films and screen tests which reveal an obsessive attempt to stop time or at least to slow it down. Warhol’s statements about his relationship to time were, as with all his statements, contradictory. On the one hand Warhol seemed to race through time to get to where the future will be. In his autobiography from 1975 Warhol states:

I really do live for the future, because when I’m eating a box of candy, I can’t wait to taste the last piece. I don’t even taste any of the other pieces, I just want to finish and throw the box away.¹⁰⁴

On the other hand Warhol seemed to relish any opportunity to stop rushing forward and to capture everything there was to capture. His early films are nothing if not

¹⁰² Quoted in Goodall, p. 16

¹⁰³ Goodall, p. 16

¹⁰⁴ Andy Warhol, *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol (From A to B and Back Again)* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975), p. 113.

meticulous recordings of time's passage. Peter Wollen contends that it was Warhol's belief 'in a certain kind of literalism'¹⁰⁵ that made him worried about losing moments when changing the reel in his camera during the filming of *Sleep* in 1963. The film features the poet John Giorno sleeping in his own bed. Warhol filmed hundreds of feet of footage from different angles which was subsequently edited by Sarah Dalton, then a sixteen-year-old student. Some of the reels are shown in their full length while other ones are made of repetitions of short sections.¹⁰⁶ The end result is a 16mm film appearing 'to be one continuous night of sleep'¹⁰⁷ running five hours and twenty-one minutes.

Warhol had already experimented with the form in his previous film *Kiss* from 1963 where several couples kiss for three minutes each, the film lasting fifty minutes in total. The film, which was shot at twenty-four frames per second, was projected at sixteen frames per second, as were all Warhol's silent films. This resulted in, as Stephen Koch remarks, 'an unchanging but barely perceptible slow motion'.¹⁰⁸ The mesmerising and hallucinatory effect of the slowing down is a play between literal and represented time. As Lee notes, the films 'are one and the same time both *representation* and *experience* of duration, both subject and object'.¹⁰⁹ Perhaps the most accurate and somewhat excruciating example is *Empire* from 1964. Shot by Jonas Mekas from the forty-fourth floor of the Time-Life building, the film features the Empire State Building from early evening onwards for eight hours. Nothing much happens: dusk turns into night, the building is illuminated, a

¹⁰⁵ Peter Wollen, 'Raiding the Icebox', in *Andy Warhol: Film Factory*, ed. by Michael O'Pray (London: British Film Institute, 1989), pp. 14 – 27 (p. 25).

¹⁰⁶ Watson, p. 134

¹⁰⁷ Watson, p. 133

¹⁰⁸ Stephen Koch, *Stargazer: The Life, World and Films of Andy Warhol* (Marion Boyars Publishers, 1991), p. 39.

¹⁰⁹ Lee, p. 280, original emphasis

pigeon flies by, and at one point Warhol's reflection can be seen on the window. Of course, the absence of action is relative. In fact, a lot happens if one pays attention. Lee argues that 'the building is both actor and clock; and much as the business of clock watching, it produces an anxiety around what may or may not happen, what may or may not occur in the not-too-distant future'.¹¹⁰ And it is the film's 'demands upon our patience'¹¹¹ that produces its pull, if not excitement. Its sixteen frames per second projection speed, Koch argues, 'is a technique that faintly dislocates the pressure of real time, extends it, and makes it just slightly Other, in a lush, subtle experience of movement and time possible only in film'.¹¹²

Lee contends that 'In its peculiar tracking of time in (fictive) real time, *Empire* offers a perversely meditative experience, fidgeting continuously between moments of sheer restlessness, boredom, and pronounced anticipation'.¹¹³ Warhol once said:

I can see a murder mystery one night, and then see it a second time the next night and still not know who did it until the very last minute. [...] I guess time is actually the best plot – the suspense of seeing if you'll remember.¹¹⁴

Empire would seem to be the perfect film for a person like Warhol, then, who could watch the whole thing in anticipation. In reality, Warhol himself would leave only a few minutes into screenings of the film because he found it irredeemably boring.¹¹⁵

Lee sees *Empire* as 'a satiric litmus test for the distracted masses' who were at the time also confronted with what McLuhan described as the "mosaic mesh" of the television.¹¹⁶ *Empire*'s duration was the ultimate experience of making sense of ever increasing fragmentation of 1960s culture. Warhol's silent films are a canny partner

¹¹⁰ Lee, p. 284

¹¹¹ Lee, p. 284

¹¹² Koch, p. 43

¹¹³ Lee, p. 287

¹¹⁴ Warhol, p. 117

¹¹⁵ Lee, p. 287

¹¹⁶ Lee, p. 287

to his screen tests which comment more overtly on the growing television culture, especially the world of fame and celebrities. Made between 1964 and 1966 and totalling 472 films, the screen tests are three minute silent films of Warhol's friends and acquaintances posing for the camera as if auditioning for a film. And while some of the sitters pose like professionals either silently or while engaging in talking or singing, others become more and more uncomfortable as the minutes roll on and their fidgeting becomes evident. The early portraits of Barbara Rose and John Giorno, for example, are almost completely without any movement. They are also carefully lit and thus resemble studio photography rather than moving images. On the other hand there are films with more performative qualities, such as Donyale Luna 'demonstrating her modelling moves' and Harry Smith 'making Eskimo string figures'.¹¹⁷ When their three minutes are up the camera simply stops rolling. With their inaction, stillness and lack of a climax the screen tests follow the rhetoric of the long silent films. Their duration, however, is considerably shorter and precise. The three minutes are the shorter version of the fifteen minutes of limelight Warhol predicted everyone will have in his perhaps most well-known statement.

The statement itself is an interesting illustration of the cultural context. Reva Wolf points out that Warhol's statement 'in the future, everyone will be world-famous for fifteen minutes' refers to the length of several television and radio programmes which remained fifteen minutes long until 1963.¹¹⁸ Warhol's use of media and pop culture as his frame of reference for measuring time and his understanding of celebrity culture as the production of goods (celebrities) for instant

¹¹⁷ Callie Angell, *Andy Warhol Screen Tests: The Films of Andy Warhol Catalogue Raisonné, Vol 1* (New York: Abrams and Whitney Museum of American Art, 2006), p. 16.

¹¹⁸ Reva Wolf, 'Introduction: Through the Looking-Glass', in *I'll Be Your Mirror: The Selected Andy Warhol Interviews*, ed. by Kenneth Goldsmith (New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 2004), pp. xi – xxxi (p. xxv).

consumption would seem to follow the logic of just-in-time production. In some ways, then, Warhol's work reflects the logics of both Toffler and MacLuhan. The speeding up of production and of consumption seems to be reflected in Warhol's practice which he saw as a factory churning out art for mass consumption (although for celebrity prices). His impatience with the present and fascination with the future and immediacy (to have everything now and to throw away the chocolate box) is a counterpart of flexible accumulation. However, I will come to argue that Warhol's work also questions that logic and it does so perhaps without really meaning to. But first I examine some of the similarities between the work of Warhol and Newman to examine how they responded to the same problems with different tools.

In his writing on a trip he made to Akron, Ohio in 1949, Newman describes his experience of the Miamisburg mound and the Fort Ancient and Newark earthworks in which he finds 'the self-evident nature of the artistic act, its utter simplicity'.¹¹⁹ The trip was a turning point of sorts for Newman as it helped him to articulate the questions he had been exploring in his work. Questioning the emphasis on space in art, Newman declares his interest: 'The concern with space bores me. I insist on my experiences of sensations of time'.¹²⁰ In his article 'The New American Painting' in 1959 Lawrence Alloway wrote about how Newman's and Pollock's early big pictures 'create space by occupying it literally'.¹²¹ Michael Auping suggests that 'the most significant and ambitious contribution of postwar American art resides in an evolution in which form is subordinated to a monumental sense of

¹¹⁹ Barnett Newman, 'Ohio, 1949', in *Barnett Newman: Selected Writings and Interviews*, ed. by John P. O'Neill (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), pp. 174-5 (p. 174).

¹²⁰ Newman, p. 175

¹²¹ Lawrence Alloway, 'The New American 'Painting'', in *Art International*, Vol. 3, Nos.3-4, 1959, pp. 22-26 (p. 22).

place'.¹²² However, what Newman was looking for in his vast paintings of monochrome fields and the famous zip was an experience of time, of being enveloped. Newman gave the name 'zip' to the stripes that inhabit his monochrome canvasses. Most often running down the canvas vertically, the zips began with *Moment* in 1946. Previous stripes in Newman's earlier paintings start from the top of the canvas but either stop in the middle (*Untitled*, 1946) or narrow down as they reach the bottom of the canvas (*The Beginning*, 1946).

However, it took two more years before the significance of the stripes became apparent to Newman. Painting *Onement I* in 1948 was 'a founding moment' and Newman spent several months contemplating the change the painting was asserting on his art. The simplicity of the deep red colour plane together with one central stripe was a powerful device for making the viewer present. Although the emphasis on space in the abstract expressionist paintings was also discussed with reference to Newman's work, Newman certainly wrote more extensively than other artists or critics on the issue of time. In his notes on his Ohio trip, Newman writes: 'Only time can be felt in private. Space is a common property. Only time is personal, a private experience. ... Each person must feel it for himself'.¹²³ As Richard Shiff argues, Newman considered time to be 'a sensory and psychological phenomenon best understood through an artist's experience rather than through the scientist's analysis, the philosopher's logic, or the historian's rational interpretation'.¹²⁴ Newman did not see himself as 'a painter of ideas'.¹²⁵ Irving

¹²² Michael Auping, 'Beyond the Sublime', in *Abstract Expressionism: The Critical Developments*, ed. by Michael Auping (London: Thames and Hudson, 1987), pp. 146 – 166 (p. 146).

¹²³ Newman, p. 175

¹²⁴ Richard Shiff, 'Newman's Time', in *Reconsidering Barnett Newman*, ed. by Melissa Ho (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2005), pp. 161-179 (p. 163).

¹²⁵ Irving Sandler, *The Triumph of American Painting: A History of Abstract Expressionism* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), p. 185.

Sandler argues that ‘the effect of his color-fields is not intellectual but one of an engulfing chromatic sensation whose immediacy inhibits cerebration’.¹²⁶ But unlike the paintings of other abstract expressionists such as Pollock, Willem de Kooning, and Mark Rothko each of whom, according to Meyer Schapiro, ‘seeks an absolute in which the receptive viewer can lose himself’,¹²⁷ Newman wanted the viewer (and the painter) ‘to become self-aware’.¹²⁸

In his exploration of the idea of time in his art, Newman comes very close to Fried’s idea of the total situation. Unlike his Modernist and Abstract Expressionist contemporaries, Newman wanted his paintings to include the beholder, to make them a bodily presence within the work. He sought to be rid of given spatial abstraction and investigated non-picturesque places that could not be captured by formal representation. Those places included open expanses of prairie, the Northern tundra and conditions of thick, impenetrable snow or fog known as whiteout. For Newman, such empty expanses offered a situation where ‘You’re not looking at anything. But you yourself become very visible’.¹²⁹ For Newman, *Onement I* did exactly that. The sensation of presence that the viewer should feel when looking at his paintings was an important idea for Newman. He insisted that the best place to exhibit his massive paintings would be in a small gallery. ‘At his first one-man show’, Michael Auping notes, ‘he had a note pinned to the wall asking visitors to stand between six and seven feet away from the paintings, a particularly short distance for viewing such large works’.¹³⁰ In instructing the viewer on where to stand and how to view the work, Newman was actively thinking about the body of

¹²⁶ Sandler, p. 185

¹²⁷ Meyer Schapiro, ‘The Younger American Artists of Today’, in *The Listener* (London), 26 January 1959, pp. 146-147 (p. 146).

¹²⁸ Shiff, in Ho, p. 174

¹²⁹ Newman, quoted in Shiff, in Ho, p. 166

¹³⁰ Auping, p. 151

the beholder, in fact in accordance with later concerns in Minimalist work. The viewer is part of the work and its duration.

It was in the late 1950s that Newman finally found his fame, or when the art audience found Newman. He had gone unnoticed to a large degree until his 1958 solo show at Bennington College in Vermont. His subsequent exhibition in New York in 1959 brought him, as Sarah K. Rich contends, ‘more serious attention from critics’.¹³¹ It also made younger artists take notice. For example, Robert Smithson has acknowledged how his work from the late 1950s ‘grew out of Barnett Newman’.¹³² Richard Serra noted of Newman’s paintings:

They’re great when you have to walk by them and immerse yourself in the divisions of their spaces... Then time becomes a factor: the physical time it takes you to see it and walk across it.¹³³

It is perhaps Newman’s comparison of ‘the “visual experience of the painting” to an “encounter with a person, a living being”’¹³⁴ which illustrates Newman’s influence and the subsequent similarities between Newman’s work with its focus on presence and the work of the Minimalists. Shiff argues that, ‘Common opinion in 1969 was that Newman had fathered a reductive or minimalist look in large-scale painting and sculpture’,¹³⁵ like those of Frank Stella and Donald Judd. It is here that one finds interesting similarities between Newman’s and Warhol’s work.

On reseeing Warhol’s silent films, Jonas Mekas noted on meaning in Warhol’s work:

¹³¹ Rich, p. 96

¹³² Robert Smithson, ‘Interview with Robert Smithson or the Archives of American Art/Smithsonian Institute’, in *The Writings of Robert Smithson*, ed. by Nancy Holt (New York: New York University Press, 1979), pp. 139-142, p. 140.

¹³³ Richard Serra quoted in Michael Kimmelman, *Portraits: Talking with Artists at the Met, the Modern, the Louvre and Elsewhere* (New York: Random House, 1988), p. 60.

¹³⁴ Newman, quoted in Richard Shiff, ‘Whiteout: The Not-Influence Newman Effect’, in *Barnett Newman*, ed. by Ann Temkin, (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2003), pp. 76 – 111 (p. 82).

¹³⁵ Shiff., p. 84

Yes, the duration, that's the word. There are certain ideas, feelings, certain contents which are structured in time. The literal meanings you can spell out through climaxes... But the real meaning, the one that is beyond the literal meaning, can be caught only through structuring time. That applies equally to feelings and thoughts.¹³⁶

One might suggest that this quote from Mekas could easily apply to Newman as well. Subject matter was important to Newman and his abstractions were not mere formalism but one had to arrive at their meaning, arriving referring here of course to the duration it takes to *come to* something. In Newman's case that was often the sense of the moment, the presence of oneself. Newman's zip was a vital element in facilitating 'a sensation of 'presence' in the viewer'.¹³⁷ In her essay on the function and naming of Newman's zip, Rich argues:

Painted in hues that would allow them to be seen less as figures against ground and more as seams conjoining disparate fields, these stripes flattened the pictorial space of the painting, calling attention to the immediate surface of the canvas and to viewers' direct engagement with it.¹³⁸

Warhol's and Newman's meanings could be said to be accessible on the surface.

Warhol famously said: 'If you want to know all about Andy Warhol, just look at the surface: of my paintings and films and me, and there I am. There's nothing behind it'.¹³⁹ Donna De Salvo argues that Warhol 'understood the implications of surface in contemporary culture. ... The idea is to sell the sizzle rather than the meat. One can say that what Warhol painted was not the thing itself, but the feeling that it evoked; not the image, but the afterimage'.¹⁴⁰ And it is an intriguing emphasis on surface that governs the viewing of Warhol's silent films and screen tests.

¹³⁶ Jonas Mekas, 'Notes after Reseeing the Movies of Andy Warhol', in *Andy Warhol: Film Factory*, ed. by Michael O'Pray (London: British Film Institute, 1989), pp. 28 - 41 (p. 33).

¹³⁷ Rich, p. 99

¹³⁸ Rich, p. 99

¹³⁹ Warhol, in Gretchen Berg, 'Nothing to Lose: An Interview with Andy Warhol', in *Andy Warhol: Film Factory*, ed. by Michael O'Pray (London: British Film Institute, 1989), pp. 54 - 61 (p. 56).

¹⁴⁰ Donna De Salvo, 'Afterimage' in *Andy Warhol: Perspective*, ed. by Heiner Bastian (London: Tate Publishing, 2001), pp. 47 - 51 (p. 27-48).

However, unlike much of Warhol's work before his silent films, this is not the stuff of conveyor belt production and seriality. In their insistence on slowness and unproductivity the films demand attention and like Newman's paintings, make one visible. As Lee suggests in her reading of the work of On Kawara, one can find here 'an ethic of slowness and commitment'.¹⁴¹ Lee sees this slowness as enacting

an ethic of surviving, strategizing, under the sign of postmodernism, however much without fanfare, with a staunch diligence to the Everyday that runs counter to the seeming inexhaustibility of this present.¹⁴²

And yet, no one ever really sees all of it, all of the eight hours of *Empire* or the five hours of *Sleep*. Although the screenings of *Empire* in the 1960s were sold out sometimes, people spent their time going in and out of the theatre, spending more time in the lobby talking to their friends and occasionally going in to see a snippet of the (in)action. It became a back drop to a night out. As Lee argues, *Empire* 'stands as an allegory for time located elsewhere'.¹⁴³ In that way *Empire* and all of Warhol's early films occupy ground somewhere between resisting the time of production and yet commenting on and succumbing to its fragmentation. Indeed, all his work discussed here seems to be closest to the logic of Toffler and MacLuhan, to a throw-away society and the pervasiveness of media, but also inverting that logic while not quite consciously aiming to.

Newman and Warhol, I would argue, addressed similar concerns but used different approaches and tools to do so. Indeed, as similar as the effects Newman and Warhol achieved were, their methods could not have been more different. For Newman it was imperative that he himself made his own art 'from beginning to

¹⁴¹ Lee, p. 307

¹⁴² Lee, p. 307

¹⁴³ Lee, p. 287

end'.¹⁴⁴ He stated: 'There's something about painting which I don't possibly feel I can turn over actually to anybody else'.¹⁴⁵ Warhol, on the other hand, not only made his work with machines but had several assistants when doing both prints and film. In fact, Warhol famously expressed a desire to be a machine, it would seem both in the sense of entering 'a world of pure seriality and standardisation'¹⁴⁶ that Wollen suggests and in the sense of what Wolf refers to as actors being the machines of the film studio.¹⁴⁷ Wolf notes how Marilyn Monroe once said: '[an] actor is not a machine, no matter how much they want to say you are...This is supposed to be an art form, not just a manufacturing establishment.'¹⁴⁸ For Warhol it seemed to be important to think of art as nothing but a manufacturing establishment. The machine-like quality of his working methods makes apparent Marcuse's administrative logic and thus questions the valorisation of the individual artist and authentic subjectivity. For Marcuse, 'The artistic alienation has become as functional as the architecture of the new theatres and concert halls in which it is performed. And here too, the rational and the evil are inseparable'.¹⁴⁹ However, it could be argued that it was the same logic that partook in the circulation of meaning in Newman's work. In her discussion of how Newman ended up calling his signature stripes "zips", Rich contends that 'Newman deployed an idiom appropriate to the art world and popular culture of the 1960s'.¹⁵⁰ Newman began to call his vertical stripes zips during the mid-1960s. Drawing attention to the onomatopoeic

¹⁴⁴ Newman quoted in Carol C. Mancusi-Ungaro, 'The Paintings of Barnett Newman: "Involved Intuition on the Highest Level"', in *Barnett Newman: A Catalogue Raisonné*, ed. by Ellyn Childs Allison (London: Yale University Press, 2004), pp. 116 – 142 (p. 117).

¹⁴⁵ Newman, p. 117

¹⁴⁶ Wollen, p. 21

¹⁴⁷ Wolf, p. xxviii

¹⁴⁸ Quoted in Wolf, p. xxviii

¹⁴⁹ Marcuse, p. 65

¹⁵⁰ Rich, p. 100

nature of the word and its similarity with the ‘bangs’ and other short words used in cartoon Pop art like that of Roy Lichtenstein, Rich argues that Newman’s

development of the term zip was initially intended to convey a metaphysical message through a vocabulary spoken in a new art world. It was a means of engaging Pop art on its own turf, with the primary intent of refuting its popular superficiality and commercial connotations.¹⁵¹

However, as Rich notes, the term zip ‘may appear problematic as a proper name because the term carries connotations and names a class of objects rather than a singular entity’.¹⁵² Like Campbell’s soup it became a brand name guaranteeing the consumer consistent quality. Thus, Rich argues, ‘Newman produced a term that compromised the very operations of presence he valued’.¹⁵³ Or in Marcuse’s words, ‘they [have] become cogs in a culture-machine which remakes their content’.¹⁵⁴

4 End of endlessness: Beginning performance

As we have seen, it was the body, whether the embodied encounter with a presence of another person Fried found in Minimalism or the viewer’s body made visible in front of Newman’s sublime and similarly Warhol’s ‘bored’ body, which came to mediate temporal concerns in the art of the 1960s. I will now focus on thinking about the body that emerged in the performance of that decade. Morris’ thinking about sculpture and its forms had begun to take shape in the early 1960s and was developed in tandem with his performance work. In 1961 Morris was given seven minutes of performance time with the Judson Dance Theater. His performance was a hollow column which stood still for the first three and a half minutes. It was then made to topple and lay on the floor for another three and a half minutes. Morris’ 1965 performance *Site* involved him moving and manipulating white plywood

¹⁵¹ Rich, p. 111

¹⁵² Rich, p. 111

¹⁵³ Rich, p. 111

¹⁵⁴ Marcuse, p. 65

screens and gradually revealing the artist Carolee Schneemann reclining on a makeshift bed as Manet's Olympia. In her phenomenological reading of the decade's sculpture, Rosalind Krauss argues that theatre or performance became a way to re-position or re-plot sculpture. The kind of work such as Morris' minimalist, unitary shapes are 'central to the reformulation of the sculptural enterprise: what the object is, how we know it, and what it means to 'know it''.¹⁵⁵ And 'knowing it' in phenomenological terms means that one is not capable of reconstituting the object 'regardless of one's own position'.¹⁵⁶ Indeed, 'meaning arises only from *this* position and *this* perspective'.¹⁵⁷ Thus, Minimalism used theatricality and performance in order to 'produce an operational divide between the sculptural object and the preconceptions about knowledge that the viewer might have both about it and himself'.¹⁵⁸

Krauss' positioning of performance as ancillary to sculpture might tell us something about performance's place in the historiography of art. The artists whose work Krauss discusses as performance are mostly visual artists who use performance as a way to solve a sculptural problem. That is to say, or Krauss seems to say, performance is only useful when employed as a tool in the process of making visual art. However, the artists I have chosen to focus on here are the same that Krauss analyses, Robert Morris and Bruce Nauman. In choosing them I not only wish to point to how performance has been figured in the hierarchy of art history but through focusing on the work of Nauman and Morris in tandem with Yvonne Rainer I wish to present a useful meeting point which highlights the intertwining issues and concerns in different art forms. For Morris performance seemed to be a way of

¹⁵⁵ Krauss, p. 242

¹⁵⁶ Krauss, p. 240, emphasis added

¹⁵⁷ Krauss, p. 240, original emphasis

¹⁵⁸ Krauss, p. 240

finding an angle to approach his sculpture at later on whereas for Nauman performance led his later work to use the medium of film. As for Rainer, sculpture in some instances became a way to reconfigure dance (reversing somewhat Krauss' trajectory). This nexus of overcoming and dealing with the issues is an important instance as it exemplifies the genealogy of making time visible.

While studying at the University of California at Davis during the mid-1960s, Nauman started using performance as well as video and film. One of his earliest performances in 1965 involved Nauman, as he describes it, 'standing with my back to the wall for about forty-five seconds or a minute, leaning out from the wall, then bending at the waist, squatting, sitting, and finally lying down'.¹⁵⁹ This sequence of seven different positions was then repeated four times, 'standing away from the wall, facing the wall, then facing left and facing right'.¹⁶⁰ Lasting for half an hour, the performance reconfigures sculpture by using the body as material, a central feature of Nauman's work and one born out of necessity as that was often the only material Nauman found in his studio. The performance was made into a video in 1968 and called *Wall-Floor Positions*. Another performance from the same year was entitled *Manipulating a Fluorescent Tube* and involved, as Nauman explains, 'using my body as one element and the light as another, treating them as equivalent and just making shapes'.¹⁶¹ Also later made into a film, the performance establishes interesting connections between the work of Nauman and Morris as it 'articulate[s] the artist's deepest concerns about art as a durable form of labor and the implication

¹⁵⁹ Bruce Nauman, in Willoughby Sharp, 'Nauman Interview', in *Arts Magazine* 44, (March 1970), pp. 22 – 27, reprinted in *Please Pay Attention Please: Bruce Nauman's Words*, ed. by Janet Kraynak, (London: The MIT Press, 2005), pp. 111 – 130 (p. 122).

¹⁶⁰ Nauman, p. 122

¹⁶¹ Nauman, p. 123

of the body in the execution of art'.¹⁶² Furthermore, around the same time that Morris was performing *Site*, Nauman made a film *Manipulating the T Bar* where he 'goes through a series of manipulations of two long plumber pipes in the form of a T'.¹⁶³ Examining the relationship between object and body both artists explore the qualities of time in the experience of art. Many of Nauman's videos and films involve the artist taking up an activity in the solitude of his work place. Film and video works such as *Stamping in the Studio* (1968), *Walking in an Exaggerated Manner around the Perimeter of a Square* (1967-68) and *Bouncing in the Corner, No 1* (1968) present the artist engaging in simple activities like stamping or in more choreographed exercises like walking carefully along a square. But rather than seeing himself as a sculptor using dance, Nauman considered himself as solving a dance problem:

...I guess I thought of what I was doing sort of as dance because I was familiar with some of the things that [Merce] Cunningham had done and some other dancers, where you can take any simple movement and make it into a dance, just by presenting it as a dance.¹⁶⁴

The performance activities in Nauman's films and videos examine 'the kinds of tension that arise when you try to balance and can't. Or do something for a long time and get tired'.¹⁶⁵

For Nauman, his films and videotapes constituted either performances or a record of a performance.¹⁶⁶ Sometimes a solitary performance turned into a video

¹⁶² Robert Riley, 'Bruce Nauman's Philosophical and Material Explorations in Film and Video', in *A Rose Has No Teeth: Bruce Nauman in the 1960s*, ed. by Constance M. Lewallen, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), pp. 171 – 192, (p. 182).

¹⁶³ Constance M. Lewallen, 'A Rose Has No Teeth', in *A Rose Has No Teeth: Bruce Nauman in the 1960s*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), pp. 7 – 118 (p. 38).

¹⁶⁴ Nauman, in Lorraine Sciarra, 'Bruce Nauman' [1972], in *Please Pay Attention Please: Bruce Nauman's Words*, ed. by Janet Kraynak, (London: The MIT Press, 2005) , pp. 155 - 171, (p. 166).

¹⁶⁵ Nauman, in Willoughby Sharp, 'Interview with Bruce Nauman', in *Avalanche 2* (Winter 1971), pp. 22 – 31, reprinted in *Please Pay Attention Please: Bruce Nauman's Words*, ed. by Janet Kraynak, (London: The MIT Press, 2005) , pp. 133 - 154, (p. 142).

¹⁶⁶ Nauman, p. 138

got turned into a performance again as in the case of *Bouncing in the Corner* which Nauman performed with Meredith Monk and his wife Judy Nauman at the ‘Anti-Illusion’ exhibition in 1969 at the Whitney Museum in New York. One objective of Nauman’s work was how to make sculpture and video meet. For Nauman, one of the first successful pieces to do so was his *Performance Corridor* in 1969. The sculpture is a corridor made of two screen walls placed so that the remaining space between them is very narrow. The viewer walks down the corridor and approaching the end sees her back on a television screen moving away. The previous year Nauman had made a video entitled *Walk with Contrapposto* where he walks down a similarly narrow corridor swinging his hips. Although *Performance Corridor* was dependent on the viewer to realise it as a piece of work, it was important to Nauman that the situation was ‘as limiting as possible’¹⁶⁷ and that the viewer could not ‘make their own performance out of [his] art’.¹⁶⁸ Janet Kraynak argues that what the restrictions of the situation and the fact that the corridor was measured by the width of Nauman’s swaying hips meant was that ‘the artist’s performance is essentially repeated by the viewer – his/her actions physically limited by the confines of the space’.¹⁶⁹ Kraynak goes on to argue that,

the *Corridor*’s meaning issues not from an individual act of bodily intervention, performed by the viewer in the presence of the artwork, but from a compression of many moments: the past traces of Nauman’s ‘original’ performance; their repetition in video; and their present and future reiterations by the audience.¹⁷⁰

Thinking of the performance as a repetition of layers added on by different ‘subjects’ is possibly a powerful mechanism for reconfiguring the temporal in this

¹⁶⁷ Nauman, in Sharp, ‘Nauman Interview’, p. 113

¹⁶⁸ Nauman, p. 113

¹⁶⁹ Janet Kraynak, ‘Bruce Nauman’s Words’, in *Please Pay Attention Please: Bruce Nauman’s Words*, (London: The MIT Press, 2005), pp. 1 – 46, (p. 28).

¹⁷⁰ Kraynak, p. 28

case. It points to an endlessness and yet requires an active participation to keep it going.

A certain sense of on-goingness or endurance is a key component in all of Nauman's early films and videotapes. Whether three minutes or an hour in duration, they are all meant to run repeatedly and uninterrupted. For Nauman it was important that 'one should be able to come in at any time and nothing would change'.¹⁷¹ Four films in particular align Nauman's concerns over endlessness with those earlier presented in Warhol's work. All made in 1969, *Black Balls*, *Bouncing Balls*, *Gauze* and *Pulling Mouth* were shot with an industrial high-speed camera. The result when played in normal speed is slow motion where nothing seems to move at all. According to Nauman, 'you sort of notice the thing is different from time to time'.¹⁷² Running for about ten minutes, the films consist of repetitive actions in extreme close-up, such as putting black make up on testicles, stroking or bouncing testicles, pulling gauze out of the mouth and making faces. By slowing down time, the films turn performance into an endless loop situated somewhere in between photography and sculpture.

In her practice Yvonne Rainer was striving to make her dance more akin to sculpture. She notes:

I remember thinking that dance was at a disadvantage in relation to sculpture in that the spectator could spend as much time as he required to examine a sculpture, walk around it and so forth – but a dance movement – because it happened in time – vanished as soon as it was executed.¹⁷³

In response to this need Rainer created a solo called *The Bells* which was performed at the Living Theater in 1961. In it she repeated the same seven movements for eight

¹⁷¹ Nauman, in Sharp, 'Interview with Bruce Nauman', p. 146

¹⁷² Nauman, p. 138

¹⁷³ Yvonne Rainer quoted in Barbara Rose, 'ABC Art', in *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology*, ed. by Gregory Battcock (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co, 1968), pp. 274 – 297 (p. 290).

minutes. She notes: ‘It was not exact repetition, as the sequence of the movements kept changing. They also underwent changes through being repeated in different directions – in a sense allowing the spectator to ‘walk around it’’.¹⁷⁴ Rainer was at the time looking for new movement and found it in task-based activities which produced a pedestrian quality of movement and was focused on the real time of the body. She stated: ‘What is seen is a control that seems geared to the actual time it takes the actual weight of the body to go through the prescribed motions, rather than an adherence to an imposed ordering of time’.¹⁷⁵ Her 1965 performance *Parts of Some Sextets* was a piece for 10 performers and a pile of twelve mattresses. It consisted of movement like running and walking, still formations of people, tasks like taking mattresses off the pile one by one as well as more choreographed phrases.

The performance was structured by placing the different activities on a chart that had a vertical axis for the thirty-one choices of movement material and eighty-four horizontal units for thirty second intervals of time. Rainer then scattered marks on each crossing of material and a time unit so that some actions could be performed by several people at the same time and the same activity could be repeated. Carrie Lambert-Beatty argues that in this crossing of the systematic and randomness ‘time is conceived as a strip or a linear container’,¹⁷⁶ time as something to be filled rather than time generated by activity.¹⁷⁷ Thinking of time as a structure was omnipresent in the 1960s and as Lambert-Beatty points out, one sees it in ‘Andy Warhol’s *Screen*

¹⁷⁴ Rainer, p. 280

¹⁷⁵ Yvonne Rainer, ‘A Quasi Survey of Some “Minimalist” Tendencies in the Quantitatively Minimal Dance Activity midst the Plethora, or an Analysis of Trio A’, in *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology*, ed. by Gregory Battcock (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co, 1968), pp. 263 - 273 (p. 270).

¹⁷⁶ Carrie Lambert-Beatty, *Being Watched: Yvonne Rainer and the 1960s* (London: MIT Press, 2008), p. 91.

¹⁷⁷ We will see a similar distinction between linear containers and real time (or time generated by activity) in Chapter 4.

Tests and many other experiments throughout this period determined by the linear/temporal limits of a reel of film or videotape'.¹⁷⁸ John Cage's work had already displayed a similar way of thinking about time during his earlier works as he emphasised attuning to different modes of perception and thus bringing in the immediate environment. His 1952 composition *4'33* in its strictly marked-out durational structure, three movements for an orchestra who do not play a single note, the composition is, as Lambert-Beatty notes, 'a temporal unit' 'filled and then refilled in every performance'.¹⁷⁹

Similarly, some of the *Happenings* by Cage, Robert Rauschenberg, David Tudor and Merce Cunningham, which must be taken into account when talking about contributions towards thinking or theorising about time in this period, were made up of, what were called, compartments, which were sequences of time filled with predetermined, although chance-operated, material. As Michael Kirby elucidates:

Compartment structure is based on the arrangement and contiguity of theatrical units that are completely self-contained and hermetic. No information is passed from one discrete theatrical unit – or 'compartment' – to another. The compartments may be arranged sequentially...or simultaneously...¹⁸⁰

Allan Kaprow's *18 Happenings in 6 Parts* which was presented in 1959 at the Reuben Gallery in New York is an example of just such structure. The gallery space was 'subdivided into compartments; and every sequence of events occurred at a specific moment'.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁸ Lambert-Beatty, p. 91

¹⁷⁹ Lambert-Beatty, p. 91

¹⁸⁰ Michael Kirby, *Happenings: An Illustrated Anthology*, (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin and Company Limited, 1965), p. 13, original emphasis.

¹⁸¹ Richard Kostelanetz, 'A Conversation with Allan Kaprow', in *The Theatre of Mixed Means: An Introduction to Happenings, Kinetic Environments, and Other Mixed-Means Performances* (New York: The Dial Press, Inc., 1968), pp. 100-132 (p. 110).

Considering these different structures, the compartments in Happenings, the linear containers being filled and refilled, and the looping repetition seen in both Morris' sculpture and his performance work, what becomes apparent are what George Kubler terms as 'manifold shapes of time'.¹⁸² Important to the thinking of such artists as Morris and Robert Smithson, Kubler, an architectural historian, argues in his 1962 book *The Shape of Time: Remarks on the History of Things*: 'The aim of the historian, regardless of his specialty in erudition, is to portray time'.¹⁸³ Furthermore, Kubler contends, the historian 'is committed to the detection and description of *the shape of time*'.¹⁸⁴ For Kubler, an analysis of historical time that was 'not mere transfer by analogy from biological science'¹⁸⁵ meant articulating different shapes of time that would acknowledge that '[e]very action is more intermittent than it is continuous, and the intervals between actions are infinitely variable in duration and content'.¹⁸⁶ By looking at the works discussed here, we begin to see different treatments of time that portray the concerns prevalent during this period as the events and changes of the 1960s created a decade where the temporal was characterised by different pulls from various contradictory directions.

In her reading of the decade and its art, Lee finds an endlessness that not only defines the 1960s but characterizes the art made during that period. 'The sixties are endless', Lee argues.¹⁸⁷ In fact, 'We still live within them'.¹⁸⁸ She traces this tendency in the 'on and on' duration that Fried so detested in Minimalism, in Robert Smithson's ideas on entropy and in particular, she finds an infinity in the works of

¹⁸² George Kubler, *The Shape of Time: Remarks on the History of Things* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1962), p. 12.

¹⁸³ Kubler, p. 12

¹⁸⁴ Kubler, p. 12, emphasis added

¹⁸⁵ Kubler, p. 13

¹⁸⁶ Kubler, p. 13

¹⁸⁷ Lee, p. 259

¹⁸⁸ Lee, p. 259

Warhol and On Kawara. For Lee, both artists, Warhol through the bad infinity of his silent films and Kawara through the *longue durée* of his *Today Series*, lay bare an ‘*interminable now*: the present repeated as futurity’.¹⁸⁹ However, Heathfield argues that ‘this association between a durational aesthetic and a sense of endlessness... is perhaps less secure when one considers duration in art in relation to the performing and (spectating) body’.¹⁹⁰ As performance began to figure more prominently towards the end of the 1960s, becoming a major art form in the 1970s, its ‘manifestations of corporeity’ brought, according to Heathfield, ‘something resolutely material and fleshy’.¹⁹¹ That is why, as Heathfield points out, performance is always ‘imbued with a sense of mortality and *finitude*’.¹⁹² Nauman’s desire for on-goingness in his films and videotapes presents a useful example here. His anger in a film entitled *Bouncing Two Balls between the Floor and Ceiling with Changing Rhythms* (1967-68) is a perfect example of the failure of endlessness. Losing his pace while trying to establish a rhythm by bouncing balls in his studio, Nauman throws one of the balls against the wall as he gets ‘really mad’.¹⁹³ Feeling that there should be no beginning or end to the film and therefore the activity should never stop, Nauman’s anger comes from him ‘losing control of the game’.¹⁹⁴ The human body has intervened and broken the rules.

¹⁸⁹ Lee, p. 293, original emphasis

¹⁹⁰ Adrian Heathfield, ‘Thought of Duration’, in *Out of Now: The Lifeworks of Tehching Hsieh*, (London: The Live Art Development Agency, 2009), pp. 17 – 23 (p. 20).

¹⁹¹ Heathfield, p. 20

¹⁹² Heathfield, original emphasis

¹⁹³ Nauman, in Sharp, ‘Interview with Bruce Nauman’, p. 146

¹⁹⁴ Nauman, p. 146

5 Restaging the 1960s

And so it ends. In his essay on McLuhan John Cage contends that he ‘has greatly influenced many artists simply by encouraging them to continue their work’.¹⁹⁵

Noting how McLuhan has revealed the cause of the then-current social change to be the effect of electronics on sense perception, Cage argued:

Art and now music in this century serve to open people’s eyes and ears to the enjoyment of their daily environment. We are now, McLuhan tells us, no longer separate from this environment. New art and music do not communicate an individual’s conceptions in ordered structures, but they implement processes which are, as our daily lives are, opportunities for perception (observation and listening). McLuhan emphasizes this shift from life done for us to life that we do for ourselves.¹⁹⁶

The focus on doing things for ourselves was a prominent aspect both in the plastic arts as well as in performance. Another key feature of the art making of the time was bringing art and everyday together, particularly demonstrated by the Fluxus movement. George Brecht’s *Time Table Event* from 1961 consists of a railway station and a duration to be chosen from a timetable. As Ina Blom elucidates, ‘the piece consists of anything happening within that duration’.¹⁹⁷ Furthermore, as Blom argues, here ‘event’ measures time just as much in terms of pre-existing phenomena or *objects*’.¹⁹⁸ Time, therefore, ‘is conceived much like a sort of secret agent whose way of operating is either warp or continual metamorphosis’.¹⁹⁹ The aim of this chapter has been to pinpoint some of the instances in the 1960s where time has become a central issue in art and all the work discussed has suggested varying ways of rethinking the temporal. By holding side by side some of those examples we

¹⁹⁵ John Cage, ‘McLuhan’s Influence’ [1967], in Richard Kostelanetz, *John Cage* (London: The Penguin Press, 1971), pp. 170-171 (p. 170).

¹⁹⁶ Cage, p. 170

¹⁹⁷ Ina Blom, ‘Boredom and Oblivion’, in *The Fluxus Reader*, ed. by Ken Friedman (Chichester: Academy Editions, 1998), pp. 63 – 90, (p. 69).

¹⁹⁸ Blom, p. 69, original emphasis

¹⁹⁹ Blom, p. 69

begin to find trajectories of ideas and concerns that run through the decade as well as stepping off points for work to come in later decades that have in one way or another grown from similar approaches. As discussed in the first section, it was Fried's essay that most succinctly named the thing and labelled, at least for those looking at the decade retrospectively, the debate as a temporal problem. That 'Art and Objecthood' has since become a canonised text in art history is interesting when considering the spatialisation of time in the writing. It, in fact, poses a greater question of how to talk and write about time without thinking about it in spatial terms. It is a question which is a central concern in this thesis. I will come back to the spatialisation of time in detail in Chapter 4.²⁰⁰

The 1960s are endless in some sense, especially when one looks at the plethora of re-enactments of work from the decade. Simone Forti's *Huddle* from 1961 was performed at Museum of Modern Art in New York in 2009 as part of Performance Exhibition Series along with work by Yvonne Rainer's. In 2008 Andre Lepecki took on the restaging of Allan Kaprow's *18 Happenings in 6 Parts*. And also in 2009, The Performance Group's 1968 work *Dionysus in '69* was re-enacted in Texas by Rude Mechanicals. Discussing the trend in his article "'There's Something Happenin' Here...'" Richard Schechner notes that,

restaging *18 Happenings* put Lepecki – and by inference, audiences – directly in touch with Kaprow's kaprowness. Or, to put it in another way, redoing the Happening was the *only way* to 'know' it as an artwork

²⁰⁰ There is also some performance work from the 1960s which engages with the relationship between time and material that I focus on in the rest of this thesis. Robert Whitman's work is one example. His *The American Moon* (1960) in particular seems to explore how different materials (long sheets of fabric and plastic film, clothes, paper, pre-recorded film) could together constitute a performance without plot or narrative. A contemporary to Allan Kaprow and other makers of Happenings, Whitman's 'performances feature very often slow time' and Whitman insists on not 'imposing' a performance or an idea on the spectators (Robert Whitman: Performances from the 1960s Part 1, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tToYzYooHDM>> (Accessed on 2 February 2014)). In *Flower* (1963), duration is similarly employed to focus on materials which are manipulated both on and off stage. In so doing the materials become more than simply a set for the work.

analogous to how a museum viewer may ‘know’ a painting by seeing it (however out of context, however removed from in time from the occasion of its being painted). This sense of ‘first encounter’ is a core reason for the spate of restagings we are witnessing – and why we are bound to see a lot more of them.²⁰¹

The notion of the first encounter in Schechner’s argument will be taken up in more detail later on in this thesis in Chapter 5 but for now it is interesting to note how many of the restagings we are seeing today are of work from the 1960s. Schechner finds the reason for this in the possibility to engage in the feeling of creating something new that the original works had when ‘[u]topia was not yet a farce’.²⁰² Placing what he sees as some of the failures of the last decade next to the achievements of the 1960s Schechner concludes: ‘No wonder at the artistic level so many are fascinated with the past’.²⁰³ Growing out of nostalgia or not, what the trend of re-enactments highlights is that the 1960s of the 1960s is of course different from the 1960s of 2010. From October 2010 until January 2011, *The Yvonne Rainer Project* ran at BFI Gallery at the South Bank, part of which was a weekly performance of her most famous piece of work, *Trio A*. One cannot but notice how this piece has become established in the canon of performance art and dance history. Having developed out of Rainer’s concerns outlined in her No Manifesto (‘no to spectacle’, ‘no to the transcendency of the star image’), *Trio A* is now itself the star of the new dance of the 1960s.

In addition to the growing institutionalisation of studies on time and future, the 1960s also marked a new phase of theorisation on time in art prompted by a host of issues rising from the new systems of just-in-time production and the incorporation of media as discussed above. Krauss’ book *Passages in Modern*

²⁰¹ Richard Schechner, ‘“There’s Something Happenin’ Here...’, in *The Drama Review*, Vol. 54, No. 2, (Summer 2010), pp. 12 – 17, (p. 13).

²⁰² Schechner, p. 15

²⁰³ Schechner, p. 17

Sculpture was the first coherent attempt to gather together the debates and discussion that had happened during the decade. However, considering the plethora of works tackling the issue of temporality in the 1960s, it is surprising that it took some years after Krauss' book for the discussion on time in art and its experience to resurface again. Lee argues that the 'engagement with time on the part of artists and critics' in the 1960s 'remains largely untreated in the decade's general histories' despite being 'so foundational, so basic to any narrative' about the era and its art.²⁰⁴ And yet, it is telling that those writings on time in visual art, of which there has been a proliferation in recent years, often refer to work from the 1960s.²⁰⁵ The concern over the temporal has surfaced again in the last ten years not only because the beginning of a century and the end of one always sparks anxieties, chronophobia even, but perhaps also because of the undeniable acceleration due to the ever increasing possibilities brought about by technology. Looking at Warhol's early films, for example, we have seen that when technology becomes omnipresent there is a search for a mode of time that is outside its acceleration. And as it is unlikely that there will be times of deceleration any time soon, slowness is still one of art's biggest vehicles for resistance. For some that has meant using performance. As Lippard points out, 'Ideally, performance means getting down to the bare bones of aesthetic communication – artist/self confronting audience/society'.²⁰⁶ Thus, performance's investigation of operations of time can be seen as an attempt not to

²⁰⁴ Lee, p. xii

²⁰⁵ For example, both Briony Fer and Mieke Bal in *Time and the Image* discuss the work of Eva Hesse, *The Shape of Time* by George Kubler and 'Art and Objecthood'. See Briony Fer, 'Some Translucent Substance, or the trouble with time', in *Time and the Image*, ed. by Carolyn Bailey Gill (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 69-78 and Mieke Bal, 'Sticky Images', in *Time and the Image*, ed. by Carolyn Bailey Gill (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 79-99.

²⁰⁶ Lucy Lippard, 'The Angry Month of March', *The Village Voice*, March 25, 1981, pp. 25-31, (p. 25).

succumb 'to the process of technological rationality'.²⁰⁷ In an ever accelerating world an ethics of slowness has proved to be a valuable currency.

²⁰⁷ Marcuse, p. 65

Chapter 2

Stay a While: Performance's Wasteful Duration

1 24 Hour Society

In this chapter I will continue to investigate how, what I called (via Lee) at the end of the previous chapter, the ethics of slowness continues to be articulated and employed in performance. To that end, I will discuss durational (or long) performances and their employment of duration as an invitation to experience a different daily rhythm or tempo. In order to do so, I am going to fast forward from the 1960s to the end of the 20th century and investigate how by the mid-1990s just-in-time production and its demands had contributed to the formation of a society that is constantly open for business.

In his 1999 book *The 24 Hour Society*, Leon Kreitzman argues that, 'The old time-markers – day and night, morning, noon and night, weekday and weekend – are losing their relevance. We are having to come to terms with a world that is always open'.¹ For Kreitzman, a 24 Hour Society, although a slight exaggeration as a term, is a present reality. Shops are open later than ever before, while some of the supermarkets extending their opening hours around the clock, we work longer hours than ever and if nothing else, at least the internet will always be open and on. The flexibility of working hours has created a demand for flexibility in trading hours and access to consumer goods. As the temporal gap between production and consumption decreases so does the need to shop. Kreitzman notes that by the mid-1990s there was a considerable increase in weekend shopping trips, as well as early

¹Leon Kreitzman, *24 Hour Society* (London: Profile Books, 1999), p. 2.

morning and late night supermarket use. This was partly made possible by the Shops Act 1994 which deregulated UK shopping hours.² Far removed from the regimented time of an industrial world, the 24 Hour Society is a suspension of temporal control. Kreitzman argues that the 24 Hour Society ‘is about removing constraints’³ and the logic of the 24/7 temporal model could be traced to the financial liberation and the complete freedom of finance to move in and out of the economy.

However, one could also argue that instead of a suspension of temporal control, the 24 Hour Society brings about an intensification of such control which is evident in the demands to constantly produce. For Sylviane Agacinski, such intensification is due to the ‘technical hegemony of the West’ which, through establishing its production methods all over the world, unifies the measure of time.⁴ Agacinski goes on to say that the adoption of the temporal architecture of the West also reduces time to its market value. She argues: ‘Western rationality has deployed an economics according to which time must be productive, useful, and profitable. We must forever ‘gain time’, because time itself gains us something else’.⁵ Thus, the only way to resist the logic of the general economy of time, according to Agacinski, is ‘to *give* our time, to spend it or lose it, to let it pass’.⁶ As I discussed in the previous chapter, this rhetoric around a resistance to capitalism and its economy of time is not alien to thinking of performance. For Adrian Heathfield, performance is a crucial tool in exposing and contesting the ‘powers that construct social

² Kreitzman, p. 10

³ Kreitzman, p. 2

⁴ Sylviane Agacinski, *Time Passing: Modernity and Nostalgia* (Columbia University Press, 2003), p. 6

⁵ Agacinski, p. 6

⁶ Agacinski, p. 6, original emphasis

knowledges and experiences of time'.⁷ In subverting our usual time structures by, for example, scheduling performance works at unusual times or stretching the duration of performance, performance offers a critique of capitalist economies and its demand for productive time. Heathfield contends that in this capitalist culture of speed, 'deploying a contemplative and 'wasteful' expenditure of time, performance continues its long wrangle with the forces of capital'.⁸

So it is this long wrangle with capitalism that performance engages in that I examine in this chapter. I do this in reference to what is often termed durational performances, that is to say, performance-installations that last from several hours to several days (or in some cases for months) where the audiences are invited to come and go as they please while the performer(s) stays in the space engaged in continuous action. In particular, I examine the basis on which the duration of performance constitutes an offer on the part of the artist to the audience to attend. Marina Abramović notes that, 'long durational performances should be [the] answer to the fast life'.⁹ I examine the premise of Abramović's suggestion that durational performance could be an anti-dote of sorts to the speed of the 24 Hour Society. In developing the conceptual framework for durational work I examine three case studies which construct an audience experience premised on acceptance of certain rules of attending to performance duration. I ask what happens to the notion of the real in the experience of time in durational work and interrogate some of the terms used in discussion around performance's temporality. In doing so, I analyse

⁷ Heathfield, 'Alive', p. 10. Moreover, Heathfield goes on to say, 'Willfully offering himself up as a subject of disciplinary organization, Hsieh subjects his life to the very temporal (and spatial) constraints that govern the institutions of capitalized labor'.⁷ For Hsieh, his one-year performances are 'working hard to waste time' whereas his last two artworks were simply 'wasting time'. p. 335

⁸ Heathfield, p. 10

⁹ Cited in Lara Shalson, 'Duration and Multiplicity', *Performance Research On Duration*, Vol. 17, No. 5, 2012, pp.98-106, (p. 100).

Heathfield's assertion that time can be productively wasted in performance and that this wasting produces a form of critique of the daily rhythms in late capitalism. In the first part I will outline a theory of performance time from both a theatrical and contemporary performance standpoint, and with a focus on durational performances. In the second part I launch a Marxist argument regarding time which I develop with reference to the Fordist labour model. In the third part I synthesize these ideas in relation to three case studies which engage with not only the waste of time (per Heathfield) but also the perception of time.

The case studies include four performances from a live art context: *LABOUR* (2012), *Marina Abramović Presents...* (2009), and two performances from Tehching Hsieh: *One Year Performance 1980-1981* and *Art/Life One Year Performance 1983-1984* with Linda Montano. All three performances have different demands and approaches to duration and I will examine how they all invite us to attend and whether that invitation is actually possible to respond to. I suggest that in *LABOUR* the audience are invited to either drop in for a moment or stay for the whole thing while in *Marina Abramović Presents...* it is seminal to the work that everyone attends the whole four hour duration. In Hsieh's (and Montano's) one year performances, however, staying for any considerable length of time is not a possibility and the access for the audience is in fact very tightly controlled. Alongside these live art practices I will consider long duration in theatre through *GATZ* (2012) by Elevator Repair Service, and examine the experience of duration it pursues and the issues that it presents around work, waste and theatricality. Through discussing these examples of durational, or long duration, performance work I wish to ask: What can performance's long duration tell us about time and how we use it?

2 Durational performance

Durational performance has become an influential part of current live art practices.

Artists such as Alastair MacLennan, Abramović, La Ribot, Amanda Coogan and Kira O'Reilly frequently employ and examine long durations in their work.

Durational performance has its roots in the practices emerging in the late 1960s such as in the work of Vito Acconci, Joseph Beuys, and Abramović and Ulay. As I have discussed in Chapter 1, interests and explorations of time were evident in the visual art practices in the 1960 and the notion of endlessness, or infinity, were present, for example, in the long films of Andy Warhol. According to Heathfield, long duration and 'use of unregulated temporalities (chance operations, contingent forms and improvisations) was a means to assert 'inassimilable' values'.¹⁰ He goes on to say that, 'For those artists whose investment in performance emerges from or is directed towards its status as social ritual, its capacity to connect distant times with the present, to slide into a liminal temporality, is one of its most vital elements'.¹¹ There are two ways then, according to Heathfield, that performance interrupts time: one is its potential to interrupt the time of fiction and the other is the way it disrupts the time of the spectators. Durational performance is a form of these explorations and employments of time. As Heathfield notes, 'The term "durational" is often used then to indicate an art work that draws attention to its temporal constraint as a constitutive element of its meaning'.¹² Durational performances vary in length and can be anything from four hours (or depending on the task even two) to a year, such as in Tehching Hsieh's and Linda Montano's practices.

¹⁰ Heathfield, 'Alive', p. 8

¹¹ Heathfield, 'Alive', p. 8

¹² Heathfield, *Out of Now: The Lifeworks of Tehching Hsieh*, (London: The Live Art Development Agency, 2009), p. 22.

Similarly, reasons for making durational work vary. For Tim Etchells, durational performance is freedom from the tyranny of theatre's economy which 'forces one to deal with the ergonomic shape of an hour and a half – the pattern of 'start', 'middle' and 'end' that produces a satisfactory feeling of closure'.¹³ But that tyranny is also two hours with an interval, in the evening, during a time that is designated as leisure time. It reflects the notion of culture as something that is allocated free time, a hobby.¹⁴ Durational performance, then, not only challenges theatre's conventions but could also said to be confronting our use of leisure time. As Hans-Thies Lehmann states, in drama, 'Time as such is meant to disappear, to be reduced to an unnoticeable condition of being of the action.'¹⁵ According to this logic, live art practices and durational performance in particular present a way then to expose the mechanics of that time that theatre is so keen to hide.

For Abramović, durational performance is 'an energy dialogue'¹⁶ where the spectators become invested in co-creation. This suggests a shared 'time-out', a moment of time the audience take, as if somehow together, out of their normal lives. In such work, there is an attempt towards spiritual exchange or charge, or, in Lehmann's words, an unrepeatable 'self-transformation'.¹⁷ In this sense, it differs from Jonathan Kalb's statement that unlike theatre, durational live art practices (or performance art) consider themselves to have 'little obligation to adjust to audiences, or even acknowledge them'.¹⁸ I think there is in Kalb's account a lack of

¹³Tim Etchells, in Adrian Heathfield, 'As if Things Got More Real: A Conversation with Tim Etchells', *Not Even a Game Anymore: The Theatre of Forced Entertainment*, ed. by Judith Helmer and Florian Malzacher (Berlin: Alexander Verlag Berlin, 2004), pp. 77-99 (p. 80)

¹⁴ I will take up this discussion on allocated free time and what Adorno calls 'organised freedom' in Chapter 4.

¹⁵ Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, trans. by Karen Jüers-Munby (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 161.

¹⁶ Peggy Phelan, p. 22

¹⁷Lehmann, p. 137.

¹⁸Kalb, p. 145.

consideration of the body and artists' intention towards the co-creation of an event. In fact, Kalb is missing the significance of questioning the structure of the contract between artist and spectator in live art. In *Contract with the Skin*, Kathy O'Dell argues that through their work, the 1970s body artists 'could dramatize the importance of a transaction that is often overlooked or taken for granted'.¹⁹ It is in fact this relationship or contract between performer and spectator that comes to the fore in live art. Kalb's statement is somewhat odd when one considers that it is theatre, certainly realist and naturalist, which does not adjust to or acknowledge its audience. I would argue, along with O'Dell, that in live art, the relationship between audience and performer is one of complicity. However, O'Dell points out that the contract in live art is one 'that we all make with others but that may not be in our own best interests'.²⁰ In other words, the spectator is implicated in the action and carries a responsibility for taking part. This notion of the contract as something that does not carry an assumption that an audience needs to be entertained continues to be explored in current live art practices. I will discuss this further when considering *Marina Abramović Presents...* In so doing I will focus on the different agencies operating in durational performances and consider the overlapping times of the performer, spectator and the performance.

Lara Shalson notes that 'the distinction between theatre and performance art is routinely based in practices of bodily endurance, and such practices are commonly described as antitheatrical'.²¹ Shalson goes on to trouble this routine assumption by discussing the theatricality of bodily endurance in *Forced Entertainment's* theatre work. Through my three performance examples I discuss

¹⁹ Kathy O'Dell, *Contract with the Skin* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), p. 2

²⁰ O'Dell, p. 2

²¹ Lara Shalson, 'On the Endurance of Theatre in Live Art', *Contemporary Theatre Review*, 22:1, 2012, pp. 106-119 (p. 108).

how what Etchells calls freedom from theatre economy's tyranny manifests in durational performances and to what extent 'real' time as found in durational performances is antitheatrical. I am also interested here in making a distinction between the terms 'durational' and 'endurance', which I find to be crucial in this discussion. Indeed, durational performance continues to be topical because of its pursuit of temporality as something real, that is to say both performer and audience feel the flow or fall of time in real time. As Lehmann notes above, time is meant to disappear in drama. However, does not theatre in fact make the spectators more aware of the gap between the time of the stage (the action) and the time of the auditorium? Furthermore, I will examine the terms that are used to describe the experience of time in live art practices.

3 Work time

I begin by setting up a framework for thinking about current work practices in order to then examine how durational performance fits into the temporal structures of late capitalism. For Agacinski, the 'temporal architecture' of the West and its production methods is one where the value of time has been 'reduced to the market value of work time'.²² The industrial age brought with it ever more strictly organised time frames such as workers' time clocks in factories. Eva Hoffman argues that the introduction of time zones in the late 19th century induced protests and anxiety: 'For people who adjusted the pace of their activities to dawn and dusk, the regimentation of the clock seemed a great tyranny'.²³ As the 'true' time of locality was disturbed, 'People felt squeezed and cramped by the imposition of grid time onto event time;

²²Agacinski, p. 6

²³Eva Hoffman, *Time* (London: Profile Books, 2009), p. 131.

thrown off their own rhythms and equilibrium; unnaturally hurried and harried'.²⁴

Event time, the time it takes to do something, as the way to measure time, becomes the true time of locality of course only when contrasted with the imposed time of the industrial world.

In Fordist production, pioneered by Frederick Taylor's motion studies, every small detail of time use was calculated. Hoffman states that, 'From these calculations, factory managers derived the 'standard time' required for the completion of relevant work at hand, dividing workers' movements into 'waste' motions...and those which were necessary for the performance of a task'.²⁵ Therefore, time management became a key aspect of mass production and this 'involved the control no longer only of the workers' lived time, but of their bodily rhythms and pace'.²⁶ As Kreitzman argues, 'Instead of being paid for the task, workers during the Industrial Revolution began to be paid for their time'.²⁷ Furthermore, Kreitzman goes on to say that workers' time thus 'became a commodity to be bought and sold'.²⁸ Kreitzman's conclusion that time has become a commodity is an interesting one as it articulates a misunderstanding (or a misreading of Marxist theory) that is common.²⁹

What is in fact commodified is labour. In *Capital*, Karl Marx argues that the worker, or the proprietor of labour-power,

must constantly treat his labour-power as his own property, his own commodity, and he can do this only by placing it at the disposal of the buyer, i.e. handing it over to the buyer for him to consume, for a definite period of

²⁴ Hoffman, p. 132

²⁵ Hoffman, p. 132-2

²⁶ Hoffman, p. 133

²⁷ Kreitzman, p. 66

²⁸ Kreitzman, p. 66

²⁹ I will address this misunderstanding of time as commodity in my discussion of Tehching Hsieh's work in the latter part of this chapter.

time, temporarily. In this way he manages both to alienate [*veräußern*] his labour-power and to avoid renouncing his rights of ownership over it.³⁰

The worker and the capitalist (money owner) enter into a commodity exchange as equals. According to Marx, ‘they all work together to their mutual advantage, for the common weal, and in the common interest’.³¹ However, the labour process whereby the relationship between the capitalist and the worker is established displays two distinguishing features. The first of them is that ‘the worker works under the control of the capitalist to whom his labour belongs’.³² The capitalist is responsible for supplying the raw materials and ensuring that they are not wasted in the process. This is where the second characteristic is displayed. By incorporating the means of production into the labour, the capitalist thus not only owns the labour but also the product. The worker, ‘by giving his labour, does no more, in reality, than part with the use-value he has sold’.³³ The effects of these two features of the labour-process, although not commodifying time itself, do have repercussions for the use of time. More precisely, they dictate who is in control of time. In the scenario that Marx presents to us, it is the capitalist who is in control of not only his time but that of the worker. Furthermore, by selling his labour-power and in the process the product of this labour, the worker is alienated from his work. According to Jane Bennett, ‘Marx makes it clear that the harm of commodification accrues to humans’³⁴ as they are deprived of the ‘sensuously varied objectivity of articles of utility’.³⁵ Bennett goes on to note that, ‘As commodities, labor and the labourer are

³⁰ Marx, p. 271

³¹ Marx, p. 280

³² Marx, p. 291

³³ Marx, p. 292

³⁴ Jane Bennett, *The Enchantment of Modern Life: Attachments, Crossings, and Ethics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 117

³⁵ Marx, p. 166

‘objectified’, an objectification that enables the swindle that is profit’.³⁶ These two effects, one of alienation and one of control of time, will become important later on in my discussion.

The information technologies emerging since the 1970s produced major shifts in the organisation of work and production. These have resulted in a transition from industrial methods of production to what David Harvey calls ‘flexible accumulation’.³⁷ For Harvey, flexible accumulation (or post-Fordism) ‘rests on flexibility with respect to labour processes, labour markets, products, and patterns of consumption’.³⁸ Furthermore, post-Fordism is ‘characterized by the emergence of entirely new sectors of production, new ways of providing financial services, new markets, and, above all, greatly intensified rates of commercial, technological, and organizational innovation’.³⁹ In a 1988 article in *Marxism Today*, Stuart Hall noted a blend of characteristics of the post-Fordist labour market, including a ‘decline of the old manufacturing base and growth of the ‘sunrise’, computer-based industries’ and a ‘decline in the proportion of the skilled, male, manual working class, the rise of the service and white-collar classes and the ‘feminization’ of the work force’.⁴⁰ What is noticeable in these changes is the growing demand for a flexible work force, including part-timers, casuals, fixed term contract staff, temporaries and sub-contractors.

As noted above, the 24/7 society facilitates such working practices where a worker is available for work or is in fact working in some form all the time. In the job market created by flexible accumulation, Kathi Weeks points out, ‘Putting in

³⁶ Bennett, p. 117

³⁷ Harvey, p. 147.

³⁸ Harvey, p. 147

³⁹ Harvey, p. 147.

⁴⁰ Stuart Hall, ‘Brave New World’, *Marxism Today*, October 1988, pp. 24-9, (p. 25).

long hours can also be used as an indication of commitment, which can in turn be a signal of productivity'.⁴¹ There is an illusion in work here whereby those who work the longest seem to be the most productive even though the same amount of work could be done in a shorter time, with less time wasting. People who work at their office or designated workplace perform or pretend that they are working, or in other words, being at work involves a performance of working. Weeks goes on to argue that, 'Whereas Fordism demanded from its core workers a lifetime of compliance with work discipline, post-Fordism also demands of many of its workers flexibility, adaptability, and continual reinvention'.⁴² However, post-Fordist work practices and particularly those that are flexible are still being conducted through logics and rhythms similar to Fordist production. Kreitzman argues that, 'We still behave as though there is a natural world that begins when the sun rises and closes as it sets, and our days are still structured in this way'.⁴³ This is why, according to Kreitzman, 'The workplace still dominates our lives and determines our social relations'.⁴⁴ People in jobs with flexible schedules increasingly come to feel like they ought to do work even outside their quota of hours.⁴⁵ So there seems to be a certain waste already imbedded in some work practices where appearing to be working does not mean actually working.

We might agree, however, that it is precisely work that shapes the use of time in late capitalism. Although the Industrial Revolution homogenised work time (to an extent) it also created very long days, up to 11 or 16 hours, six days a week. The eight-hour movement began to combat long working days, demanding an eight

⁴¹ Kathi Weeks, *The Problem with Work: Feminism, Marxism, Antiwork Politics, and Postwork Imaginaries* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), p. 71.

⁴² Weeks, p. 70

⁴³ Kreitzman, p. 169

⁴⁴ Kreitzman., p. 68

⁴⁵ Melissa Gregg, *Work's Intimacy* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011), p. 35.

hour working day with ‘eight hours of labour, eight hours of rest, and eight hours for what we will’.⁴⁶ I examine in this chapter how the standard working day of eight hours in late capitalism is reflected in the case studies I have chosen here.

In her book *The Problem with Work: Feminism, Marxism, Antiwork Politics and Postwork Imaginaries*, Weeks addresses the assumption in Marxist and feminist discourses that work is a naturalised or inevitable activity. Weeks notes that the demand for shorter working days has been an issue especially in debates that are asking for more family time. However, in demanding a shorter work day and more time ‘for what we will’, the eight-hour movement resists stipulating what we should do with the rest of the time. Weeks argues that this would let us spend more time inhabiting ‘the spaces where we now find a life outside of waged work’⁴⁷ but more importantly also to ‘create spaces in which to constitute new subjectivities, new work and non-work ethics’.⁴⁸

Such non-work ethics are examined and advocated by post-work visionaries who argue that work is shaping us too much. In *Post-Work Manifesto* Stanley Aronowitz et al. call for a thirty-hour week of six-hour days without a reduction in pay. As non-work time is increasingly taken over by work time in flexible accumulation (whether through overtime, or managing several temporary or part-time jobs), the authors of the manifesto argue that, ‘it is time for a discourse that imagines alternatives, that accounts for human dignity beyond the conditions of work’.⁴⁹ This call for human dignity finds parallels with notions of alienation in Marx’s account of the worker’s life and could thus be read as a demand for more

⁴⁶ Weeks, p. 169

⁴⁷ Weeks, p. 174

⁴⁸ Weeks, p. 174

⁴⁹ Stanley Aronowitz, Dawn Esposito, William DiFazio, Margaret Yeard, ‘The Post-Work Manifesto’, in *Post-Work: Wages of Cybernation*, ed. by Aronowitz and Jonathan Cutler (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 31-80 (p. 69).

control of our own time. Furthermore, the authors declare that, ‘it is time to get a life’.⁵⁰ The colloquial phrase ‘Get a life!’ is one that is often used to suggest that one is spending too much time doing one thing. The demand in the *Post-Work Manifesto* positions life against work. In discourses on work, getting a life becomes, according to Weeks, a political project where imagining alternatives to work is an act of resistance of a kind. The emphasis here is that one gets not *the* life but *a* life; there are, in fact, several lives to be got.⁵¹

Moreover, ‘getting’ in this context becomes a temporal mandate. Weeks argues that, ‘It is not a call to embrace the life we have, the life that has been made for us but the one that we might want’.⁵² Furthermore, and this is an important point to make, the project of life against work does not propose an absolute set of oppositions. As Weeks points out, there is no true or authentic life to be had outside of work. Life as an alternative to work is not outside of work but the two remain intertwined. The project, then, becomes about ‘contest[ing] the existing terms of the work society’ and ‘build[ing] something new’.⁵³

I start this investigation with *LABOUR*, which was a live exhibition of performances by eleven Irish and Ireland-based female artists.⁵⁴ Co-curated by Helena Walsh, Chrissie Cadman and Amanda Coogan, *LABOUR* toured to London, Derry/Londonderry and Dublin in February and March 2012. The eight hour duration of the performance(s) corresponds to an average working day and thus the project, according to the press release, ‘interrogates the gendered representational frameworks prevalent within an Irish cultural context that produce, limit and

⁵⁰ Stanley Aronowitz et al. *Post-Work Manifesto*, p. 40.

⁵¹ Weeks, p. 232

⁵² Weeks, p. 232

⁵³ Weeks, p. 233

⁵⁴ Chrissie Cadman, Helena Walsh, Amanda Coogan, Elvira Santa Maria Torres, Anne Quail, Ann Maria Healy, Áine Phillips, Michelle Browne, Pauline Cummins, Frances Mezzetti, Áine O’Dwyer.

devalue various forms of female labour'.⁵⁵ In London the durational performances visited]performance space[, an artist-run venue in an industrial estate in Hackney. As I walked into the cold warehouse I saw people standing around, some of them the audience, some of them performers. Elvira Santamaria Torres was sitting near the front door tying red roses to black balloons. Near her, Anne Quail was struggling with a pile of tea bags, holding them, spreading them on the floor, lying on them. On the stairs, Amanda Coogan was walking up and down slowly looking like a caterpillar with layered white winter coats on her back. In one corner Ann Maria Healy was grinding rice between two stones and in another Chrissie Cadman was going through a laborious task of washing a big white sheet and herself in a bathtub.

LABOUR sets out to investigate female labour in an Irish context. The history of female labour in Ireland is one which is marked by a struggle for political autonomy and a resistance towards patriarchal oppression.⁵⁶ In particular, *LABOUR* needs to be read in context with the Magdalene Laundries in Southern Ireland, institutions for unwaged female labour. These for-profit laundries run by the Catholic Church, set up in the 19th century with the last institution closing as recently as 1996, forced women and girls to work for penance for (supposed) moral impurity. Such 'immoral' women would include rape victims and unmarried mothers whose children were invariably taken from them. The women worked in the laundries in squalid conditions and with little hope of getting out. The trauma caused by the Magdalene Laundries is still affecting the country and the victims are still looking for redress. It is with reference to the Magdalene Laundries in particular

⁵⁵ *LABOUR* press release

⁵⁶ Helena Walsh, *LABOUR* programme

that *LABOUR* comes to represent and question the equality of work and labour in an Irish context. Cadman's struggle with a white sheet in a bathtub is perhaps the most direct reference to this aspect of *LABOUR*'s theme. Another would be Aine Phillips' performance. Using the so far untold stories of the women from the laundries, Phillips' performance is a quiet testimony of the unseen and unheard. Walking around the space in a white outfit, Phillips is gradually covered in ink which is seeping out of her clothes. On her back and sewn into her clothes, a small speaker is playing the testimonies from Magdalene Laundries victims. The sound is quiet and soon there is a small group of audience members following Phillips around, craning their necks and cocking their ears to be nearer to the speaker.

LABOUR thus aims to explore this delicate issue of forced female labour. What I am interested here is the way in which it can be read as exploring a more complex web of issues around post-Fordist work relations. The working patterns brought by flexible accumulation make it possible for ever more people to decide where and when to work. There might be less leisure time but it can be more flexible. However, what is important to notice here is that those whose working time is flexible (or to put it differently, those who are in control of their own time) work in certain professions and areas. Then there are those whose working patterns are rigid because they serve a different aspect of the economy where Fordist production methods are still in place. For example, Kreitzman points out how,

Modern attitudes to industrial employees' time are exemplified by the Oxford's clothes factory (in Monticello, Georgia, USA). A system clocks every worker's pace to a thousandth of a minute. The workers, mostly women, are paid according to how their pace compares with a factory standard for their job. Operators who beat the standard by 10 percent are paid a 10 per cent bonus over their base rate. If they lag 1 per cent behind the standard, they have 10 per cent knocked off their wages.⁵⁷

⁵⁷Kreitzman, p. 66

Here, those who work in the factory have little control over their (work) time whereas those who run the factory have control not only of their time but that of their employees. As Marx argues, ‘The capitalist has bought the labour-power at its daily value. The use-value of the labour-power belongs to him throughout one working day’.⁵⁸ Furthermore, Veronica Beechey and Tessa Perkins note how ‘some studies suggest that where the labor force is primarily made up of women, employers are more likely to use part-time workers to maintain flexibility; indeed, certain jobs are constructed to be part time because they are generally filled by women’.⁵⁹ It is therefore women who most often are offered part-time work which, as Weeks argues, ‘is often low-paid and has few or no benefits and few opportunities for advancement’.⁶⁰ Weeks goes on to argue that part-time work thus ‘continues to be rationalized by reference to women’s assumed position as secondary wage earners and primary unwaged reproductive labourers’.⁶¹ Thus, it seems that despite the increased flexibility and control of time in certain job sectors, women are not often reaping the benefits.

While the position of women in the current economy of work is distinctly different from the forced labour in such institution as the Magdalene Laundries, *LABOUR* in some ways makes us think about the position of women in the work market (certainly in the manual labour sector).⁶² But moreover, *LABOUR* is also pointing to the interesting relation between work time and leisure time in current

⁵⁸ Marx, p. 341

⁵⁹ Veronica Beechey and Tessa Perkins, *A Matter of Hours: Women, Part-time Work, and the Labour Market*, (Cambridge: Polity, 1987), p. 145.

⁶⁰ Weeks, p. 164

⁶¹ Weeks, p. 164

⁶² It is worth highlighting here that the women’s work in the Laundries (and, indeed, in *LABOUR*) is unpaid, and therefore the extraction of women’s labour-power is different in principle to the exchange Marx is referring to here. The laundry inmates’ work is slave labour.

work practices. At its different locations it was programmed quite differently and I wish to discuss what types of spectatorships and conditions those different performance times engendered. Firstly, if *LABOUR*'s eight hour duration is referring to the standard working day it feels important in some way then to stay with the performance for the whole duration. Or at least, staying for the whole duration draws parallels between the economy of labour and the work of performance. However, while its eight hour duration references and replicates the standard working day, those eight hours are positioned, at its London performance, which is where I saw it, not 9pm to 5pm but 1pm to 9pm. Therefore, *LABOUR* is not demanding that we spend our working day at the performance, nor is it asking for any specific amount of duration on the spectator's part. Nor is it asking for endurance.⁶³ The structure of this durational performance (and we might say that this is often true of durational performances of this kind) was one where the spectator was free to come and go throughout the installation. It, therefore, seems to be asking of the spectator a flexible use of time. I went to this performance at 1pm, and stayed for an hour. But I could have gone at 5pm and stayed until the end, or I could have gone for the whole duration. This type of performance, as I will be discussing further in the next section, is relying in some ways on the flexible use of one's work time. Or, it is not replicating completely the standard day of 9 to 5 so that everyone, even if they work 9 to 5, can attend the performance at some point during the day. Those demands then, of popping in for a bit of the show or staying for the whole duration, are different and it is important to draw the distinction.

⁶³ Again, it is not asking for endurance on the spectators' part. It is of course asking all of these things of its performers.

]performance space[is an artist-run venue in an industrial estate in Hackney which is an apt location when one thinks what industrial estates are for: the building of a dedicated infrastructure to facilitate a more effective production and the segregation of work from urban living areas. Industrial estates confine the act (and converse the smells, noises and the sight) of labour within a space that is a comfortable distance away from people's daily lives in the city. To go to an industrial estate, then, to watch this exhibition is to emphasise not only the labour in this performance but its eight hour duration. But what *LABOUR* made difficult for the spectator on its London visit was the possibility of returning to see the performance during the day. Due to the location of]performance space[it is nearly impossible to leave the performance to go back to one's work place, for example, and return. Once you went you stayed unless having a short break outside or a slightly longer one at a café a five-minute walk away, reflecting a break in a work day. When *LABOUR* visited Dublin, however, the performance took place not in the middle of most people's working week but on a Saturday. The gallery hosting the work had a large glass front facing a busy shopping street. Here, the fact that the exhibition is a weekend event emphasised the notion of leisure as many people watched the performance(s) through the front window without even going in. A form of window shopping, it blended with other activities in the shopping area. This created a very different mode of spectatorship from the likely expert audience in a cold warehouse in London. The labour in this performance of *LABOUR* became the labour of the cultural worker.

4 Marina Abramović and the rhythm of Fordism

The different modes of spectatorship at *LABOUR*'s performances, the Saturday shoppers behind the glass front in Dublin and the audience I witnessed in London, asks the question, who is durational performance durational for? How much time do we spend in durational performances and how does its temporality enter our day? There is an interesting question here about programming durational performances and the time people can effectively spend with the work. Who attends durational performances, and more specifically, who can and does attend them in their entirety? Marina Abramović's 2002 piece *The House with the Ocean View* ran for twelve days at the Sean Kelly Gallery in New York and despite the artist living in the gallery for the whole of the 12 days the audience could only attend between the gallery's opening hours of 11am to 6pm. Abramović states that it is vital in her work that the audience 'have to make this radical step of not being an observer anymore, or a passive thing, but being participants. It's essential. They have to be creative to finish the work'.⁶⁴

This aspect of her work was addressed in a durational performance she curated in 2009, entitled *Marina Abramović Presents...* The four-hour performance at the Manchester International Festival included fourteen invited artists performing simultaneously in the Whitworth Art Gallery. The audience were asked to stay in the performance for the whole duration. The marketing for *Marina Abramović Presents...* made it clear that audience members would be required to wear white lab coats throughout the event and sign a contract stating that they will give their mobile phones and other personal items for safekeeping and will not leave before the end of

⁶⁴ Marina Abramović, 'Elevating the Public: In conversation with Adrian Heathfield', in *Live: Art and Performance*, ed. by Adrian Heathfield, (London: Tate Publishing, 2004), pp. 144-151 (p. 151).

the four hours. Suspicious of such strict rules and their practicality, I was somewhat relieved to see that no contracts or handing over of personal items was required on the day. The audience left their coats and bags in the foyer at the beginning of the performance and were indeed allowed to come back to them as well as leave the building after the first hour which involved a drill led by Abramović.

This first hour included a brief talk by the artist and some concentration exercises such as pairing up and staring into each other's eyes for five minutes and walking slowly across the floor as a group. Such exercises were done to prepare the audience for the experience that was to come, namely three hours of uninterrupted and simultaneous performances in different spaces in the gallery by Amanda Coogan, Alastair MacLennan, Kira O'Reilly, Nikhil Chopra, Ivan Civic, Yingmei Duan, Marie Cool and Fabio Balducci, Jamie Isenstein, Nico Vascellari, Terence Koh, Melati Suryodarmo, Fedor Pavlov-Andreevich and Eunhye Hwang.

After the hour of exercise and preparation we are released into the galleries to use our newly learned skills of concentration. In the grand staircase, O'Reilly is falling down the stairs while wearing nothing but black leather cycling gloves. O'Reilly's performance, which I read as a take on Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase*, challenges in subtle and curious ways our approach to looking. As O'Reilly falls down the staircase in an immensely controlled and slow manner, she contorts her body into positions that present itself to the spectator in a way that both draws one in and makes one think where to look. Her falling is echoed in the centre of the building where Coogan is climbing another staircase and jumping onto a big yellow mattress, giving her body over to the fall, over and over again. In another room of the gallery, Civic is climbing on the wall. He is moving in and out of scenes of his homeland projected onto the wall, as if hiding under a table in one moment, as

if engaged in a conversation with the people in the film in the next. Somewhere in the building, echoing through all the galleries, a constant bang starts. It comes from the basement where Vascellari is ‘striking a rock with the bronze knot of a compressed church bell’.⁶⁵ I only know this from reading some of the documentation after the event. I do not go in since I fear the loud noise. But its constant presence throughout the performance is a reminder of what is going on around me. The performances all have their own strategies of either inviting or demanding our time but the framing of *Marina Abramović Presents...* makes the spectator acutely aware of these intertwining times that make up the experience.

The multiple and simultaneous performances in both *LABOUR* and *Marina Abramović Presents...* demand that we stop acting like consumers. My discomfort in these performances, I realise, comes from the fact that I cannot see all of them as much as I want. I go around the different performances and want to ‘consume’ everything instead of focusing on only one. However, the lack of direction from outside ourselves coupled with the array of performance work going on around us is bewildering and I lose momentum. A slight panic sets in when I think that to get the best result out of this I must see as much of everything as I can. After a while, faced with 13 performances to see, museum fatigue sets in. Gareth Davey notes that the traditional view of museum fatigue posits that visitors lose interest in an exhibition after approximately 30 minutes’ of concentration and that this results in ‘cruising through galleries, relatively rapid rates of viewing without rest periods, and increased selectivity towards exhibits’.⁶⁶ Davey suggests that the aspects contributing to museum fatigue are due to both visitor attributes (physical fatigue,

⁶⁵ Joanne ‘Bob’ Whalley and Lee Miller, ‘Disorderly Looking’, in *Marina Abramović + The Future of Performance Art*, ed. by Paula Orrell (Munich: Prestel, 2009), pp. 95-99 (p. 99).

⁶⁶ Gareth Davey, ‘What Is Museum Fatigue?’, *Visitor Studies Today*, Vol. 7 No. 3, 2005, p. 18.

cognitive processes) as well as environment attributes (exhibit design factors). For example, ‘mere-exposure effect’ is a cognitive process whereby ‘over-exposure may lead to ‘wear out’’.⁶⁷ Looking at similar shapes (say, paintings that are the same size and hung on similar level) repeatedly will make the visitor stop paying attention. My own museum fatigue was certainly due to physical fatigue (the five-hour coach trip up to Manchester that morning inevitably contributed to my feelings of fatigue) but also to the sense that there is too much to see (or that I am expected to see all of it).

However, instead of giving up and leaving to go sit on the inviting green grass outside, I stay for the whole duration waiting for a transformation brought on by this feat of endurance. Or, to quote Lehmann again, ‘an unrepeatably self-transformation’.⁶⁸ And yet, I am not able to enjoy and immerse myself in the durational performances happening in the gallery emptied of its usual collection. Instead, I sit in one corner telling myself not to fall asleep, to attend as best I could. Amelia Jones noted that ‘the entire event felt coercive’⁶⁹ as the audience milled around in white lab coats they were obliged to wear. My feeling was similar as I tried to fight my fatigue and increasing boredom brought on mainly by the sense that I was not supposed to leave.

Marina Abramović Presents... requires from the spectators that they attune according to the disciplined nature required in the drill. Evocative of Taylor’s motion studies it is an attempt to teach the spectators a new (effective) bodily rhythm. I am taught how to attune during the drill, and my subsequent failure to attune and find the here and now feels like I am not doing this job of watching or

⁶⁷ Davey, p. 19

⁶⁸ Lehmann, p. 137.

⁶⁹ Amelia Jones, ‘The Artist Is Present: Artistic Re-enactments and the Impossibility of Presence’, in *The Drama Review*, Vol. 55, No. 1, 2009, pp. 16-45, (p. 38).

witnessing well at all. However, it soon becomes clear that rather than putting spectators under duress or coercion, the demand that the show makes is for endurance in a period of regimented time more familiar to Fordist production than to the 24/7 world. In fact, the distinction that needs to be made here is one between attention and time frames. That is to say, the attention required in both of Abramović's works that I am discussing here is similar whereas their temporal structures are somewhat different. The come and go structure of *The House with the Ocean View* is an invitation to pay attention, to attune, and to attend amidst one's working day. Thus, *The House with the Ocean View* (and, in fact, *LABOUR*), which asks spectators to come and go, is compliant with and could be said to characterise the 24/7, always open, society where the boundaries between leisure and work are blurred. You can come and go because that is what you do all the time, you drop in, you drop out, you dip into this and go and see that, you work a bit while you watch this and so on. *Marina Abramović Presents...*, on the other hand, demands a use of time that is more akin to a restricted and disciplined work time.

It is this demand which might, in this instance, contribute to museum fatigue. There is a sense that this is work, that this is something I should not be doing in my leisure time. In Jean-Luc Godard's *Band of Outsiders* (1964), the three protagonists run through the Louvre to beat the nine minute record set by 'an American', enjoying a quick but perfectly satisfactory look through the museum's collections. The joke here is perhaps that one is not allowed to run in a museum. But more importantly, that one is not *supposed* to run in one either. A museum viewer is expected to walk slowly, to peruse the collections thoroughly, to spend time and give attention to each work. For Odile, Franz and Arthur in Godard's film, nine minutes is enough to spend in a museum, for them seeing the art works quickly

while running is, again, enough. Martin Creed, whose work I will discuss in the next chapter, notes how he enjoys running through museums. Creed states that sometimes it is ‘good to see museums at high speed. It leaves time for other things’.⁷⁰ Creed’s comment might seem like a throw-away musing on his own work,⁷¹ but it in fact points to the ways in which we approach (or are told to approach) museums. And that is the demand that museums make to us to spend our leisure time productively. In his essay on Valéry, Proust and the museum, Theodor Adorno argues that, ‘it is no longer possible to stroll through museums letting oneself be delighted here and there’.⁷² More and more, museums ‘emphatically demand something of the observer’.⁷³ In museums, ‘Art becomes a matter of education and information’.⁷⁴ In their work on culture industries, Adorno and Max Horkheimer posit that ‘Amusement under late capitalism is prolongation of work’.⁷⁵ The worker looks for entertainment or amusement in his leisure time to balance out the mechanised work process the worker goes through at work in a factory. Furthermore, Adorno argues, there is no free will in free time: ‘In a system where full employment itself has become the ideal, free time is nothing more than a shadowy continuation of labour’.⁷⁶ Thus, running through the museums as Godard’s protagonists and Creed does, is a way of resisting the museum’s demand for attention, its demand that leisure time is work. Museum fatigue, then, is an attribute

⁷⁰Martin Creed, ‘Work No. 852’, in *Martin Creed: Works*, ed. by Martin Creed and Tom Eccles (London: Thames and Hudson, 2010), p. 852.

⁷¹ I will discuss Creed’s *Work no. 850* in Chapter 4

⁷² Theodor W. Adorno, *Prisms*, trans. by Samuel and Shierry Weber (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1981), p. 185.

⁷³ Adorno, p. 185

⁷⁴ Adorno, p. 177. For Proust, ‘it is only the death of the work of art in the museum which brings it to life’ (p. 182).

⁷⁵ Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, ed. by Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, trans. by Edmund Jephcott (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), p. 105.

⁷⁶ Theodor Adorno, ‘Free Time’, in *Culture Industry*, ed. by J.M. Bernstein (London: Routledge), pp. 187-197, (p. 194).

of this phenomenon where we get tired of being at work, of working while at leisure. It is this same attribute of museum fatigue that I find in *Marina Abramović Presents...* In these four hours, with newly acquired training in attuning, I am asked to give my time, to put it to (good) use.

However, it is this same framing of the show which makes it akin to Fordist working practices that also facilitates or allows the spectator to be acutely aware of the intertwining times that make up the experience. Moreover, it is in fact this intertwining of different times that occurs in *Marina Abramović Presents...* that might tell us something about the specific character of time in performance. Writing of the approaches postmodern and post-dramatic performance employs towards time, Lehmann articulates a perhaps common misunderstanding around the notion of time as experienced. He argues that,

The new concept of shared time regards the aesthetically shaped and the real experienced time as a single cake, so to speak, shared by visitors and performers alike. The idea of time as an experience shared by all constitutes the centre of the new dramaturgies of time: from the diverse distortions of time to the assimilation of the speed of pop; from the resistance of slow theatre to theatre's convergence with Performance Art and its radical assertion of real time as a situation people live through together.⁷⁷

What does Lehmann mean when he says time is shared like a cake? Is time something material like a cake is, something tangible? How does one share in other people's experiences of time? How does one *live through time together*? What does this passage say about Lehmann's concept or thinking of time? Is time not only, as Agacinski argues, the measurement of movement? And if we agree with Agacinski's assertion that we should 'accept not having time oneself'⁷⁸ then how can we share or live through time? And more importantly, how do we share time in

⁷⁷ Lehmann, p. 155

⁷⁸ Agacinski, p. 6

performance then? Would that be to say that we experience it the same way as the person standing next to us?

In *Marina Abramović Presents...* one could note an implicit agreement between spectators and performers to share a time out. Heathfield calls this ‘a liminal temporality’.⁷⁹ This same idea is evident in the title of Heathfield’s book on Hsieh’s lifeworks, ‘Out of Now’. So what do all these terms mean? How is, or can one be, out of time? One can run out of time, I suppose, but can one be outside of time? This is a very different proposition from the contract to share a time out which implies that spectators are taking a period of time out of their usual schedule and focusing on something else. But can they all focus on one thing, namely time itself? Do they in other words share it or experience it the same? In the same way, I would question how a group of people can share time, or ‘live through it’. The misunderstanding in Lehmann’s statement, then, is that time can somehow be shared as if it was an object to be divided into sections. I would therefore suggest that when we say we share time, what we really mean is that we share space. Furthermore, for Lehmann, ‘The novelty [in body or endurance art practices] resides in the fact that there is a transition from *represented pain* to *pain experienced in representation*’.⁸⁰ I wonder if there is such a thing, then, as ‘real time’ experienced in representation and if this is the time that Lehmann is actually referring to when he assumes that we are able to share time. In other words, this real time that is happening, that we are sharing, is only happening in representation.

Writing about the type of thinking that is particular to theatre, or the way in which theatre could be said to think, Joe Kelleher notes that, ‘each performance is

⁷⁹ Heathfield, ‘Alive’, p. 8

⁸⁰ Lehmann, p. 166, original emphasis

terminal, and terminally silent, as if somehow *its* thinking – the thinking of the performance – were calculated to resist the thinking...that feeds upon it for its speech'.⁸¹ For Kelleher, the type of thinking that happens in theatre, or in theatrical performance, is one of stopping, or stopping and starting. He goes on to write:

one thing we can take from theatrical performance – I think – is that it does stop, that it involves a time limit. And here I am including theatrical performances that seem to go beyond the limit, all sorts of limits... Simply put, it is possible to arrive late at the theatre, even to be there early, anyway to be unpunctual.⁸²

I suggest that this is true of durational performances, even the very long ones (I am thinking here of Tehching Hsieh's work which I will discuss later) and it is the bottom line of performance. It is of course possible that within that time limit something about or within that performance goes beyond some other limit, in other words the limit of endurance. And since theatre stops it is possible that we are late for the theatre. Therefore, we have missed some of it. Although, we might have also missed some of it even when we are watching it but not paying attention. Theatre is, then, a limited activity. It asks us to pay attention at a certain time, for a certain period of time. But the other facet of Kelleher's argument is that something stops us at the theatre. Kelleher finds in the theatre

the sort of negation that stops to think, as if to register what the texts and images can't or can no longer say; or else that halts along the way to bring wandering thought back to where the performances, the texts, the images and everything else have stopped in front of us, and stop us in our places. Not unlike the way beauty might stop us. Or the writing on the wall might stop us. As such, the sort of thinking that belongs to the theatre.⁸³

Stopping is a way of thinking for theatre. And it is a stopping that creates repetition and lingering. Although performance asks us to pay attention at particular points,

⁸¹ Joe Kelleher, 'The Writing on the Wall: Performances of Thinking, Terminal and Interminable', keynote paper given at *How Performance Thinks*, PSi Performance and Philosophy Working Group conference, 13th – 14th April 2012, p. 8

⁸² Kelleher, p. 6-7.

⁸³ Kelleher, p. 6

and to be punctual, I suggest (along with Kelleher) that it is improbable that spectators pay attention to everything all the time. Something might stop us and make us think of something else, our thoughts wandering to a different direction. Or a thought that occurs in front of us (on stage) repeats and repeats in the mind until we realise we have not been listening and decide to start again. It is as if we get off the moving train (of thought?) at times and then get back on again, having missed a short part of the journey. Thus, while we could say that we share time for a short time while we are in the performance, we can only say that we share time in the sense that we are punctual, in the sense that there are limits. Within those limits of punctuality we are only sharing space while our time is ours alone. My time is multiple but not shared.

And this is what *Marina Abramović Presents...* ends up emphasising, despite its insistence on a communal experience of duration. Although the spectators do spend the same time in the performance(s) (apart from those who possibly left before the end), the experience is solitary, like the experience of viewing art in a gallery, one where other people, rather than being in the same place, get in the way. One where you do not go and see a particular painting (or you hesitate to go) because someone else is standing in front of it. Furthermore, Abramović often works in a 'tableau vivant' mode of durational performance where spectators do not see the end or the beginning. When we finish our drill, walking slowly across the room as a group and disperse into the different rooms of the gallery, the performances are already going on. O'Reilly is already falling down the stairs, Coogan is falling on her yellow mattress and Civic is climbing on the wall. Everything is already 'on' and happening and we join the artists after they have already begun their work. The performance is an image hanging in the air, simply

always there. It is endless. At the end (the end of spectating) we pile out of the gallery and the artists... I don't know what they do. The assumption (or illusion) is that they carry on. Thus, the 'shared time' (or real time experienced in representation) is only shared up to the point where the spectators leave. The theatricality of the tableau vivant model supports Shalson's claim that 'both theatre and performance art continue to endure [the] taint'⁸⁴ of theatricality.

I also find durational performances wasteful in the way they demand my time without telling me how long I might spend in them. Going to see *GATZ* for eight hours is different from going to see a durational performance of eight hours if I have not got eight hours to spend with it. So going into it I don't know how long I will spend with it. Or, to put it differently, the time we spend with durational performance is determined by the time we have available. I might stay five hours if I really have all that time or I might leave after an hour because I must go to a meeting. We slot durational performance into our lives, but is that what it is meant for? Here it is revealed that wasting time has different consequences when working in a 9-5 job than when working in a 24/7 model where time is less regimented. The use of time is looser, thus being more impervious to waste.

In her book *Network Culture*, Tizianna Terranova discusses free labour in the digital economy which 'is characterized by the emergence of new technologies (computer networks) and new types of worker (such as digital artisans)'.⁸⁵ Terranova focuses on this economy for the way in which Internet users are in many cases producing the content. AOL, for example, is run by 15,000 volunteers. Furthermore, 'The 'open-source' movement, which relies on the free labour of

⁸⁴ Shalson, 2012, p. 119

⁸⁵ Terranova paraphrases Richard Barbrook's description. Tizianna Terranova, *Network Culture: Politics for the Information Age* (London: Pluto Press, 2004), p. 76.

Internet tinkers, is further evidence of this structural trend within the digital economy'.⁸⁶ In such an economy, then, '[l]abour is not equivalent to waged labour'.⁸⁷ Both old (e.g. television and print) and new (Internet) media industry use free labour which is not, as Terranova points out, 'necessarily exploited labour' but mutually beneficial.⁸⁸ However, the digital economy 'challenged the post-modern assumption that labour disappears while the commodity takes on and dissolves all meaning'.⁸⁹ The Internet, in fact, demands a continuous labour to uphold it. But because the labour within the digital economy, for example, is mutually beneficial in ways that are not necessarily quantifiable, collective knowledge work presents a problem to capital which seeks to 'extract as much value as possible...out of this abundant, and yet slightly untractable terrain'.⁹⁰ However, although free or volunteer, the labour in the digital economy that sustains the Internet is nevertheless productive. It would then be possible to argue that within the post-Fordist organisation of the 24/7 world it is ever harder to waste time since doing things in order to waste time (such as using the Internet) turn out in the end to be productive.

Elevator Repair Service's *GATZ*, an eight-hour reading of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, presents an interesting case study which reveals a network of relations between work, waste and theatre.⁹¹ On stage, we see a non-descript office, slightly run down, looking like it smells of damp, like it did not really matter to whoever owns it. Then, some noise outside and lights come on in the corridor leading to the door to the office. A man in a long overcoat, played by Scott Shepherd, arrives to work in this dreary office. After all the necessary

⁸⁶ Terranova, p. 91

⁸⁷ Terranova, p. 88

⁸⁸ Terranova, p. 91

⁸⁹ Terranova, p. 90

⁹⁰ Terranova, p. 88

⁹¹ Noel Coward Theatre, 8 June – 15 July 2012.

manoeuvres (coffee cup down on the table, coat on the coat rack, turn on the computer) Nick sits down at his desk, only to realise his computer is refusing to switch on. He turns it off and then on again. After a couple of futile attempts, a sigh - like he's been here before. It is not only as if he has been here before, and for a long time, but that this place has been there for a long time, unchanged, an office like any other office, a place without a name or specific time. As Nick waits for the computer to do its thing, he flips open an index card holder to find, not index cards (although one could assume from looking at this place they could still be in use) but a book. Nick tries the computer again but as it does not seem to co-operate he starts to read the book, *The Great Gatsby*, out loud. Soon other people come in to the office, an office dogsbody, a secretary in her booth, Nick's manager or a more authoritative co-worker, going about their business, while Nick keeps reading. Gradually Nick's co-workers become characters in *The Great Gatsby*, saying their lines, acting out scenes. The drab office environment is turned into 1920s New York City and Long Island's North Shore.

Watching the way Nick enters the office and prepares for the working day one cannot help but think that he is not passionate about his work, or that there are other things that he could be doing with his time. The whole mood of the office reflects that. Nobody seems to mind him reading a book during his (and everybody's) work day. The story of Jay Gatsby, a self-made millionaire who likes to throw lavish parties at this mansion, presents the escapism out of the humdrum 9 to 5 office jobs we see on stage. Nick, and his co-workers, are drawn into the reading of the book not only to get away from their menial tasks but into the lives and stories of the rich in the roaring 1920s. But *GATZ* also draws attention to the relationship between labour and leisure in theatre. It does so, for example, through

the show's eight hour duration which, like in *LABOUR*, corresponds to the eight hour standard working day. In *GATZ* it also reflects the working day of the office workers while making the actor's labour more obvious. There is an interesting mix of real and theatrical labour in the way it draws attention to the actors' labour (the endurance involved in Shepherd's reading) and conceals it in acting (this is not 'about' endurance).

The show is divided into sections which last up to two hours each. It has a dinner break of an hour and a half in the middle of the production with fifteen minute breaks between its four sections. In some ways, time-wise, it feels like watching one production, having dinner and watching another production. In another way, it feels like going to work, having lunch and going to work for the afternoon. It also begs the question whether spending eight hours in the theatre is a waste of time we could use more productively or whether these eight hours are indeed the kind of life we should be living were we not wasting our time working.

Due to the long duration of the performance, the actors have found their own strategies of managing that duration which is also for most of them (apart from Shepherd) divided into smaller sections. In between their appearances on stage, the performers spend their time in different ways, apart from Kate Scelsa who plays the secretary and spends most of her time on stage in her little cubicle. Scelsa has been in the production since the company started working on it in 2005. Her character has no lines and mainly walks on to distribute paper work to her colleagues. So in order to spend her time while sitting in the cubicle, visible from shoulders up, Scelsa used

to work on her book in the earlier tours of the show.⁹² Scelsa puts her wasted time on stage into good use in her ‘double working’.

GATZ is, then, both about duration and endurance. Although the dinner break half way through the performance, as well as the few smaller breaks, ensure that spectators, and performers, remain as comfortable as possible, following such a long performance does take its toll. Elevator Repair Service’s performance theatre (Sara Jane Bailes’ term) habitually breaks the conventions of theatre. Or, lingers between antitheatricity and theatre. Its antitheatricity is one which, using Nicholas Ridout’s categorization, insists ‘on the presentation of ‘realness’ rather than the representation of the real’.⁹³ In *GATZ* it is the acknowledgement along the way that we are listening to a novel, a device that breaks the illusionism of theatre. *GATZ* presents realness as it presents us with a real book, being read in real time. In *GATZ*, the peculiar dynamic of reading a whole novel on stage pulls the spectator in and demands a different type of concentration. It is a gentle unravelling which brings to our attention a different temporality. We know this is going to take a while, since Shepherd is not even half way through his reading.

The power of this approach is the multiplicity of temporal frames which are in play here. According to Bailes, *GATZ* is one in a series of Elevator Repair Service works which

examine ways in which theatre can translate the solitary intimacy and interiority of the literary imagination (and the equally intimate relations between writer, text, and reader) into a public theatre spectacle, focusing upon the collective exteriority of the encounter demanded by stage.⁹⁴

⁹² Kate Scelsa, *Website*, <<http://www.katescelsa.com/>> (Accessed on 1 February 2014).

⁹³ Ridout, 2006, p. 5

⁹⁴ Sara Jane Bailes, *Performance Theatre and the Poetics of Failure: Forced Entertainment, Goat Island, Elevator Repair Service* (London: Routledge, 2011), p. 150

By bringing into focus both the duration of the reading, what we might call here real time and thus align the company's position with those interested in the term within live art, and the fictional time of the novel (and perhaps another fictional time of the office, the working day that is being wasted here), the production is tackling the question of shared time in performance. There is a sense of intrigue after seeing *GATZ* that one should read the novel now. But of course we have read the novel now. Or at least we have *heard* the novel, we might have *seen* something else. *GATZ* is not, then, an adaptation nor is it a reading. In fact, Bailes refers to this as a process of translation rather than adaptation.⁹⁵ Furthermore, it is a process of translation that is interested or invested in its own failure. It explores the (im)possibility of opening up or sharing the interiority that is, as Bailes notes, distinctive of literature.

Elevator Repair Service's approach to *The Great Gatsby* brings to mind Gertrude Stein's trouble with theatre and its syncopated time. Stein writes: 'Plays are either read or heard or seen'.⁹⁶ In *GATZ*, though, as I argued above, all of those things happen on stage. And they happen in their own tempo, or in Stein's words, in a tempo that is out of our control as an audience. When one reads a book one can go to the end of the book and read the end and still be excited by the book as one reads along. When watching *GATZ*, one might know or not know how *The Great Gatsby* goes but in either case, one cannot go ahead of the performance and get to the end. One hears and sees something being read and cannot rush ahead but is in fact in the syncopated troubled time of the theatre. Furthermore, Stein notes that there is 'a strange doubling' in a book which attempts 'to make the people in the book familiar

⁹⁵ Bailes, p. 151

⁹⁶ Stein, Plays, p. 451

with each other and to make the reader familiar with them' too.⁹⁷ It is double time. Thus, we see not only double time here but multiple time: the characters in the book making themselves familiar with other characters as well as with the audience, the labour of the actors working on the stage, the labour of Scelsa in her double work.

5 Techching Hsieh and passing the time

Contrary to the demand in *Marina Abramović Presents...* that the audience should stay for the whole duration, in Hsieh's work there is in fact very little room for the audience. It is impossible to stay for the whole duration (without becoming the work) and in fact the work has a clearly structured and limited audience relationship. Hsieh's *One-Year Performance 1980-1981* was an extreme form of being available to time where he assigned himself a one year long task of repetitious punctuality. Dressed in a grey uniform, Hsieh would punch a worker's time clock on the hour every hour. After each clocking-in he would stand next to the clock and shoot one film frame with a camera hanging from the ceiling. Like his other one year performances, this one was highly demanding, based on very strict rules that impose confinement and restrictions. Hsieh was only able to sleep for 50 minutes or so at a time and was unable to go very far from his New York loft. His act of punching-in, performed in a uniform with a label of Hsieh's name and a number sequence of the starting and ending dates of the performance and his short, almost military hair at the beginning of the project can be seen as a symbolized performance of labour in capitalist society. Heathfield argues that, 'Hsieh's physical conditions in this time are an exaggerated version of the altered biological conditions of shift labor; he is pressed into an extreme state of broken dreaming and

⁹⁷ Stein, p. 457

subdued consciousness, where the primary function of the body is simply to produce'.⁹⁸ Hsieh contends that, 'Wasting time is my basic attitude to life; it is a gesture of dealing with the absurdity between life and time'.⁹⁹ By proposing a gap *between* life and time, Hsieh draws attention to the unstoppable onward march of time. According to the artist, the one year pieces were not blurring art and life but he made his life follow art.¹⁰⁰ The struggle then becomes about how to pass time, or how to survive.

What is left of this year of punctual punching-in is 366 yellow time cards and a film of Hsieh standing next to his time clock. During the year, he missed 133 punch-ins due to sleeping or being either too late or too early. The subsequent film totals six minutes and 4 seconds and is a peculiar testament to Hsieh's arduous task. Every frame presenting an hour, it is a convulsion where we see his body moving and swaying as he stood slightly differently every time and we see his hair grow over the year. First it is difficult to see the hair growth as it goes from a shaved head to a centimetre of hair. After that it is more obvious until the end again where Hsieh's hair has reached his shoulders and it is more difficult to see it grow. The clock hands on the time clock next to Hsieh whir around and the numbers on the time cards behind him climb up as each day progresses and start from the bottom again as a new day starts. Hsieh states that his work 'is not about documentation'.¹⁰¹ According to Hsieh, 'the document is secondary... [because] the document can hardly restore art'.¹⁰² And yet, the film and the few rare but perfectly succinct photographs of this work (and his other one-year performances, all immaculately

⁹⁸Heathfield, in Tehching Hsieh and Adrian Heathfield, *Out Of Now – The Lifeworks of Tehching Hsieh* (London and Cambridge, MA: Live Art Development Agency and MIT Press, 2008), p. 3.

⁹⁹Hsieh, 2008, p. 334

¹⁰⁰ Hsieh, p. 334

¹⁰¹Tehching Hsieh, Wide Open School Talk, 20 June 2012, Hayward Gallery, London.

¹⁰²Hsieh, 2008, p. 326

presented in the voluminous publication edited by Heathfield) seem like a very well thought-out and executed series of documentation. In fact, they are necessary as Hsieh points out: ‘To get the message of my art, an audience’s presence is not vital. As long as audiences know my concept and the real action I did, they can use their own experiences and imagination to feel these artworks’.¹⁰³ This is thus a work that demands very little of its audience in terms of durational engagement. Instead, there is a demand for relating to the work on the level of thought and experience. In some ways, Hsieh’s art is for him, an isolation. Hsieh states that if he ‘became too social with an audience’ during the performances ‘it would break the work’.¹⁰⁴ He goes on to say, however, that, without his audiences his performances simply wouldn’t exist. So there is a need for someone to be there at the allocated times, during the days when the audience is invited to come and see the work. This makes the audience a co-operator who maintains the work’s nature as work and also as art.

However, all the pictures of the work, the film frames and the time cards document only the time of clocking in. What is left of the year is six minutes and four seconds. I would therefore suggest that although this work is about, and requires, endurance it is not durational. If one were to ask ‘Where is this work?’, as one viewer did when going to see Hsieh’s *One Year Performance 1978-1979* during which Hsieh lived in a cell built in his loft,¹⁰⁵ the conclusion would be that the work is a series of single instances, punches of the time clock and clicks of the camera reel, totalling not a year of time spent but only six minutes and four seconds. The time outside of these instances is the auxiliary time we experience in performance: getting ready to go, travelling to the venue, waiting for it to start, waiting in

¹⁰³ Hsieh, p. 327

¹⁰⁴ Hsieh, p. 327

¹⁰⁵ Hsieh, p. 327

between... Therefore, does Hsieh really give his time excessively? Or does he give it (spend it) in short instances? The duration of the piece was decided as a year since ‘One year is a basic unit for human beings to calculate their life, and it is also the time the earth takes to circle the sun completely’.¹⁰⁶ Hsieh states that he could have done the piece for longer but that it was not necessary: going beyond a year would not prove anything useful.¹⁰⁷ There is, in fact, an interesting aspect in Hsieh’s *One Year Performance 1980-1981* whereby the work seems to be about marking time through measuring and calculating it and yet there is an attempt at passing time. Hsieh states that the work is not a lived experience, in other words it is art.

With uninterrupted commitment to this repetitious task Hsieh’s performance also addresses the in-built efficiency of Fordism’s motion studies: Clocking in was meant to reduce time waste, yet Hsieh gives his time excessively.¹⁰⁸ His time becomes not his time but the worker’s time, in fact it becomes the clock’s time. Hsieh goes on to say: ‘I had to let time waste in order to prove how hard I was working’.¹⁰⁹ Heathfield suggests that Hsieh’s performance can ‘be read as a systematic critique of the temporal logic upon which the social and cultural organization of late-capitalism is founded’.¹¹⁰ According to Heathfield, Hsieh critiques this temporal logic through his non-production. Punching-in demarcates or brackets a period of time when something is produced and that period of time is monitored and controlled in order to make it the most productive it can be. However, Hsieh’s hourly signing on is just that, simply an act of signing with nothing to show for it. By using such a highly efficient and calculated production

¹⁰⁶Hsieh, p. 319

¹⁰⁷Hsieh, 2012

¹⁰⁸Heathfield, 2008, p. 32

¹⁰⁹ Hsieh, 2008, p. 334.

¹¹⁰Heathfield, 2008, p. 32.

method to produce nothing, Hsieh enacts a peculiar kind of ghost version of capitalist production. But how does such an enactment of the process function as a critique of it? According to Heathfield, 'Hsieh gives his personal temporality as a matter of record to an apparatus of accounting and exposure; he gives it over to another order; that of capitalized time'.¹¹¹ In other words, Hsieh's personal temporality, his rhythm is taken over by capitalist production and his rhythm becomes that of capitalist time. But it is a misreading of capitalist time that allows Heathfield and others to see it as a commodity.

Heathfield asserts that practices exploring long duration in 1960s were aware of the cultural logics of late-capitalism where 'time itself is a commodity that must be exploited to its maximum potential'.¹¹² In his writing on Hsieh, Heathfield further pursues and confirms this same reading where time is made into a commodity through it being dissected, spatialised and economised.¹¹³ But how can time be a commodity when, as Agacinski points out in the quote above, time is 'only the relative measurement of a movement'? Time is the measurement of labour which is in turn a commodity. Or to quote Marx: 'What exclusively determines the magnitude of the value of any article is therefore the amount of labour socially necessary, or the labour-time socially necessary, for its production'.¹¹⁴ We cannot sell or exploit our time as a commodity. At times Heathfield seems to contend as much, for example when he writes:

[Hsieh] gives his time to the work of art, and forms this gift as a giving over to the machine (to the orders for which it operates) as if time itself were in his (or its) possession. One might say, then, that this is an impossible gift: he

¹¹¹Heathfield, 2008, p. 32

¹¹²Heathfield, p. 21

¹¹³Heathfield, p. 36

¹¹⁴Marx, p. 129

gives something that cannot be owned and in so doing he gives the gift of nothing.¹¹⁵

So, Hsieh's gift of time is an impossible gift because time cannot be owned. And yet, in other places there is a revealing misplacement of terms in Heathfield's writing where time has become a commodity because it has become corrupted by capitalism.

Furthermore, a sense of mourning pervades Heathfield's text where time as something pure has been lost. It is now (nothing but) another product on the market. Similarly, Christine Wertheim and Margaret Wertheim repeat this misunderstanding in their reading of Marx when they argue that,

it is not, as Marx points out, essentially our labor that we sell in the market; it is our time, like any commodity, the condition for man's selling 'his' time is that it be constituted as something both quantifiable and detachable. Clock time is the mechanism by which this constitution is effected. Objectified, regularized, alienated and automatized, the clockable units of modern man's time are more than just an effect of the free-market, they are its *raison d'être*...¹¹⁶

However, as Marx argues, 'In order to become a commodity, the product must be transferred to the other person, for whom it serves as a use-value, through the medium of exchange'.¹¹⁷ It is not the worker's time that is a use-value for the capitalist, but the labour. This systematic critique then that Hsieh engages in is dependent on a logic that says: according to capitalism we *have* or *own* time, in other words, time is something that we can *give*. Therefore, Hsieh gives his time (excessively) over to the machine (of capitalism). Thus, wasting time only makes sense in this configuration of capitalist time.

¹¹⁵ Marx, p. 32-31

¹¹⁶ Christine Wertheim and Margaret Wertheim, 'The Pendulum Swings', in *Jem Finer: Longplayer*, ed. by Gerrie van Noord (London: Artangel, 2000), pp. 3-6, (p. 5).

¹¹⁷ Marx, p. 133. This section was in fact added to the later editions of *Capital* by Friedrich Engels to do away with the misunderstanding that every product produced for someone else is a use-value.

Hsieh's art/life is made possible, of course, by him working to earn a living that would support his year-long performances. In addition to his carpentry work, Hsieh held cleaning and dishwashing jobs before and between his performances. In addition to getting some financial support from his family in Taiwan, he also rented out his 5000 square feet Tribeca loft flat to several people and this income (150 dollars per month) made his futile art labour possible.¹¹⁸ Hsieh can waste time (through his art) because he has time to waste. This waste has been made possible by manual labour (good old true work).

His fourth and final one year performance was done in collaboration with Linda Montano. During *Art/Life One Year Performance 1983-1984*, the pair were tied together with a rope that measured five and a half feet when stretched to its maximum between them. Customary to Hsieh's previous works, at the beginning of the performance, the pair released a declaration stating the rules and shaved their heads. Two witnesses signed a statement proving that they had inspected the lead seal at each end of the rope. According to the rules of the performance, Montano and Hsieh were not allowed to touch each other during the year despite having to be in the same room at all times, when indoors. The photographic documentation from the year show the two artists lying on their single beds next to each other, doing DIY together, Montano brushing her hair in the bathroom while Hsieh is showering behind the shower curtain next to her, Montano standing by the window that Hsieh is washing outside on the window ledge, the pair cycling, Hsieh standing with his back to a wall being photographed with the rope extending to the edge of the picture, the pair installing an exhibition, the pair with friends, Montano standing

¹¹⁸ Quoted in Delia Bajo and Brainard Carey, 'In Conversation: Tehching Hsieh', *The Brooklyn Rail*, <<http://brooklynrail.org/2003/08/art/tehching-hsieh>>, (Accessed on 15 February 2013); Hans Ulrich Obrist, 'Interview with Tehching Hsieh, in *Marina Abramović + The Future of Performance Art*, ed. by Paula Orrell (Munich: Prestel, 2009), pp. 75-83, (p. 82).

with her back to a wall being photographed with the rope extending to the edge of the picture, the pair jogging in the streets of New York. The only other piece of documentation that survives from the year are cassette tapes that were used to record the conversations that Hsieh and Montano had during the year. These cassette tapes were never planned to be heard and survive less as a form of documentation than a legitimate part of the performance.

The loss of intimacy during the year long performance caused considerable tension between Hsieh and Montano and their first few months have been reported to have been tumultuous. The strict rules of the performance did not prevent the two artists from continuing to make their work in other contexts. Montano earned money doing some teaching while Hsieh did carpentry. Although, being tied to another person certainly made them change their routines and the speed with which they lived. As Montano notes, 'I am forced to remain alert and attentive because I am doing something different from what I ordinarily do [...] the task of being tied is so difficult and absorbing that I can only do just that'.¹¹⁹ In some way the effects of duration can be read in the relation between Hsieh and Montano. Or in other words, duration becomes evident as an echo that bounces between them. The contract that we saw between Abramović and her audience here becomes a contract between Hsieh and Montano.

Furthermore, Hsieh's and Montano's relationship parallels, and to some extent goes beyond, the collaboration between Marina and Ulay. There are interesting connections to be made, for example, between *Night Sea Crossing* (1981) and Hsieh's and Montano's rope piece. There is a picture among the documentation from 26th July where Montano is sitting by her desk writing in a

¹¹⁹ Quoted in Heathfield, 2008, p. 49

notebook while Hsieh is sitting at his, typing on a typewriter. But contrary to *Night Sea Crossing*, a performance where Marina Abramović and Ulay sit opposite one another separated by a table for extended periods of time, Hsieh and Montano are not sitting opposite but with their backs to each other. There is a perfect symmetry in this photograph and it is similar to the symmetry finds in *Night Sea Crossing*, although in reverse. And yet, there is a clear tension between them.

In her interview with the artists, Cynthia Carr contends that, ‘Montano thinks of art as ascetic training. Hsieh thinks his art is often misunderstood to be ascetic training’.¹²⁰ Hsieh considered *Art/Life One Year Performance 1983-1984* as representing a symbolic struggle; the ‘central image of two people tied together symbolized people’s survival (dependency) needs’.¹²¹ For him, it was not about the sexual politics between man and a woman but about two equal people. Montano, on the other hand, was interested in that precise aspect, the ‘power structure of their relationship within the work’.¹²² For Hsieh, his art is not about enduring but existing or surviving. Jill Johnston calls it ‘hardship art’.¹²³ Hsieh’s formalism, his strict belief that his art is a task to survive, hits against Montano’s view of the work as something personal. It also butts against the focus on longing and melancholy in Heathfield’s writing on Hsieh’s work. In this writing time as something pure is lost and therefore constantly mourned. Time in late capitalism is time spoiled by clocks that demand so much of us, by demanding constant productivity.

However, since time is nothing, or not a thing, it cannot be lost. Time, in such writing, seems to be a substitute for life. In other words, we are aware, or

¹²⁰C. Carr, *On Edge: Performance at the End of the Twentieth Century* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2008 [1993]), p. 5.

¹²¹ Jill Johnston, ‘Hardship Art’, *Art in America*, Vol. 72, 1984, pp. 176-9, (p. 178).

¹²² Johnston, p. 178, original emphasis

¹²³ Johnston, p. 176

afraid, that there is a life out there somewhere that we are not living. The rhetoric around the importance of wasting time is in accordance with the rhetoric by which there exists between us and our work a form of alienation and it is produced by the fact that we exchange our labour for a wage. Being alienated from our work, we mourn the lost time that we could be living were we not working for a wage. This would seem to be the project of the post-work imaginaries, the ‘Get a Life’ advocates. Thus, working hard to waste time, or paying excessive attention to things done outside our work, is a way of reaching out or regaining some of that lost time.

In this chapter I have discussed durational performances and their demand for an altered mode of watching or witnessing performance. I have chosen my examples of live art and durational performances because they complicate or offer useful suggestions to the question concerning duration and endurance. The demand felt in *LABOUR* is that we as spectators partake in endurance. It also seemingly invites the spectator to come and go but the remote location of the venue makes it difficult to integrate the performance into the rest of my day. Furthermore, *LABOUR*'s eight-hour duration seems significant as an index of a standard working day and it would therefore make sense to stay for the whole duration. I have suggested that the come and go structure of durational performance is compliant with the always open 24/7 world where we are constantly multi-tasking, always equally ready for work and leisure. I began this chapter with a question on whether durational performance ‘wastes’ time and if so, acts as a form of resistance to the general economy of capitalist time. Placing the durational performance works discussed here in parallel to changing post-Fordist work practices, they also say something about the wastefulness of work time. Rather than resisting the general economy of time such performance practices (and these works I have been talking

about in particular) have come to reflect in some ways the economies of duration in varying work patterns in which boundaries between different types of time (work, leisure, etc.) is increasingly blurred. I have also discussed the degree to which durational performance in some ways attempts to slot itself in to the working day or the times allotted for such activities. In so doing I have also questioned for whom durational performance is durational. How do audiences witness these works or what are the possibilities given to them to watch them in their entirety? *Marina Abramović Presents...* confronts that question with an insistence that the audience stays through the whole performance. In so doing, it presents a model more akin to Fordist production where efficiency is key. I have included Hsieh's one year performances in this discussion because of their extreme duration. But a closer look at his *One Year Performance 1980-1981* turns out not to be durational although it is about, and requires, endurance. Furthermore, Hsieh's practice receives a peculiar gloss from Heathfield for whom time has been tainted and become a commodity to sell on the market place of capitalism.

I begin the next chapter with a description of a performance by Brian Lobel in which the selling and buying of both time and performance is examined through a literal interpretation of selling time. In so doing I move from durational performances to very short performances which, I argue, present their own challenge to performance's economy.

Chapter 3

Instances: On Consuming Encounters

1 What to do with a minute? Taking part in *Carpe Minuta Prima*

I didn't expect it to be so quick. Not the actual minute that I sold but the whole experience. There is something very urgent in that experience. Brian Lobel invites you to step into his make-shift office where he explains the rules of the transaction: he records a minute of your time, which you sell to him. The recording happens in a small black space behind a curtain with a computer camera above eye level. Lobel explains what you need to do (push the button on the wall, a light will flash three times and that is when the camera starts to record) and says you can do anything for a minute. 'All I ask', says Lobel, 'is that you use your minute well'.

Lobel leaves and I am struck with a slight panic. What am I going to do with my minute? Prior to my appointment at *Carpe Minuta Prima*,¹ I hadn't really thought about how I would use my minute. I knew that I had very few skills that I could use and even fewer tricks to do in a minute so I simply decided to do nothing. Just to stand there. To take a minute for myself. Or, if the mood struck me, read a passage from a book that I knew would last approximately one minute. I knew that because I tried it out, because I rehearsed it. And that was just it, a rehearsed reading of a book on Beckett didn't quite seem like the thing to sell. Too dramatic. Trying too hard. Too boring. Therefore, a minute spent not doing very much seemed like the best option at the time. I wracked my brains for a few moments, thinking that doing nothing might not be an option here after all, that I would let Lobel down if I

¹ 23 February 2011, Brixton Market, London.

didn't do anything, that I would fail at this game, that I would not know how to do this performance. But no matter how hard I thought I couldn't come up with anything to do that I thought worth selling. So I simply stood and stared at the camera, feeling more and more anguished about my inactivity as the seconds rolled by. In the end the minute felt quite long and yet exactly like a minute should feel.

I left the small black space and sat down in Lobel's office again. I decided to sell my minute and wrote and signed a contract, giving Lobel exclusive rights to put the recorded minute in a vending machine for people to buy. I took my one pound coin and left, puzzled by the exchange. Had I done the right thing? Had I spent my minute well? And as I was walking to the underground that was going to take me back to central London, I wondered whether I had spent my time well coming to Brixton Market in order to sell my time. Was it really worth it? It was all so quick. The questions that are raised by the exchange are intriguing ones. How do we spend our time and what part of our time is worth selling? I had reasoned to myself that since I spend a lot of my time gazing into the distance, not doing anything, this was the type of time I could sell since it wasn't useful for me. I have, I thought to myself, several of these minutes that I could use more effectively so why not get rid of them. And perhaps, even if I had a skill that would make a minute worthwhile, I wouldn't want to sell that. Maybe that is worth more than a pound. Yet, Lobel's words about using my minute well keep ringing in my ears. The future buyers of our minutes won't know what they'll get until they have bought it. There is no information on the cover of the DVD about the person selling their time, only a picture of them holding a pound coin. So while there is little pressure to do interesting things with your minute in order to get it sold, to market yourself, there is the pressure of making a good impression, to give it your all, your ultimate best.

Someone out there might buy my minute and get a person staring at them. However, who is to say I didn't do anything? Or that consequently, my recorded minute won't do anything to its future owner? However you look at it, however I look at it, I gave my time. I was there. Actively present. Effort invested.

The experience of nowness, as Andy Lavender calls it, is a vital element in taking part in *Carpe Minuta Prima*. For Lavender,

We both own more of the world, as shoppers and shareholders, and less of it, as individuals in increasingly denationalized and corporatized economies. Something similar has happened to our experience of time. We have more of it. And there is, to put it anecdotally, never enough of it. Which means that the experience of nowness has become a defining feature of our relationship to time.²

Lobel's request that we use our minutes well strikes to the heart of the matter. For Lavender, nowness and liveness, which he sees as siblings, 'are the temporal equivalent of goods and possessions'.³ In this economy, of course, time is money, and time spent well is possibly even more money. As Lavender points out, whether we spend more leisure or 'quality' time or are determined to 'live in the now', we are increasingly concerned with pursuing time as a commodity.⁴ By asking how to make our time more valuable, *Carpe Minuta Prima* questions the value of time in this economy of rushing around. Ten days after my appointment to sell my minute, I go back to Brixton to buy somebody else's minute from the vending machine. I look at the faces on the DVDs and end up choosing a lady with red hair who looks nice. I think to myself she looks like a person who spends her time well. I think I will probably get my money's worth. During her minute, the red-haired lady called Claire introduces herself and explains why she's come to Brixton that day, how she

² Andy Lavender, 'The Moment of Realized Actuality', in *Theatre in Crisis: Performance Manifestos for a New Century*, ed. by Maria M. Delgado and Caridad Svich (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), pp. 183–190 (p. 188).

³ Lavender, p. 188

⁴ Lavender, p. 188

saw this art project and became interested, that she started studying last autumn and how this project relates to her studies. She is cut off at the end of her minute, she would have had more to say. I am happy with the minute I've purchased. It's a useful minute.

However, the emphasis on performance's *nowness* often results in claims according to which, as Nicholas Ridout argues, 'the evanescence of performance represents a way of avoiding capture within circuits of economic exchange'.⁵ For example, Joshua Sofaer contends: 'By the very nature of the work – temporal, fleeting, often conceptually based – [live art practices] struggle to enter into the world of exchange capital. They do not accrue value. They are not investments, they can not be sold on'.⁶ However, as Ridout has shown, 'The exit from the art market – a market in manufactures – is not an exit from the market as such, but merely a relocation of operations from a market in goods to a market in services'.⁷ In his discussion on the service economy, Ridout argues that, 'contemporary performance practice does more than reflect shifts in the operations of capital and labour. It participates actively in the logics of the service economy'.⁸ Ridout paraphrases Maurizio Lazzarato to define 'immaterial labour' as 'work that does not produce goods, but instead produces social relations, communication, [and] the movement of information'.⁹ Furthermore, this 'labour of the service and knowledge economies'¹⁰ is, according to Lazzarato, 'split between conception and execution, between labour

⁵ Nicholas Ridout, 'Performing in the Service Economy: Outsourcing and Delegation', in *Double Agent*, ed. by Claire Bishop and Silvia Tramontana (London: ICA, 2008), pp. 126 – 131, (p. 130).

⁶ Joshua Sofaer, 'Seven Reasons Why Live Art Gives Great Value', in *I Love LA: Postcards from a Volatile Corpus*, ed. by Mark Waugh (London: Arts Council of England, 2001), pp. 2-6 (p.2).

⁷ Ridout, p. 130

⁸ Ridout, p. 127

⁹ Ridout, p. 129

¹⁰ Ridout, p. 129

and creativity, between author and audience'.¹¹ The split, writes Ridout, is 'most visible in the divided sociality of the traditional theatre set-up'.¹² He goes on to argue:

The second half of the twentieth century saw the inauguration of a shift from an industrial/theatrical model of artistic production to one in which the performance of services predominated. This shift is perhaps most evident in those theatrical innovations that sought or seek to reconfigure the relation between stage and auditorium (or, as we might now say, between production and consumption).¹³

Ridout suggests that this shift to a service economy 'is perhaps more evident in recent developments in immersive theatrical experiences'¹⁴ and attempts at audience participation, such as one to one performances. The split is certainly there in Lobel's *Carpe Minuta Prima* where it is the viewer who does the work, produces a performance and applies creativity. As monetary exchanges go, *Carpe Minuta Prima*'s deal of one minute for one pound seems, at a first quick glance, fairly straight-forward and transparent.¹⁵ And yet, considering my anxieties around how to do this performance, how to spend my minute and whose minute to buy, it seems it is also a very puzzling transaction. Lavender argues that '[a]n experience of liveness [and nowness] is partly a question of being in fuller possession of this moment, having and holding it more completely'.¹⁶ Considering Ridout's statement that performance does not exit the market place and Lavender's description of nowness as (equivalent to) goods and possession, what is this experience of nowness that we buy in the form of performance? Do we go to performance in order to buy time to hold it more completely, as Lavender suggests? In fact, how is time spent, sold,

¹¹ Maurizio Lazzarato, cited in Ridout, p. 129

¹² Ridout, p. 129

¹³ Ridout, p. 129

¹⁴ Ridout, p. 129

¹⁵ However, it is not very transparent at all. I will examine the cost of the project in the first section of the chapter.

¹⁶ Lavender, p. 188.

wasted, invested and bought in the theatre economy? I focus on short performances in this chapter in order to trouble some of the assumed conditions of performance. How might short duration (and I will define the term ‘short’ in this context in the next section) interrupt that economy and make time strange? Indeed, what are the conditions in which performance gets produced, programmed and circulated? What does a focus on short duration reveal about that economy? Furthermore, how does short performance emphasise the experience of nowness? How to ‘hold it more completely’? In order to approach these questions, this chapter investigates the material conditions of performance and theatre. In addition to examining *Carpe Minuta Prima* and its hidden costs, I will also concentrate at some length on one to one performances because I see them as interrupting the way performance is usually programmed. The limited audience capacity of such work means that one to one performances are often (encouraged to be) half an hour or less. I also extend these questions into the visual art world and gallery-based performance and examine Martin Creed’s *Work no. 850*, where runners sprinted through the Duveen Galleries in Tate Britain every 30 seconds for four months and his Turner Prize winning *Work no. 277*, or *Lights going on and off*. I will examine the duration of these art works and in so doing explore the act of waiting in these works. I also consider the type of economy that the art world inhabits and how visual art institutions conduct their models of business.

2 The material conditions of performance

In exploring the material conditions of performance I follow the model of cultural materialism as outlined by, among others Jonathan Dollimore, Alan Sinfield and Ric Knowles. In so doing, I focus on how the social and economic aspects affect both

the production and reception of performance. For Knowles, cultural materialism ‘understands meaning to be produced in the theatre as a negotiation at the intersection of three shifting and mutually constitutive poles’: performance in one corner, conditions of production in the second and conditions of reception in the third.¹⁷ Within this triangle, ‘A wide range of material factors frame, contain, and contribute to the ways in which audiences understand theatrical productions’.¹⁸ I wish to investigate these factors in order to understand what audiences are paying for and why and how what I called in the previous chapter the ‘wasteful duration’ of performance fits into capitalist economy. I wish to take the focus off the event of the performance and instead look at materialism. As Dollimore and Sinfield argue,

‘Materialism’ is opposed to ‘idealism’: it insists that culture does not (cannot) transcend the material forces and relations of production. Culture is not simply a reflection of the economic and political system, but nor can it be independent of it.¹⁹

Alongside cultural materialism I will continue with Marxist theory as discussed in Chapter 2. Here I will discuss use and exchange value more explicitly and the labour time necessary for their production. According to Marx, ‘The usefulness of a thing makes it a use-value’.²⁰ Furthermore, it is the physical body (iron or corn etc.) of the commodity ‘which is the use-value or useful thing’.²¹ In Marxist theory of labour, the substance of value is labour and the measure of its magnitude is labour-time.²² Or to put it differently, ‘As exchange-values, all commodities are merely definite quantities of *congealed labour-time*’.²³ So, what happens if we look at the

¹⁷ Ric Knowles, *Reading the Material Theatre*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 3.

¹⁸ Knowles, p. 9

¹⁹ Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield, eds. ‘Foreword to the first edition: Cultural Materialism’, in *Political Shakespeare: Essays in Cultural Materialism*, 2nd ed. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), pp. vii-viii, (p. viii).

²⁰ Marx, p. 126

²¹ Marx, p. 126

²² Marx, p. 131

²³ Marx, p. 130, original emphasis

relationship between the performance maker or artist, the spectator and the producer? Do we find here the relationship between the worker, producer and the capitalist? According to Marx, the capitalist ‘has two objectives: in the first place, he wants to produce a use-value which has exchange-value, i.e. an article destined to be sold, a commodity; and secondly he wants to produce a commodity greater in value than the sum of the values of the commodities used to produce it’.²⁴ What follows, then, is an examination of how a performance (of immaterial labour) is sold and produced as a commodity and who or what might the capitalist be in this network of labour relations.

I have chosen to focus on *Carpe Minuta Prima* here in order to examine the material conditions of performance and theatre and in so doing to situate the production and reception of short performances in the wider economy of theatre. I consider Lobel’s project to be a useful example in the ways it highlights the issues around value, especially monetary value, within performance. Firstly, its one minute duration amounts to what I would describe as a short performance. (Even considering the short time on either side of the performance where the participants visit Lobel’s office first to learn the rules of the game and then to sign the contract and be paid, the whole experience only lasts approximately five minutes.) I also employ it here as an example of a performance that reveals its own conditions of production. To this end, I will discuss the costs and the funding of the project later in this section. To begin, I will outline how a standard time of performance is often formulated and in so doing consider in what contexts a performance could be considered to be short, as any such term is highly relative and dependent on how and where it is presented and framed.

²⁴ Marx, p. 293

The question of venue and audience is an important one when it comes to thinking about the material conditions or the context of more traditionally staged performance and theatre. In *Reading the Material Theatre*, Knowles compares the funding structures between commercial and not-for-profit theatre and contends:

Not-for-profit theatre is neither structured to pay dividends to private investors nor to reward its creators and producers financially with anything other than wages or standard royalties negotiated through agents or professional organizations. In theory at least, this would suggest more flexibility in programming, and the opportunity for more aesthetically or politically alternative productions to contribute more directly or more successfully to the production or negotiation of cultural values than is available in the culturally affirmative world of the commercial theatre.²⁵

Thus Knowles would seem to suggest that short performances, if considered in terms of being aesthetically alternative, would sit better in a not-for-profit theatre.

Knowles goes on to note, however, that public funding ‘is not without its own constraints’.²⁶ Similarly, producer Kate Yedigaroff makes a clear distinction between programming for a regional theatre and more experimental venues such as festivals. Yedigaroff works as a producer both for the Bristol Old Vic and for Mayfest, an annual two-week performance festival, also in Bristol. Speaking of the Bristol Old Vic, Yedigaroff asks:

There is an income to be made, so how do we programme imaginatively without isolating the core audience group who in Bristol are older, perhaps conservative in their taste? They’re the high net worth, which means that they’re the people who’ve got more money.²⁷

Yedigaroff’s question touches on several factors that are at play at a larger, regional theatre. Firstly, there is a strong indication here that the core audience group have the most ‘buying power’. As Yedigaroff suggests, it is that group who come to the theatre most regularly and are willing to spend their money. As regular theatre-goers

²⁵ Knowles, p. 56

²⁶ Knowles, p. 56

²⁷ Kate Yedigaroff. Interview with the author, 19 April 2011. All subsequent quotes from Yedigaroff are from this interview.

they probably have expectations of what they wish to see in that particular venue.

For Yedigiaroff, it is a question of trust:

My assumption is that there would have to be so much work done with an audience to understand what that [an unusually short performance] means, that there's a thing about trust there and not feeling ripped off, or feeling like you don't really understand what's happening.

Therefore, the question of what kind of work a venue regularly and traditionally programmes is of great importance here. On that point, Yedigiaroff goes on to note, 'We're pretty stuck in the structures of how we present work... There's a kind of imaginative link missing in terms of you could invite someone over a year to come and do their very short thing, [where] they're resident there rather than touring'. Furthermore, in Knowles' discussion on the space of reception there are strong indications of why theatres might not be inclined to stage extremely short shows or why audiences might not 'bother' coming to see them. As Knowles argues, 'the theatrical event begins long before the house lights dim'.²⁸ In other words, the time that spectators take to get to the performance venue is already a part of the experience. Paraphrasing Robin Phillips, the director of Stratford Festival in Ontario, Knowles notes that 'the production began when the spectator arrived at the edge of town'.²⁹ Thus, audiences are, I suggest, reluctant to drive to an event that is considerably shorter than all the time taken to get to it. As such, audiences might not drive to a venue, have drinks, see a very short show, have dinner and then drive home. Whereas they would probably drive to a venue, have drinks, have dinner and then drive home. Theatre, therefore, needs to be able to sustain the social aspects which surround it. Another aspect which is highlighted by short performances especially in regional theatres is ticket prices. Can the audience be charged as much

²⁸ Knowles, p. 70

²⁹ Knowles, p. 70

as they would be for a two-hour show and if not, how to cover production costs?

Yedigiaroff points out the importance of an interval in venues such as the Bristol Old

Vic:

[T]hat's a moment when you possibly have 500 people buying drinks and that's a major source of revenue for any kind of theatre or regional theatre. To make a case for something that doesn't have that is quite difficult. [...] And again, the tickets in that space are priced differently and they have to be more expensive so I suppose there is a caution there to ask somebody to spend 30 odd quid on something that is really short. [...] So everything, the way that work is produced there, is cost centred right back to the show. So it has to in some way make sense together.

Therefore, the seminal elements of an interval and the tradition of programming certain type of work in a venue mean that a standard duration of a performance in regional theatres is around one to two hours.

It is perhaps not surprising, as Yedigiaroff argues, that 'there are very few people [in theatre programming] who will take a risk on taking something that's not tried and tested as a model'. For Yedigiaroff, 'festivals are where it can happen'. In theatre, short plays and monologues often get programmed as an evening of several short performances, or such plays and monologues might accompany a longer, full evening performance. Festivals, on the other hand, are freer to programme work of shorter duration as they often already have an audience and a whole day to fill.

Having several short performances especially outside of the big studio spaces during a day would seem like a viable way to fill a programme. Or to have one short performance run several days throughout the day, such as the one to one games of Edward Rapley, where a single audience member tries to see Rapley's face while he tries to hide it,³⁰ or sitting in front of Rapley with his eyes closed only to be told the

³⁰ *The Face Game*, One to One Festival, BAC, 2010.

first thing that comes to Rapley's mind when he opens his eyes.³¹ Therefore, there would seem to be more flexibility for festival programmers to have shorter shows in a day of performances rather than theatres who have to fill an evening which comes with its own demands for all the different elements and professionals who work in the theatre (for example, technical team, front of house staff, box office). Indeed, speaking of one to one performance Sam Rose argues that, 'regarding programming, most events encourage as many audience members access to the work as possible, therefore it is sometimes very difficult to gain commissions for a one to one performance that lasts for over half an hour'.³² On the other hand, studio shows for larger audiences that are around 15 minutes to half an hour often get put into a double bill with another 'short' show. So there are two different ways here then that festival venues negotiate different temporal frames: repeating a more installation-based and/or limited audience capacity piece of work and double-billing studio shows. For Yedigaroff, 'it depends very much on the thing and what the experience is for the performer'.

However, the possibility of programming a considerably shorter studio show to play only once is not a straight-forward matter. And here again it is ticket prices that come into play. Yedigaroff notes how Mayfest often programs short work of about half an hour duration and charges around £5 and would, indeed, feel awkward to charge more. Yedigaroff goes on to say: 'If it was an international company with a name it would be easier to charge more because as an audience you'd be buying an experience of something that has a pedigree'. The same is true of longer pieces of work. For example, the tickets for Robert Wilson's four and a half hour opera

³¹ *The First Thing, I'm Still Your Worst Nightmare*, Arnolfini, 2009.

³² Sam Rose, in Rachel Zerihan, *Live Art Development Agency Study Room Guide on One to One Performance* (London: Live Art Development Agency, 2009) p. 70.

Einstein on the Beach which visited the Barbican in London in May 2012, twenty years after its last production, started at £35 and went up to £125. For comparison, at SPILL Festival 2011 at the Barbican, less established, emerging artists Sylvia Rimat and The Kings of England were programmed in a double bill with a combined ticket of £12.³³ Their performances were an hour each. Of course there are differences in the costs of the shows. Wilson himself notes that in fact '*Einstein on the Beach* at the Metropolitan Opera cost \$90,000 per performance. Just to run a show that was already created'.³⁴ Also, *Einstein on the Beach* was in the main theatre and Rimat and The Kings of England were both in the smaller studio and were commissioned and supported. However, the ticket prices also reflect the position of the artists as the most highly priced tickets at £125 offer more than a better view, they offer an experience of what Yedigiaroff calls pedigree.

The pricing of short performances is even more interesting. Franko B's 11-minute studio performance of *Don't Leave Me This Way* charged quite differently in different venues. For example, at the Arnolfini in Bristol a normal ticket cost £4 whereas at the Greenroom in Manchester the same performance cost £9. The one to one performance with the same title that lasts around three minutes cost £5 at the ICA.³⁵ For comparison, at Queen Mary's Outside AiR festival Mehmet Sander's five minute performance *Uncomfort Zone* cost £10.³⁶ The purpose of these snapshots is to note the differing pricing that takes place in different venues. As

³³ *I Guess if the Stage Exploded...* by Rimat and *In Eldersfield – Chapter 1: An Elegy for Paul Dirac* by The Kings of England, SPILL, Barbican, 18th – 24th April 2011.

³⁴ Quoted in Robert Stearns, *Robert Wilson: from a Theatre of Images* (Cincinnati: The Contemporary Arts Center, 1980), p. 107.

³⁵ The ICA website lists the duration as three minutes, in fact the actual duration of the performance is 35 seconds.

³⁶ *Don't Leave Me This Way* at the Arnolfini, 15th Dec 2007; Greenroom Manchester, 3rd Oct 2008; one to one at the ICA 25th and 26th June 2008; *Uncomfort Zone*, 15th & 16th March 2011. A combined ticket for Sander's and Julia Bardsley's performances was £12. Sander's performance was also followed by a long talk by the artist.

Yedigaroff notes, ‘There’s this weird, slightly archaic ‘how much bang do you get for your buck’ problem’, which I think is evident in these examples and it seems the different venues have negotiated that problem in their different ways. Indeed, how much can be charged for a half an hour performance, or a five-minute one? When is performance good value for money? How much are we willing to pay for performance? Ridout argues that in performance ‘we apprehend something of our relationship to labour in an acute sense of our position as consumers in the presence of a producer who is working for us and at our behest’.³⁷ We feel discomfort when we see the service we have paid for be provided or performed in our presence. So how much of this immaterial labour do we perceive as material (or with real material conditions) and therefore as needing our financial support? In other words, when we experience the affect of discomfort while witnessing performance do we have a sense of the exact financial sacrifices we are making? Again, then, how much are we willing to pay for performance and why?

This is one of the questions *Carpe Minuta Prima* poses and it does so by removing (to some extent at least) the discomfort out of watching someone provide a service for us as it is the spectator who effectively does the (creative) labour. Instead, some of those anxieties are replaced by new ones (as I discussed in the introduction above) about how to earn one’s money in this type of situation. Furthermore, its one pound per minute exchange is only seemingly transparent. I, with many others, received a pound for my time and I subsequently spent it on a minute of somebody else’s time. Thus *Carpe Minuta Prima* makes everyone’s time equal, no one’s minute is worth more than anyone else’s. But there are of course many other costs incurred in this non-profit making process. In fact, as Lobel points

³⁷ Ridout, p. 126

out, it is a process which is ‘only possible because of arts funding’.³⁸ When the project was presented at festivals for an evening, the artist received a fee which was approximately £50 per night. When I visited the show in Brixton, its two week run was funded by a Small Arts Grant from the Jerwood Charitable Foundation. The grant was £4800 and although the space was free, the project went over its budget and Lobel’s fee in the end was approximately £200 instead of the initial £1500. Some of the money was lost when 25 minutes of material did not record properly and therefore the money spent by Lobel on the minutes could not be made back through the vending machine.³⁹ Furthermore, the initially alluring prospect of buying and selling a single minute for £1 in fact becomes a less viable exchange when thought in terms of longer duration as one hour would cost £60. All of these aspects in fact make *Carpe Minuta Prima* relatively expensive.

Furthermore, the financial details of Lobel’s project above also highlight that the cost of one to ones are different from the performer’s perspective. A day of one to ones for the performer is, after all, durational. To sustain a day or at least several hours’ of performing brings with it financial implications and considerations that a spectator of one to ones do not see. A working day requires breaks and subsistence. Here we come to what Marx terms socially necessary labour-time. This is the ‘labour-time required to produce any use-value under the conditions of production normal for a given society and with the average degree of skill and intensity of labour prevalent in that society’.⁴⁰ In other words, it would not make it more valuable if an unskilled labourer spent a long time producing the commodity. Instead, Marx argues, ‘What exclusively determines the magnitude of the value of

³⁸ Brian Lobel, ‘Interview with Season Butler’, *Bellyflop Magazine* (1:4 Summer 2011), pp. 12-15, (p. 15).

³⁹ Lobel, in an email communication with the author, 8 August 2011.

⁴⁰ Marx, p. 129

any article is therefore the amount of labour socially necessary, or the labour-time socially necessary for its production'.⁴¹ Marx uses the example of a diamond to explain the connection between value and the labour time socially necessary. Diamonds, although small in most cases, are rare and therefore to find them one must use a great deal of labour time. Thus, Marx argues, 'much labour is represented in a small volume'.⁴²

Susan Bennett argues that, 'Ultimately theatre is an economic commodity. Money is generally exchanged for a paper ticket which... promises the audience two performances: one is the show itself and the other is the experience of being in a theatre. To both performances is attached the anticipation of pleasure'.⁴³ This question of (seeking) pleasure is also one of the reasons why we go to the theatre in the first place (although, as I have pointed out, it is also an experience of simultaneous uneasiness or embarrassment.) We, of course, go to see a performance but we also go to be seen and to have a night out. The core audience at Bristol Old Vic, for example, expect a certain type of theatre when they go, not only because they like it but because they expect the whole night to be a familiar experience. Many audiences go for pre- or post-show drinks and/or dinner and thus getting ready for the night is also for many an important and time consuming activity. Therefore, considering the effort an audience member makes to get to a venue for a night's entertainment (and here, of course, the location of the venue is crucial as discussed above with reference to Knowles) and the investment made, which is not only monetary, it is perhaps commonsense to conclude that showing or seeing a performance taking a considerably shorter time than the time around the event does

⁴¹ Marx, p. 129

⁴² Marx, p. 130

⁴³ Susan Bennett, *Theatre Audiences: A Theory of Production and Reception* (London: Routledge, 1997), 2nd ed., p. 118.

not make financial sense or is not satisfying in other ways. Of course, this raises another question around how we as a society spend our leisure time. Bennett contends that, ‘Western industrial societies, for example, assign a specific role for leisure and this supports an economically important entertainment industry. In this way, there is a predetermined need to seek out and maintain audiences for the arts’.⁴⁴ Furthermore, E. P. Thomson argues that, ‘In mature capitalist society all time must be consumed, marketed, put to *use*; it is offensive for the labour force merely to ‘pass the time’’ and this goes for leisure as well.⁴⁵

In the world of current labour habits, leisure has become a problem. For Adorno (as discussed in the previous chapter) hobbies, for example, are nothing but another productive activity, done because ‘Organised freedom is compulsory’.⁴⁶ In this configuration, then, Lavender’s proposition that our hobbies (our quality time) are an attempt to ‘live in the now’ seems to suggest that to desire an experience of *nowness* is only another form of organised freedom. Thus, as I stand in the black booth at *Carpe Minuta Prima*, conscious of the seconds rolling by but unable to do anything, I refuse to spend my time well. In this situation, something one could call ‘in the now’, I wonder what kind of time is worth selling. I decided to sell my spare time, time that I normally use for gazing out of the window because that type of time is not useful for me. That is to say, I do not want to sell my work time because that is too useful. I equally do not want to sell a skill (even if I felt I had one) since £1 does not seem like enough to pay for talent or expertise. Therefore, caught in a situation where I paradoxically do not want to sell my work time or my skill for a

⁴⁴ Bennett., p. 93

⁴⁵ E.P. Thompson, ‘Time, Work-discipline and Industrial Capitalism’, *Past and Present*, (December, 1967), pp. 56 – 97, (p. 90-91), original emphasis.

⁴⁶ Adorno, ‘Free Time’, p. 190

mere pound, my inactivity, my act of wasting of time, becomes only a small resistance of sorts.

3 One to one performance

Of course, none of these boundaries between theatre and performance and dichotomies of evening/festival that I have discussed above are solid. Seeing a short performance as part of a day's programme in a festival might not be any different from seeing a short play or performance or monologue in a programmed evening at the theatre. But it bears considering what the constraints of those particular areas of production and site are. The standard duration of theatre, which, as I have discussed above, is usually two hours, is determined not only by the overheads the production needs to cover but also the time that is allocated to free time in a worker's day. The traditional working pattern of 9am to 5pm confines leisure time to the evenings. The standard time of theatre is thus configured around the working day. Festivals on the other hand are in some ways a suspension of control, a period of time that people spend without rigid patterns and are thus free to spend extended durations engaged in leisure. One to one performances offer an interesting case study for the economies of duration in performance context. Rachel Zerihan contends that one to one performances 'generally last for around five or ten minutes, though they have been known to take anytime from one minute to one hour'.⁴⁷ I would like to examine one to one performances here because they in fact interrupt the economy of performance in a different way. As Rose argues above, it is sometimes very difficult to gain commissions for a one to one performance that lasts for over half an hour.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Zerihan, p. 3

⁴⁸ Rose, in Zerihan, p. 70

Their limited audience capacity means that their short duration is encouraged so that as many audience members as possible can see them.

Furthermore, although often scheduled in performance festivals on their own, there is also a current trend for festivals or evenings of one to one performances. In close examination, such programming reveals interesting and problematic issues about the relationship between programming and assumptions about performance's time frames. Stoke Newington International Airport, for example, used to run evenings of one to one performances entitled *Live Art Speed Date*, which like the name suggests were structured like speed dating events, with every performance happening in a booth and lasting four minutes, a duration set by the organisers. While supporting and giving opportunities for the makers of one to one performances, the format also emphasises and focuses on the sexual attractiveness and intimacy of the one to one encounter, which can be problematic and uncomfortable both for the audience and the performer, thus eliminating or undermining any other attributes of a particular performance. The experience of attending *Live Art Speed Date* is one of long duration, waiting and dipping in and out of performances, all homogenous in their length, although it is interesting to note how differently each performance manages the four-minute duration. Battersea Art Centre's *One-on-One Festival* is another example of interesting festival programming. In its second year in 2011, the festival was designed as a tapas menu with each session consisting of three performances. There were ten sessions in total and each one was given a title, such as 'Challenging', 'Intimate' or 'Reflective', attempting to describe the overall feel of all the three performances. The decision to group the performances under overarching themes meant that the spectator could not choose to go and see the performances she wants since the choice had already been

made for her. Therefore, if the spectator wants to go to all of the performances that interest her, she will have to attend several sessions, a somewhat clever ploy by the programmers.

Furthermore, there is another troubling aspect that comes with this mode of programming. Similarly to *Live Art Speed Date*'s offering of a four minute encounter of underlying sexual tensions, BAC's choice to give the performances themes and titles results in the reductive over-emphasis of one aspect of the performances, an aspect that might not be similarly identified by every spectator or indeed even by the performer/maker. In fact, the whole festival is in danger of simplifying the fact that they are one to ones by focusing on it. For Yedigaroff, BAC's festival is like 'having loads of desserts'. Instead of programming a festival with shows with several varying durations where a 10 minute performance is set against a show lasting an hour and a half, BAC's choice to keep the length of the one to ones fairly homogeneous resulted in an experience for the viewer that was, like Yedigaroff suggests, too much of one thing.

The programming of BAC's festival is also highlighting an interesting assumption about the duration necessary to sufficiently constitute a proper performance. The three performances grouped in a session are divided into a main course and two side dishes. The main course in most sessions lasted for about 25 minutes while the side dishes were around ten minutes. Although there were a few exceptions with shorter main courses, there is an assumption made here about the amount of time required for a performance to be considered a 'main' course with a disparaging attitude towards the shorter performances that are mere side dishes. I am not attempting here to define the value of theatre or performance per se, but I do think that a closer look at the duration of performance and its brevity in particular

throws into high relief assumptions about how to price performance and therefore the value of time and performance (or performance's time). At first glance, the choice to base ticket prices partly on the duration of the performance seems as arbitrary and therefore as rational a choice as any (since somebody somewhere has to pay something and that is more often than not the spectator and the cost of the production and its funding aside, how else does one price performance?) But at a closer look it indeed becomes less viable since it often means that shorter pieces of work are not getting the attention and support from programmers and audiences that they might deserve. Furthermore, one to one events such as those at BAC and Stoke Newington International Airport are examples of the negotiation to make short pieces fit into more traditional frames of programming. Bertolt Brecht's term 'culinary'⁴⁹ theatre seems an apt way to describe these evening length events. They are easily consumable and do not disturb standard work-leisure time patterns. It is also in this configuration that it becomes clear that when it comes to one to one, or other limited audience capacity, performance's thirty minutes in fact becomes subversive, in other words long duration becomes a problem. Time seems to look a little strange.

The performances I have discussed above are all framed in a specific performance context, that is to say performances that have an audience who make an effort to come to the venue to see a particular performance. There are of course other modes of performance that are less reliant on such factors, such as cabaret and interventions. For example, Ange Taggart's and mydadsstripclub's intervention/performance *Coke Fuck* (2005) consists of Taggart fucking Coca-Cola

⁴⁹ Bertolt Brecht, 'The Modern Theatre is the Epic Theatre', in *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic*, ed. and trans. by John Willet (London: Methuen, 1964), pp.33-42 (p. 35).

vending machines in different sites in city centres with a strap-on dildo made from a Coca-Cola bottle. Due to intervention art's site-specific nature, place is a crucial element in this genre. Its duration, however, can vary from several day long protest-like interventions to passing moments on the street. Short interventions like *Coke Fuck* depend on their ability to catch attention of passers-by, to intrigue, to make them question and to intervene in their daily lives, and not to be caught by the police. Concerns about finding an audience for this type of work are mostly erased by its functioning not on a level of marketable theatre or performance but of activism. The effect of its brevity is much due to its already existing, unsuspecting audience. Cabaret on the other hand relies on an existing audience but an audience who generally have come for a night's entertainment at a club rather than for a specific performance. The fact that such performances are not the only entertainment of the evening requires a performance that is short and fitting with the light mood of the venue. At Duckie at Royal Vauxhall Tavern, Saturday nights are programmed as cabarets with one to three acts during the evening. The acts usually last around eight to twelve minutes and the artists are paid up to £150 while a ticket for the cabaret is £6. Although Duckie gets most of its funding from The Barbican, City of London and the Arts Council, its Saturday cabaret is paid for by its box office takings. Thinking strictly in numbers, Duckie's £150 fee for a short performance might seem like a profitable deal for an artist but that proposition is immediately undone when considering that the process of making performance work is rarely as straightforward as that.

As the discussion on *Carpe Minuta Prima* has demonstrated so far, the making of even the shortest performance piece is a complex process to calculate. A £150 lump sum as an artist fee nominally covers, but does not actually include, the

cost of a rehearsal space, materials, technical equipment, music or the labour time used to make a performance. For example, Lobel points out that during *Carpe Minuta Prima*'s six-day run (totalling 48 hours) he only took 20 minutes break time in total. Not only does artist fees often exclude material costs but also does not factor in the artist's break time. How can we then think about artist's free time?

There is also a strong argument to be made about the amount of time 'necessary' for the development of a piece of drama. How long is long enough to establish dramatic tension, or in the case of more narrative-based theatre, a story and characters? In an art form that is essentially about time, how long does it take to explore a dramatic idea? For example, Samuel Beckett's short plays such as *Come and Go* and *Act without Words I* are a few minutes, while his shortest, *Breath*, is a mere 35 seconds. However, Beckett's work is an exception in this case; other short plays, such as those by David Mamet, are often near the 10-minute mark. It is perhaps unsurprising that live art has found it easier to deal with duration considering its background in task-based performance and the foregrounding of image. One to one performances, for example, often fall into two types: One involves encounters, such as Rapley's *The Face Game* mentioned above. The performance is a meeting between the artist and spectator with an expectation of an exchange, whether the spectator knows 'the rules' or not. The other involves fleeting images, like *Don't Leave Me This Way* (also mentioned above). The spectator enters a (dark) room where Franko B sits on a chair. Suddenly a strong light flashes up behind the artist facing the spectator. The sudden flash of light burns an image onto the retina. The performance, which lasts around 35 seconds, is a presentation (for the lack of a better word) of an image and does not require active participation. The longer version of *Don't Leave Me This Way* is set in a studio for a

larger audience and lasts eleven minutes. The duration is determined by the fact that Franko B's earlier bloodletting work lasted eleven minutes because that was the maximum time the artist could bleed safely enough. Therefore, the logic goes, other work does not need to be any longer. This logic then that determines the duration of his work is one which is not concerned with the question of necessary aesthetic labour.

The experience of attending the BAC's *One-on-One Festival*, on the other hand, is one of waiting. The experience is also very long. Since most of the performances are five to ten minutes, the time is spent mainly waiting between performances. The menu given to the spectator on arrival encourages either to reflect on the one to one the spectator has just seen or to visit extra, off the menu, performances that are spread around the building. The programme also instructs spectators to arrive at the place of the next performance five minutes in advance. In the end the whole experience amounts to nearly two hours. In fact, most of the time one is either waiting by the door, waiting somewhere else (at the bar, perhaps?) and sharing one's experiences with the ushers whose chit-chat invariably concerns what one has seen before or/and is going to see later. There is a constant reiteration of one's experiences of the performances in a way that does not often happen with evening length performances. These one to ones are short enough to be discussed over and over again, filling the space between these short one to ones. The waiting and anticipation is also present in the actual experience of the performances. Because one is so aware of the brevity of the encounter there is an intensification of the tensions that characterise attending performance. One is very aware that something will happen and because there is a limited amount of time it will probably happen pretty quickly, it will happen now.

The fast and speedy nature of everyday life in the 21st century might be a factor in a growing trend for very short performance work. As I have shown above, this ‘now’ is not an escape route for performance out of the art market. The problem is not of course that we pay for performance but that work like *Carpe Minuta Prima* reminds us that we do. It makes explicit the attempt to escape the market while rooting us very firmly in an economy based on exchange value. This in turn calls for a closer scrutiny on the conditions of the economy in which performance circulates. What I have highlighted above is a complex network of issues all contributing to the programming and making of performance work. The size of a venue, the amount of funding a venue receives, the consideration of a core audience and the reputation of the artist all play their part in the economy of the theatre. Yet, it seems that short performances present a problem for this economy that is rooted in assumptions about the necessary or correct time frames of performance. Of course, we might not be seeing many performances under 10 minutes because the medium of performance lends itself better to longer duration. And yet, I suggest, those short performances might not get made because they do not fit into the current model of programming. Furthermore, examining performance and its material conditions in parallel to those of theatre is to emphasise the emergence of performance as a discipline. Performance’s recent emergence, despite RoseLee Goldberg’s arguments that performance was ‘a catalyst in the history of twentieth-century art’,⁵⁰ challenges some assumptions and conventions about its position in the consumer economy in useful ways. When placed in parallel to theatre models performance refuses to fit in.

⁵⁰ Goldberg, 2011, p. 7

4 What does it sell? Museums and galleries

The examples which I have discussed so far reveal that the price of performance (the price paid for the work) is not in fact related to the value of labour time.

Therefore, time is not explicitly purchased. This question becomes important in the next example where I examine these questions within visual art and gallery-based performance. Unlike performance, visual art has a history of explicitly selling work and investing money but are the material conditions around visual art any clearer? Below, I will look at how the visual art world functions and what it sells.

Olav Velthuis argues that, ‘The art market is characterized by a dense network of intimate, long-term relationships between artists, collectors and their intermediaries’.⁵¹ Velthuis goes on to contend that, ‘whereas some scholars are keen on making a sharp distinction between an (ideal) gift economy and a (corrosive) market economy I argue that this distinction is untenable, for circuits within the art market are characterized by economic transactions that are not *quid pro quo*, but involve mutual gift giving and delayed payments’.⁵² In order to examine some of the differences in how value is determined in performance and visual art I focus on Martin Creed’s work which, in its insistence on instantaneousness, highlights the question of absorption and duration. I discuss here how Creed’s museum-based performance/installations *Work no. 850* (2008) and *Work no. 227* (2000) can be thought of as both durational as well as series of individual performances. *Work no. 850* consists of runners sprinting through the Duveen Galleries at Tate Britain. The work is of course both durational as the sprinters keep coming around the corner consistently throughout the day one after the other (every 30 seconds) as well as the

⁵¹ Olav Velthuis, *Talking Prices: Symbolic Meaning of Prices on the Market of Contemporary Art* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), p. 7.

⁵² Velthuis, p. 7

duration of a few seconds. *Work no. 227* from 2000 is similarly both a durational performance and a series of individual events. The work consists of the lights in a gallery going on and off every five seconds. I consider how much time is actually spent watching the work and how much time is spent waiting for it. Like *Live Art Speed Date*, it is an experience of waiting, but an experience of waiting, I suggest, that is intrinsic to the work. I will also discuss the business models within gallery-based work and raise the question of investment.

Creed's use of an empty gallery and its lights in *Work no. 227* is a prime example of his practice where the materials he works with as well as the world he works in are mainly left as they are. Creed's works are in effect ready-mades. Yukiie Kamiya notes:

Confronting preconceived notions of artworks as creations executed with painstaking skill, the presence of things, literally as they are, can even be challenging. It also exemplifies Creed's approach: a deliberate attempt to banish any concept of hierarchy between 'things' and 'art', to assert art and ordinary life as equal in every respect.⁵³

Creed's art exists in the world (almost) without adding anything to it. Works like filling a room in a gallery with balloons, placing all the items of a gallery into one of its rooms or crunching a piece of A4 paper into a ball add 'to the world, yet since the artist is only using what's there, nothing is added'.⁵⁴ And in similar ways, as Darian Leader continues, '[t]hey add while not changing anything, yet at the same time they obviously change something'.⁵⁵ So how and what do they change? Leader argues that 'The same logic organizes Creed's on-off works', such as *Work no.*

⁵³ Yukiie Kamiya, 'Just Wanting to Say Hello', in *Martin Creed*, ed. by Jonathan Watkins (Birmingham: Ikon Gallery/Manchester: Cornerhouse Publications, 2008), pp. 26-32 (p. 26).

⁵⁴ Darian Leader, 'Forms of Attachment', in *Martin Creed: Works*, ed. by Martin Creed and Tom Eccles (London: Thames and Hudson, 2010), pp. xxxvi-xli, (p. xl).

⁵⁵ Leader, p. xl

227.⁵⁶ ‘At one level’, Leader contends, ‘the work resolved the artist’s inability to decide whether to have the light on or off: they now did both and simultaneously denied privilege to any one part of the room’.⁵⁷ Leader goes on to say that, ‘At another level, he was aiming “to make something without adding anything”. The room was left as it was and the oscillation of lights meant that, as Creed put it, “there’s no line between the work and the world here, between the work and everything in it. You can’t say the work begin or ends here.”’⁵⁸

For Creed, running is instantaneous. As Creed notes, unlike painting which is still and somehow fixes the viewer for a long time, ‘Running moves on and lets you go’.⁵⁹ Indeed, *Work no. 850* ‘runs past you, leaving you free to move on’.⁶⁰ For Creed, the best way to see museums is to run through them at high speed. But in *Work no. 850* the artwork is the one doing the running. In fact, the spectators at Tate Britain are instructed, for health and safety reasons, not to run with the runners. Massimiliano Gioni suggests that ‘Creed’s art lives in the interval between the event and its negation, between its violent bursting forth, immediate suspension and subsequent repetition.’⁶¹ For Gioni, the system that sustains Creed’s works is ‘the tension between the expectation of an event, its occurrence and its symmetrical negation.’⁶² There is something here in Gioni’s descriptions of Creed’s work that suggests an instant where the work happens and catches, or absorbs, the viewer. Both Gioni’s and Creed’s accounts of the work seem to correspond with Michael Fried’s distinction between visual art as instantaneous and therefore good and

⁵⁶ Leader, p. xl

⁵⁷ Leader, p. xl

⁵⁸ Leader, p. xl

⁵⁹ Leader, p. xl

⁶⁰ Leader, p. xl

⁶¹ Massimiliano Gioni, ‘The System of Objects’ in *Martin Creed: Works*, ed. by Martin Creed and Tom Eccles (London: Thames and Hudson, 2010), pp. xx-xxiv, (p. xx).

⁶² Gioni, p. xx

performance or theatre as something involving temporality and therefore bad. The work appears, Gioni suggests, in the short burst of the work's eventhood and its negation. However, I suggest that although Creed considers running 'a spectator sport just like art',⁶³ the sprinting operates in a frame of time that belongs to sport events rather than the durational element of art. The energy dispensed is that of the work and not the viewer. Here the work is doing the work, the viewer views. The viewer is, for most of the time, in waiting, in a suspended time. In fact, the work, unlike everything else in the gallery, makes the viewer wait for it and once it is present denies any extended acts of perusal.

In fact, I would argue that both *Work no. 227* and *Work no. 850* refuse a viewer any access to them. The waiting that occurred in *Live Art Speed Date* here becomes an anticipation that does not resolve itself. The long duration of the work does not allow the spectator to see the whole thing and yet the short instant is an unlikely duration to be experienced. Thus the work escapes one's ability to take it in. As such, the work is akin both to land art in the way it is either too big to experience as well as to most video art in galleries where one comes in at the middle of the video's loop and either stays to see the whole (but in the wrong order) or leaves again. Writing of Michael Heizer's earthwork sculpture *Double Negative* (1969), Rosalind E. Krauss argues that the work 'suggests an alternative to the picture we have of how we know ourselves'.⁶⁴ Because the earth sculpture is so vast one can only get a picture of the whole thing by standing on one side and looking at another. For Krauss, *Double Negative* thus 'causes us to meditate on a knowledge of ourselves that is formed by looking outward toward the responses of others as they

⁶³ Martin Creed, 'Work No. 852', in Creed and Eccles, p. 852.

⁶⁴ Krauss, p. 280

look back at us', forcing an eccentric position where we are no longer at the centre looking out.⁶⁵ Creed's work achieves or produces this same state of experiencing the work from a decentralised position from within ourselves. However, in Creed's work the waiting and anticipation amounts to yet something more and produces a type of boredom. On his essay on children and boredom, Adam Phillips argues:

Boredom...protects the individual, makes tolerable for him the impossible experience of waiting for something without knowing what it could be. So the paradox that goes on in boredom is that the individual does not know what he was waiting for until he finds it, and that often he does not know that he is waiting.⁶⁶

In Creed's work, however, the viewer does not get to experience the thing that she is waiting for when it does come. Instead, the spectator feels that there is something more that will come later and so the waiting continues. It is in this boredom that the work happens. As Phillips argues, 'Boredom is integral to the process of taking one's time'.⁶⁷ In these works, the work and the viewer take their time. In fact, in *Work no. 227* and *Work no. 850*, the fragment is the whole experience.

As discussed in the performance examples in the first section, labour time is not explicitly purchased in performance. And it is certainly not purchased in the ready-mades, which do not reflect (traditional) artistic skill but, as Krauss notes, pose questions.⁶⁸ So how are Creed's ready-mades consumed and circulated? *Work no. 227* was acquired by the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 2007. *Work no. 850*, on the other hand, was a commission by Tate Britain. The conditions around the business models of gallery-based performance and visual art have recently attracted attention. In 2011 Marina Abramović was looking for six

⁶⁵ Krauss, p. 280

⁶⁶ Adam Phillips, *On Kissing, Tickling and Being Bored: Psychoanalytical Essays on the Unexamined Life* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 77-78.

⁶⁷ Phillips, p. 69

⁶⁸ Krauss, p. 73

performers to perform in her 2002 piece *Nude with Skeleton*. The piece was to be performed at the annual gala of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles where the six nude performers were to lie at the centre of tables for approximately four hours while the gala guests had dinner around them. The artists were paid \$150 in total for the performance and fifteen hours of rehearsal. A seat at the dinner cost up to \$100.000. Artist Sara Wookey who auditioned for the piece but eventually refused the offer to take part states: 'I was expected to ignore (by staying in what Abramović refers to as 'performance mode') any potential physical or verbal harassment while performing'.⁶⁹ Wookey highlights the exploitative and abusive circumstances as something creative workers come across too often. In another example, Tino Sehgal, an artist known for his performance-based work, or 'actualised situations', insists that his purchased work not be documented or their instructions be written down. When Sehgal's *Kiss* was acquired by MoMA in 2008, twelve people (museum personnel and attorneys) had to memorise the instructions for the work which consists of actors recreating iconic kisses from art history. Sehgal also insists that the acquisition is only a verbal agreement and that there is no receipt. Instances such as those with Abramović and Sehgal, which take into account not only the labour time of the artist but also his material (in these case performers) question the art institutions' capacity to evaluate their business forms and to be transparent about how they spend their money.⁷⁰

Moreover, when is an acquisition of an art work a good investment? For example, Creed's *Work no. 88*, a sheet of A4 paper crumpled into a ball, can be purchased online for £150 and is an unlimited edition. In the art world, a piece of

⁶⁹ Sara Wookey, 'Open Letter to Artists', *Performance Club*, <<http://theperformanceclub.org/2011/11/open-letter-to-artists/>> (Accessed on 5 January 2012).

⁷⁰ See Santiago Sierra, *Paid People* (1999).

work from an unlimited edition would not count as a good investment because it lacks rarity. Gavin Turk's art work *Tea Stain*, a sheet of paper with a tea stain, is sold in a limited edition of 1000 for the individual price of £120. Nic Forrest argues that, 'with 1000 of the works on the market there is never going to be enough of a demand on the secondary market to produce an increase in their value significant enough to categorise the work as a good investment'.⁷¹ Performance on the other hand, as evident in Sofaer's quote discussed above, has not been explicitly situated in the world of investments. For example, as both Yedigiaroff and Rose argued above, one to one performances are often encouraged to last no more than half an hour so that as many people as possible can see them. Immaterial labour inherent in the service economy means that value is determined in labour time and not in its consumption. It is here that the issue of value versus price is articulated.

La Ribot's 'distinguished pieces' are an interesting example of art accommodating the market place. Each distinguished piece is a short performance that has been bought by a 'Distinguished Proprietor' for £600. A proprietor will get free entry to the piece they own as well as their name credited in the programme every time the piece is performed. These tactics employed by La Ribot and Sehgal disturb the assumptions that there is nothing to own in art or performance, that its value is that of emptiness, or wasting. They pose the question: What does performance sell?

La Ribot has also employed franchising in her work. The artist pays performer Sian Williamson to perform the work when La Ribot is not able to due to other commitments. Franchising as a model is commonplace when it comes to

⁷¹Nic Forrest, '*Tea Stain* by Gavin Turk – Fantastic Artwork – Bad Investment', *Art Market Blog*, <<http://www.artmarketblog.com/2007/08/12/tea-stain-by-gavin-turk-fantastic-artwork-bad-investment/>> (Accessed on 5 January 2012).

dramatic texts (a playwright writes a play, several people produce the play at different times in different places). Performance, however, finds such business models highly suspicious if not totally inappropriate. But if La Ribot's work can be performed by someone else, or several people at the same time in different places, surely one to ones could be similarly franchised? Doing so would reveal and draw attention to the fallacy of their uniqueness. Such fallacy depends on the affirmation and reproduction of the sense that this one to one that the spectator is experiencing is the only one when in fact the same performance is performed several times that day. But what would it mean to make a performance of, say, one or two hours that only one person would be able to witness? And how much could a ticket for that unique performance cost? Would not the rarity of such a performance event make it very valuable indeed? This also raises the question of what one gets from being there. Such a question could be asked of any circuit-based racing where a Formula 1 car or horse, for example, passes the spectator fast and where one can never see the whole (as seeing on television, for example). But it is, in fact, the experience of the fragment that is the answer; that is, the fragment is the whole.

5 Gift, giving, time

This chapter has focused on short duration in order to investigate the conditions in which performance is circulated and programmed. Short performance reveals how duration is negotiated within the economy of performance and how time begins to look a bit strange when considering such limited audience capacity performance models as one to ones. As *Carpe Minuta Prima* has shown, there is very little correlation between the price of performance and the labour used to make it. Indeed, both Lobel's project and Creed's work reveal that when we think about what we are

paying for in performance we think about the wrong time: we do not pay £125 for nearly five hours of Robert Wilson's work; we pay for the necessary amount of labour time that it took to make the performance. In fact, I suggest that after the time taken to make the performance it makes no difference if that performance then lasts for five hours or thirty five seconds. This fallacy of the correlation between performance's duration and its value is in contrast with the idea of value in visual arts. Whereas we expect to pay more money for longer performances we do not expect the same when it comes to objects. In fact we often pay considerably larger sums for considerably smaller objects, such as diamonds (as Marx points out).

Furthermore, investigating the material conditions surrounding performance also highlights the uneasy relationship between producer and consumer in a service economy. As Shannon Jackson contends, 'Duration is all the more palpable when it is exchanged for a wage'.⁷² This is exactly what *Carpe Minuta Prima* attempts to articulate. The literal selling on time that the project evokes ends up emphasising the fact that we are not selling time, but our labour. I have also raised the question of nowness and how this relates to perceiving time as a commodity to purchase. It would seem then that when examining the question of pursuing time as commodity, performance is an apt place to focus on, and vice versa, examining performance reveals how we erroneously attempt to pursue time as commodity.

I have also attempted to approach the question of the value of performance, or the question of how much we are willing to pay for performance. I have suggested that this question is complicated by the discomfort we feel when paying for a service. How could we think, then, about performance as economy and re-evaluate the question concerning the value of performance? Furthermore, I think

⁷² Jackson, p. 145

this issue is also linked to the question of what one gets from being there, in person. Jacques Derrida offers a suggestion in his writing on the notion of gift. For Derrida, there is a clear distinction between gift and economy. Unlike economy, the gift ‘must not circulate, it must not be exchanged, it must not in any case be exhausted, as a gift, by the process of exchange, by the movement of circulation of the circle in the form of return to the point of departure.’⁷³ And as the gift cannot circulate (in order to remain a gift), it interrupts the economy: ‘in suspending economic calculation, [the gift] no longer gives rise to exchange’.⁷⁴ The gift is, in fact, *the impossible*, but not impossible, because ‘For there to be gift, not only must the donor or donee not perceive or receive the gift as such, have no consciousness of it, no memory, no recognition; he or she must also forget it right away’.⁷⁵ Furthermore, time ‘always sets in motion the process of a destruction of the gift: through keeping, restitution, reproduction, the anticipatory expectation or apprehension that grasps or comprehends in advance’.⁷⁶ In other words, the gift stops being that at the instant when it is perceived (or even remembered or anticipated) as such. Therefore, the gift is really the gift of giving. It is here that the notion of gift becomes important to the questions raised here. For Derrida, one thing that cannot be given as gift is time because it is nothing and therefore ‘it does not properly belong to anyone; if certain persons or certain social classes have more time than others – and this is finally the most serious stake of political economy – it is certainly not *time itself* that they possess’.⁷⁷ However, since time is nothing and the giving of gift entails giving

⁷³ Jacques Derrida, *Given Time: I. Counterfeit Money*, trans. by Peggy Kamuf (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 7.

⁷⁴ Derrida, p. 7

⁷⁵ Derrida, p. 16

⁷⁶ Derrida, p. 14

⁷⁷ Derrida, p. 28

something that is perceived as nothing, then the ultimate gift would be time. And yet, how to give time? Derrida argues:

The gift is not a gift, the gift only gives to the extent it *gives time*. The difference between a gift and every other operation of pure and simple exchange is that the gift gives time. *There where there is gift there is time*. What it gives, the gift, is time, but this gift of time is also a demand of time. The thing must not be restituted *immediately and right away*. There must be time, it must last, there must be waiting – without forgetting [*l'attente – sans oubli*]. It demands time, the thing, but it demands a delimited time, neither an instant nor an infinite time, but a time determined by a term, in other words, a rhythm, a cadence. The thing is not in time; it is or it has time, or rather it demands to have, to give, or to take time – and time as rhythm, a rhythm that does not befall a homogeneous time but that structures it originarily.⁷⁸

I suggest that what goes on in the waiting and in the fragment is this demand of time, a time that has its own rhythm. Lavender states that nowness, or the moment of actuality, is a desire to possess the present moment fully, to hold it completely. Derrida's notion of the gift might be, at least partially, answer to how to achieve that. And this might also be a way into thinking about investment in performance's economy. In other words, the taking or demanding of time that the gift entails for Derrida, is not a straightforward critique of or a resistance to capitalism's time as some performance discussed here might suggest. Instead the idea of the gift suggests another approach to time that recognises time's immateriality on one hand (it does not belong to anyone) while paying due attention to its material implications. Along these lines I have suggested that immaterial labour does not escape its material conditions but that there are blind spots in the perception of labour time. As I have shown here, the immateriality of performance suggests a transformation or refusal of commercialisation, yet nevertheless benefits from a complex system of valuation and marketisation. In so doing I have attempted to highlight what is at stake in exposing the market for some works of performance (and other apparently flimsy or

⁷⁸ Derrida, p. 41, original emphasis

unsubstantial artefacts), by demonstrating the fallacy of the relation between the work itself (use value; related to its labour-time) and its price (exchange value).

Chapter 4

Space and Pure Duration: Looking for Qualitative Time

1 Henri Bergson and pure duration

In this chapter I move from examining the economic implications of durational and short performances to performances which evoke a different type of slowness and experience of duration. It is in effect a move from or beyond quantity towards thinking about quality. I will examine theatrical performances which seem to offer an experience of time that is asking its audience to attune in a specific way. The discussion focuses on work which is more traditionally staged (in that the performance happens in the performance area and the audience is expected to stay for the whole duration). I use as my case studies the work of Goat Island and Robert Wilson. In doing so, the discussion will centre on a certain type of slowness evident in the performances. It is easy to see the experience of time these performances offer as similar. Both practices engage in non-narrative performance where time seems to be the focus of investigation. There is a sense of waiting in the works of both Wilson and Goat Island that does not necessarily lead to anticipation or a climax.

In this chapter I also move from chronophobia to chronophilia. I have already studied some of these tensions in Chapter 1 where I discussed Lee's definition of the term chronophobia. For Lee, a fear or anxiety about time is connected to the rise of technology that we might not feel in control of. Furthermore, the distinction between phobia and philia in this case is not definite and fixed for Lee and one might in some cases become the other. For example, in Chapter 1 we saw how Andy Warhol and Barnett Newman exhibited an interest in

time that was more like a *philia* which drew them to it. Warhol's work is, as I discussed, contradictory in its interests in the operations of time. While he is bored of the box full of chocolates and cannot wait to get rid of the chocolates and the box, he is also resolute to capture every moment in his long films, to stop time from escaping. In the next two chapters we will see no anxiety about time but an interest, perhaps even a fascination, in its passing. The works discussed in these chapters employ time as a tool. It is a dynamic borne out of the impossibility of holding time; holding time being something performance in some ways is trying so hard to understand – a problem of the present.

Goat Island began working together as a company in 1987. Of the founding members, Lin Hixson and Matthew Goulish carried on working in the company through to the final year in 2007. By then they had been joined by Bryan Saner, Karen Christopher, Mark Jeffery and Litó Walkey. The company produced theatre performances which explored, through their structure, the experiences of temporality we might have in performance. For Goulish, '[t]he organisation of time communicates to the audience to some extent what they are *not* experiencing: chance or improvisation'.¹ Goulish goes on to describe how the performance suggests different paths or routes for the audience to take to navigate their way through. He argues: 'The fact that the performance is a loosely closed system, inscribed and encircled with limits, however porous, and that this closure's visibility signifies the presence of an author, carries its own associative meanings'.² In balancing between creating tight structures and having space or emptiness within

¹ Matthew Goulish, in Stephen Bottoms and Matthew Goulish (eds.), *Small Acts of Repair: Performance, Ecology and Goat Island*, (London: Routledge, 2007), p. 66, original emphasis.

² Goulish, p. 66

those structures, the work of *Goat Island* offers a type of duration that results from an experience of waiting and not knowing.

Wilson's work is similarly invested in making its audience wait for something, a climax, a change. This waiting is triggered by the long stretches of time that are passed by with the use of lighting, music and set, or in other words, images. Leo Bersani argues that, '[t]he irresponsible and exhilarating lesson of Wilson's theater...has frequently been that we don't have to know anything; we have only to be ready to enlarge our repertory of desirable spectacles'.³ Wilson's *Einstein on the Beach* from 1976 was made in collaboration with Philip Glass who composed the music. The pair's collaboration led to an initial break up after disputes over the authorship of the work in the 1970s. Bersani describes Wilson's work as '[t]emporally discontinuous, obsessively repetitive, indifferent to rationality and to the discursive or informational function of language'.⁴ *Einstein on the Beach* is a four and a half hour opera about and not about Albert Einstein. Lacking a coherent narrative, it is exemplary of Wilson's work where there is, in some ways similar to *Goat Island*, an emptiness or space for the spectators to assert their associations.

I will explore these works with reference to Henri Bergson's notion of pure duration which Bergson defines as 'succession without distinction'.⁵ For Bergson, time is qualitative and therefore cannot be measured. Hence our inner duration is a heterogeneous reality consisting of a multiplicity of psychic mental states which permeate one another and flow. This chapter will investigate how some performance work invites an experience of time in the state of pure duration. I examine whether

³ Leo Bersani, *Future for Astyanax: Character and Desire in Literature* (London: Boyars, 1978), p. 282

⁴ Bersani, p. 281

⁵ Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, trans. by F. L. Pogson, (London: George Allen Company, 1912), p. 101.

that experience is possible in the space of performance. I will argue that it is in fact through employing Bergson's thinking that we begin to see the difference between Goat Island's Bergsonian approach to duration and consequently, Wilson's very anti-Bergsonian focus on the spatialisation of time. Through considering these performance works, I will also address issues of repetition in performance and the effect of space on the experience of time.

Matthew Goulish articulates a common misunderstanding concerning Goat Island's work in his account of an encounter with a producer who after the performance of *It's Shifting*, Hank asked Goulish: 'What is the reason for all this repetition?'. Goulish's reply was simply: 'What repetition?'.⁶ For the company, it is a question of perception – to perceive not 'a single moment repeating' but 'a non-repeating series of similar moments'.⁷ According to Heike Roms, 'Repetition transforms poetry into inhumanity. But Goat Island demonstrates how something more human may be gained from repetition'.⁸ What I want to do here is to look at the deployment of time and repetition, or what might be more accurately termed non-repetition, in Goat Island's work in order to suggest what their function might be and how reference to Bergson's ideas about duration might augment this investigation. How does the work invite one to experience time or to experience the state of pure duration? Is that experience possible in the space of performance? What is at stake when we say that 'a cause cannot repeat its effect since it will never repeat itself'?⁹ In what ways is Bergson's notion of non-causal flow of time similar

⁶ Matthew Goulish, *39 Microlectures: In the Proximity of Performance*, (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 31.

⁷ Goulish, p. 32

⁸ Heike Roms, 'What Does Performance Fix?', *Frakcija Performing Arts Magazine: When will the September roses bloom? Last night was only a comedy: Reflections on the Performance*, No. 35, 2005, np.

⁹ Bergson, p. 233

or different to what Goulish sees as a question of perception? I have chosen to focus the discussion on two performances, namely *How Dear to Me the Hour When Daylight Dies* (1996) and *When will the September roses bloom? Last night was only a comedy* (2004). I have chosen these pieces as they present interesting examples for the investigation of waiting and uncertainty, or not-knowing, conditions which present a fruitful starting point for an investigation of inner duration.

I begin my investigation by unpacking some of the terms and notions from Bergson's book *Time and Free Will* in order to explore their implications for our understanding of the non-repetition of similar moments in Goat Island's work. For Bergson, as we will see, 'in the human soul there are only processes' and that is why 'every sensation is altered by repetition'.¹⁰ Perhaps dance is a useful way of approaching the shift in consciousness necessary for the possibility of accessing the flow of time since motion, according to Bergson, is a mental synthesis. Bergson argues that,

We generally say that a movement takes place in space, and when we assert that motion is homogenous and divisible, it is of the space traversed that we are thinking, as if it were interchangeable with the motion itself. Now, if we reflect further, we shall see that the successive positions of the moving body really do occupy space, but that the process by which it passes from one position to the other, a process which occupies duration and which has no reality except for a conscious spectator, eludes space. We have to do here not with an object but with a *progress*: motion in so far as it is a passage from one point to another, is a mental synthesis, a psychic and therefore unextended process.¹¹

Thus we see that motion is a similar psychic process as time. Thus I wonder whether watching movement augments the experience of the flow of time. Furthermore,

¹⁰ Bergson, p. 131

¹¹ Bergson, p. 110-1, original emphasis

speaking of aesthetic feelings, Bergson uses the figure of the dancer to demonstrate the feeling of grace (the simplest of the fundamental emotions, according to Bergson). ‘If curves are more graceful than broken lines’, argues Bergson, it is because ‘while a curved line changes its direction at every moment, every new direction is indicated in the preceding one’.¹² The perception of ease we see in that motion then ‘passes over into the pleasure of mastering the flow of time and of holding the future in the present’.¹³

Moreover, the accompanying music creates a ‘regularity of the rhythm [which] establishes a kind of communication between’ the dancer and spectator.¹⁴ It thus allows us ‘to foresee to a still greater extent the movements of the dancer, make us believe that we now control them’.¹⁵ In doing so, we feel physical sympathy. Our aesthetic pleasure does not grow in magnitude but is in fact ‘resolved into as many different feelings, each one of which, already heralded by its predecessor, becomes perceptible in it and then completely eclipses it’.¹⁶ In her book *Thinking in Time: An Introduction to Henri Bergson*, Suzanne Guerlac notes how aesthetic experience becomes ‘paradigmatic of feeling in general’.¹⁷ ‘In this fictive scene’, Guerlac claims, ‘the dancer performs for us what goes on inside us when we experience pure quality as ‘qualitative progress’, or the dynamic unfolding of differences in kind’.¹⁸ Moreover, this qualitative progress ‘is precisely what characterizes the flow of time itself’.¹⁹

¹² Bergson, p. 12

¹³ Bergson, p. 12

¹⁴ Bergson, p. 12

¹⁵ Bergson, p. 12

¹⁶ Bergson, p. 13

¹⁷ Suzanne Guerlac, *Thinking in Time – An Introduction to Henri Bergson*, (London: Cornell University Press, 2006), p. 49.

¹⁸ Guerlac, p. 49-50

¹⁹ Guerlac, p. 49

However, what is important here is the assumption that the dancer is dancing to music. Bergson argues:

A third element enters when the graceful movements obey a rhythm, and when music accompanies them. This is because, by permitting us to anticipate the artist's movements even better, the rhythm and the beat lead us to believe that we are the masters of these movements.²⁰

The task that Bergson takes on in *Time and Free Will* is to 'consider a level of experience that is immediate in that it is not mediated through language or quantitative notation, an experience of the 'real' ... that resists symbolization'.²¹ This means to discern a notion of time that is not related to space – pure duration – 'which we can approach only through inner states, that is through immediate, or purely qualitative experience'.²² Bergson argues that in order to count and measure time we 'project time into space'²³ since 'counting material objects means thinking all these objects together, thereby leaving them in space'.²⁴ However, if space is quantity then time, or duration, is quality and cannot be measured. The multiplicity of time is distinctly different from the multiplicity of space. Pure duration is 'succession without distinction'²⁵, a heterogeneous reality consisting of a multiplicity of psychic mental states which permeate one another and flow. Sensations, or intensities, cannot be measured or compared since they are not external objects. However, we are so used to measuring things in the external world that we do not realise the difference in multiplicity between objects and intensities. Bergson argues that,

²⁰ Bergson, p. 9

²¹ Guerlac, p. 43

²² Guerlac, p. 63

²³ Guerlac, p. 101

²⁴ Guerlac, p. 77

²⁵ Guerlac, p. 101

Pure duration is the form which the succession of our conscious states assumes when our ego lets itself live, when it refrains from separating its present state from its former states.²⁶

But, as Guerlac elucidates, ‘the only way to appreciate the power of temporal flow – the force of duration – is to be here now...to engage completely with the feelings of the present moment in all their contingency’.²⁷ We are in fact unable to know the flow of time cognitively. Indeed, ‘We can only know it concretely through the way different qualities feel to us at different times’.²⁸ Furthermore, the intervention of language adds another complication. Bergson is quick to point out that ‘there is no common measure between mind and language’ and we therefore cannot translate what the soul experiences.²⁹ He argues:

We instinctively try to solidify our impressions in order to express them in language. Hence we confuse the feeling itself, which is in a perpetual state of becoming, with its permanent external object, and especially with the word which expresses this object.³⁰

In other words, each conscious state is produced in ‘the time as quality’ but projected into ‘the time as quantity’, i.e. space. Therefore, as Bergson explains, if we walk past the same houses year after year we perceive them to look the same and we assume we still have the same impression as the first time we saw them. However, if we can arrest our habit of merely recognising instead of perceiving we will see that the houses ‘have ended by borrowing from me something of my own conscious existence’.³¹ The houses have grown old too and thus our first impression is no longer applicable. Otherwise, ‘what difference would there be between

²⁶ Guerlac, p. 100

²⁷ Guerlac, p. 91

²⁸ Guerlac, p. 80

²⁹ Bergson, p. 164-5

³⁰ Bergson, p. 130

³¹ Bergson, p. 130

perceiving and recognizing, between learning and remembering?'.³² Similarly, sensations, such as taste, seem to us the same only because we give them the same name. It is the distinction which Bergson makes between perceiving and recognizing and between learning and remembering that becomes significant when considering Goat Island's employment of time and repetition.

2 Goat Island and waiting, still

Time has been an important subject of investigation for Goat Island. As company director Lin Hixson asserts: 'I have sought time as material in performances since I first began to work with Goat Island in 1987'.³³ This interest in time manifests in several ways in the company's work. Resulting from a detailed investigation of duration, the performances are, for want of a better phrase, full of time. Made of physical, dance-like tasks, borrowed texts and recurring sequences where performers often seemingly repeat 'actions to the point of exhaustion'³⁴, the performances evoke the experience of real time instead of the cut-up, shortened and accelerated time of performance. Those writing on Goat Island's performances frequently note how 'time often seems to slow down or extend'³⁵ resulting in 'a quantity of time that simply exceeds our ability to 'know' rationally what to do with it'.³⁶ Former company member Karen Christopher states that, 'We have used different tactics throughout our working history for approaching the pause, the

³² Bergson, p. 130

³³ Hixson, in Bottoms and Goulish, p. 182

³⁴ Hixson, p. 182

³⁵ Heathfield, 'Coming Undone', *Goat Island Performance Group official website*, 2001, <http://www.goatlandperformance.org/writing_comingUndone.htm> (Accessed 26 October 2009).

³⁶ Bottoms, 2007, p. 56

break, the slowing or distortion of time'.³⁷ Time used as tangible material has a function beyond the act of framing the event by giving it a beginning and an end. Using real actions in real time means that time becomes 'regulated by the time it [takes] for the body to sweat'.³⁸ Time is not only felt as a passing of time longer than expected in a performance but its traces become visible through the exhaustion of the body. Furthermore, Christopher explains that 'the manipulation of time through the extension or duration of a similar gesture, or a series of images repeated for a longer-than-expected length of time' is, in part, a tool for facilitating a space for the audience to break away from the demands of their day and be in the here and now.³⁹

That the company are invested in examining time and duration is obvious already in the titles of their work. For example, while *How Dear to Me the Hour When Daylight Dies* focuses on a very specific temporal measure, an hour, and gestures towards this specific time as something precious and worth waiting for (this hour will come again and again), *When will the September roses bloom? Last night was only a comedy* poses a question and a concern about the future while also casting the mind back to the past, last night's event which was only a comedy. In addition to the quantification of time and temporal markers in their titles (somehow a careful framing of duration), the work of the company evoked an experience of endless time when all the while the work is in fact very carefully calculated. There is a fixation on numbers, counting and ordering structure in Goat Island's work that comes across indeed as very anti-Bergsonian.

³⁷ Karen Christopher, 'Waiting, Wondering, Wavering and Wanting: The Performance of Silence', *Frakcija Performing Arts Magazine: When will the September roses bloom? Last night was only a comedy: Reflections on the Performance*, No. 35, 2005, np.

³⁸ Hixson, in Bottoms and Goulis, p. 182

³⁹ Christopher, in Bottoms and Goulis, p. 51

For example, *September Roses* is structured according to the Fibonacci number sequence where every number is the sum of the two numbers preceding it (e.g. 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21...). All the sections in the piece have their own precise duration and once 337 seconds has been reached the spiral starts going back down again. Not only was this spiral mapped on the floor of the performance space but also ‘in time (with a stopwatch, eventually replaced by a music soundtrack, and then by a clock)’.⁴⁰ Hence, the duration of the beginning section is 55 seconds and the longest time and the highest point on the spiral, 337 seconds, corresponds with the duration of Litó Walkey’s one leg stand. As Goulish explains, the reason for choosing two James Taylor songs (*Sweet Baby James* and *Fire and Rain*) for this one leg stand sequence was to cue them into the Fibonacci structure.⁴¹ Furthermore, Goulish notes how Hixson ‘orchestrated the varying durations of the missing parts [in *September Roses* when audience and performers wait] with a precision that, in fact, reminded me of 4’33, John Cage’s three-movement silent work for piano’.⁴² Similarly, the scenes in *How Dear to Me...* which I will discuss below are at least partially set to music, as if to mark the marching on of time and the persistence of movement as it continues in silence. In its precise orchestration, Goat Island’s work resembles choreography. It is demanding that one is, and executes these movements, on time, to some extent. But in actual fact, it is more specifically the joining of dance to music.

Witnessing some of the repetitive sequences in these works is further complicated by their presence on stage. Framed as a theatrical performance, the

⁴⁰ Matthew Goulish, ‘Eight Memos on the Creation Process of Goat Island’s *When will the September roses bloom? Last night was only a comedy*’, *Frakcija Performing Arts Magazine: When will the September roses bloom? Last night was only a comedy: Reflections on the Process*, No. 32, 2005, np.

⁴¹ Goulish, in Bottoms, 2005, np.

⁴² Goulish, in Bottoms, 2005, np.

audience has come to see the work with their learned modes of spectating and expectations. As Adrian Heathfield argues, ‘Traditions of watching within live arenas may lead us to expect that such experiences’ - of self-consciousness, confusion, frustration, near boredom, and vague recognition - ‘should and will have been cut down or out’.⁴³ However, Heathfield goes on to suggest that ‘Goat Island’s work holds you inside the duration of these experiences’.⁴⁴ For example, in *How Dear to Me...* Goulish walks in a circle around the stage and at regular intervals steps over a chair that Bryan Saner places in his way. Goulish walks in a calm tempo, seemingly unaware of the other activity going on around him. After a while Christopher and Antonio Poppe join Saner and they all move the chair. The walking literally goes in circles and yet resists closure. The song that is played during this scene gradually grows to a crescendo. However, nothing is explained and what is left for the spectator is a varied range of associations and images. Indeed, it is uncertain whether the walk that the company perform here is in fact a repetition of a circle or a continuation of a line. It is this uncertainty perhaps that allows the spectator to enter the work through associations but it is also the key to the kind of temporality or experience of duration that the work offers. The not knowing opens up time so that time can be experienced as ‘a succession of qualitative changes’.⁴⁵

In effect, there always seems to be something missing in Goat Island’s performances, and in the movement sequences in particular, due to the way they have been constructed in the first place. Hixson would usually give a directive to the group members who then devise movement sequences, actions or gestures. These

⁴³Heathfield, ‘Coming Undone’ *Goat Island Performance Group official website*, 2001, <http://www.goatlandperformance.org/writing_comingUndone.htm> (Accessed 26 October 2009).

⁴⁴ Heathfield, 2009

⁴⁵ Bergson, p. 104

sequences in turn get altered by others or recycled into something else. This long ‘ongoing winnowing process’⁴⁶ of accumulating responses produces an absence at the core of every movement sequence. This results in what Sara Jane Bailes calls ‘a performative state of stillness’.⁴⁷ This state of stillness is perhaps nowhere as forceful as in *September Roses* when Saner comes forward to announce that they are missing the beginning. A silence lasting 55 seconds ensues during which the performers simply stand on stage and wait. In a similar vein, there is a moment in *September Roses* when Walkey stands on one leg for the duration of two James Taylor songs. Taking their time, these scenes force the audience to wait and to adjust their viewing accordingly. Given no context, the seemingly endless or directionless movement or simply waiting seem to invite the spectator to take their time to perceive how the action unravels in time. Walkey notes: ‘I could easily just get into a meditative state and close off, but I don’t, I’m really trying to project something’.⁴⁸ Paradoxically, it is ‘I must practice; do not waste time’.⁴⁹ Indeed, ‘there’s a lot of action going on in that stillness’.⁵⁰ However, the audience is never really let in on what Walkey is projecting or why and the uncertainty about whether anything really is unravelling or will be revealed grows. The ‘winnowing’ making process leaves the audience with an unsettling sense that things are in fact done in secret and that the spectator watching the action on stage will only see a small part of what actually goes on. Things will not be explained to us. As Walkey contends, ‘with Goat Island there’s a level of unconsciousness, or intuition – things aren’t

⁴⁶ Bottoms, 2007, p. 135

⁴⁷ Sara Jane Bailes, ‘Some Slow Going: Considering Beckett and Goat Island’, *Performance Research: On Beckett*, Vol. 12, No. 1, 2007, pp. 35 – 49 (p. 35).

⁴⁸ Walkey, cited in Bottoms, 2005, np.

⁴⁹ Walkey, in Bottoms, 2005

⁵⁰ Walkey, in Bottoms and Goulish, p. 105

over-explained. If anything, it's unexplained'.⁵¹ Watching the slight trembling of Walkey's body while she balances on one leg, we merely venture a guess that something is happening. Similarly, we wait for the missing beginning hoping, or trusting, it will appear. In doing so, the audience is held, as Heathfield suggests, inside the duration of such experiences. We are held because we are uncertain if anything is going to happen, if there is in fact anything to wait for.

According to Bailes, the performances employ 'repetitive sequencing as a way of exhausting movement rather than simply exhausting the body'.⁵² For example, *How Dear to Me...* starts with a monologue by Saner taken from Kon Ichikawa's 1956 film *The Harp of Burma* after which Goulish comes forward and stands still. He then lifts his right hand and rubs the back of his palm with his left hand using circular movements. He lowers both hands and after a beat starts again. This action is done first in silence and then over the duration of an Irish folk song and continues after that in silence. It is as if the silence that preceded the song was carried over and thus the music offers only a short respite. To place such an action at the beginning of the performance balances an atmosphere of languor against a growing concentration as the audience are drawn into the image. This is followed by a jumping sequence, named by the company as the 'puppet jump', where all the performers jump, spin and fall for several minutes after which they begin the 'shivering homage', a movement executed in a line to the accompaniment of 'Que Sera?'. Watching *How Dear to Me...* it would be easy to say that one has just seen three series of repeating movement sequences. However, as Stephen Bottoms argues:

⁵¹ Walkey, cited in Bottoms, 2005, np.

⁵² Bailes, p. 38

while sequences such as the 'puppet jump' are blatantly constructed and self-reflexive, apparently referring to nothing beyond their own physical textures, the sheer, repetitive insistence of the performers' movements seems to demand an appreciation on the spectator's part which goes beyond the purely formal.⁵³

Indeed, employing Bergson here suggests that seeing Goulish rub the back of his hand repeatedly or the company perform the puppet jump for ten minutes we most probably mistake what we see with our feeling. If a movement that we watch someone else do recurs, we say that our sensation of it repeats. We say our sensation is the same because we perceive the movement to be the same. However, being in a perpetual state of becoming, our intensities and sensations are always changing. In yet another example, from time to time during *September Roses* Goulish ducks his head as if to enter through a door into a small room. Bailes observes how during the repetition of this moment 'the door becomes an impeded body whose head stoops, tilting the body forward, knees bent as it walks so that the body is lowered with stiffness, maintaining straightness through the spine before rising again'.⁵⁴ It is not that the body is miming a door but that 'the door is becoming a body remembering a door'.⁵⁵ Or as Nicholas Ridout proposes, 'It is a repetition, scrupulously observed, of a memory of a doorway'.⁵⁶ But one could also say that it is in fact not just a memory from the body repeated but a learning, a perceiving anew of a door.

September Roses in fact takes repetition a step further. The performance is actually two performances on two consecutive nights. The show is compiled of parts

⁵³ Stephen Bottoms, 'The Tangled Flora of Goat Island: Rhizome, Repetition, Reality', *Theatre Journal*, Vol. 50, No. 4, 1998, pp. 421-446 (p. 427).

⁵⁴ Bailes, 'Report on the Process: Being in Waiting', *Frakcija Performing Arts Magazine; When will the September roses bloom? Last night was only a comedy: Reflections on the Process*, No. 32, 2005, np.

⁵⁵ Bailes, 2005

⁵⁶ Ridout, 'A Song for Europe', *Frakcija Performing Arts Magazine: When will the September roses bloom? Last night was only a comedy: Reflections on the Performance*, No. 35, 2005, np.

in a way that results in the middle section of each performance being slightly different while the beginning and end of both nights are the same sequences. Hence, returning on the second night of *September Roses* the spectator encounters what she calls the same beginning and the same end and she might thus say she is watching repetition. As Roms contends, ‘The power of performance is that it can and must be repeated’.⁵⁷ Of course, as theatre-goers we are usually well aware that every showing of the same performance is different, that seeing the same performance twice is never like seeing the same performance twice. Or in other words, that what we might call the same performance paradoxically never is. One might feel a bit different tonight, sit in a different place, pay attention to different things while the performers might do something slightly differently. But once we see the same beginning and the same end we remember we saw them last night. However, what *September Roses* instigates by repeating a performance on two nights with some minor alterations is not the act of memory but of learning, not of recognising but of perceiving.

One can find the significance of the distinction between memory and learning in Goat Island’s interest in pedagogy and teaching. Steve Bottoms notes how ‘[i]mages of schooling and teaching recur persistently through Goat Island’s performances’.⁵⁸ There is always someone who is teaching or someone who is learning. But running parallel to the use of imagery of schooling is an emphasis on a learning that goes on beyond the experience of the performances. When still active as a company, Goat Island’s practice extended beyond performance work and the company focused heavily on running workshops and summer schools. The

⁵⁷ Roms, 2005

⁵⁸ Bottoms, 2007, p. 55

company's teaching was based on their own working process and many of the exercises used in their teaching are the ones the company have used while making their own work. One of the methods which often acts as a basis for all their processes is the practice of response. Company members would produce work by responding to a directive usually given by Hixson. Members would bring material into the process which from that point on would become everyone's material. They would then respond to each other's work by making another sequence which would again get a response from one of the company members and so on. Here the response given becomes a gift that requires perceiving in place of memory. The notion of response, which produces those moments in stillness in the middle of movement, was an active tool in the group's work. One is asked not to recognise the work that inspired the response but to perceive the change in the response offered. A similar process of relearning happens in many of the exercises which require the (non)repetition of a movement sequence which is performed for one minute first slowly, then fast, then in fragments and so in different variations. The variation compels a change where we learn the new movement rather than think back to the initial sequence that started the exercise. It is in these moments where the pedagogy is about learning learning. This is sometimes referred to as unlearning in the writing on the company's work⁵⁹ but I suggest it is more accurate and helpful to focus on this specific aspect of perceiving and learning. Pedagogy, then, becomes a way to connect the way we experience performance with the way we experience all (creative) life.

In fact, what these two performances discussed here lay bare is not only the uniqueness of every performance but every single moment. As Guerlac states:

⁵⁹ Bottoms, 2007, p. 55

Time itself, as real duration, enters into the identity of inner experiences. These involve not only *what* is felt but also, quite specifically, *how it feels*. And how it feels depends on everything else that is happening at that particular moment, a moment that “never presents itself twice”. It even depends on one’s whole history.⁶⁰

What is at stake, then, is not only radical difference but the loss of causality. For Bergson, ‘no effort of logic will succeed in proving that what has been will be or will continue to be, that the same antecedents will always give rise to identical consequents’.⁶¹ Bergson thus ‘redefines inner identity in terms of the radically singular quality of each lived moment’.⁶² What I want to suggest here is that by inviting the spectator to be here and now in the present through the act of waiting and repetition, these performances draw attention to process and the perpetual becoming of time. Thus they expose radical difference since how each moment feels to each spectator is dependent, as Guerlac states, on one’s whole history and will never be the same, will never present itself twice. In doing so, they initiate a possibility of immediate experience, or the dynamic force of time, which Bergson calls real duration. Could the time of waiting in *September Roses*, while the missing beginning declares its absence or when Walkey stands on one foot, offer an opportunity for accessing the flow of inner experiences? What would that demand and is that possible in the space of theatre?

I would like to briefly discuss here a work of choreography that presents a useful comparison. Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker’s *Piano Phase* is a dance originally made for de Keersmaeker and Michele Anne de Mey as part of *Fase: Four Movements for the Music of Steve Reich*. The music is one of Reich’s so-called process pieces where a gradual process of phase shifting ‘allows a relatively small

⁶⁰ Guerlac, p. 90, original emphasis

⁶¹ Bergson, p. 208

⁶² Guerlac, p. 91

amount of musical material to be cycled through all its possible permutations, in a slow and orderly way, that is perceptible to the listener'.⁶³ *Piano Phase* is played by two pianists who begin in unison and repeat a pattern of twelve notes. K. Robert Schwarz explains:

One pianist increases his tempo very gradually until he is one note ahead of the other; the process now pauses, and the new configuration is repeated. Again one pianist gradually quickens his tempo; this time he ends up two notes ahead of the other, and the new combination is repeated. This sequence of gradual acceleration and repetition is performed twelve times until the two pianists have arrived back where they began.⁶⁴

Analogous to the music, the movement is also a gradual process of shifting. De Mey and de Keersmaecker stand next to each other and move along one line but the lighting causes the dancers' shadows to appear on the white canvas wall behind them as if another three dancers were on stage and thus gives the simple staging surprising depth. The dancers spin around on one foot while the other pushes them around, their arms constantly swinging up and down like a lever aiding the turning movement. Frequently, the simultaneous spinning goes out of phase. Their arms do not stretch to the right at the same time anymore but we see one of the dancers slowing down ever so slightly (or is the other speeding up?). After a while they seem to be in the same rhythm again, only now their arms meet in the middle as one stretches right and the other left. Out of sync they go again and after another while come back to how they started. Continuing the spinning movement, they travel along the line only to turn again, sometimes suspending the movement mid-way. Arms bend and wrists are held up to punctuate the occasional stop and gradually, in some form or another, everything repeats again.

⁶³ William Duckworth, *Talking Music* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1995) p. 292.

⁶⁴ K. Robert Schwarz, *Minimalists* (London: Phaidon, 1996), p. 65.

The toing and froing of the movement is a repetition which, as Andre Lepecki argues, ‘creates a form of standing still that has nothing of the immobile’.⁶⁵ This repetition, which in its constant movement is going nowhere and yet gets everywhere,⁶⁶ is that of paronomasia. Paronomasia is a composite word made of *para* meaning alongside or beyond and *onomos* which means name. Linguistically speaking, then, paronomasia is ‘the careful reiteration of an idea through an ongoing stringing of different words that share the same ‘stem’’, or ‘repetition with a difference’.⁶⁷ Lepecki employs the term when he writes about choreography because,

the paronomastic movement dissolves the temporal tyranny modernity’s being-toward-movement imposes on subjectivity for it to be constantly *on* time. Paronomasia proposes to subjectivity alternative modalities of being *in* time.⁶⁸

Although the choreography appears like a relentless machine which is insistently *on* time even though it is difficult to really understand how it does it, the repetition of spinning, travelling, swinging and suspending in *Piano Phase* is a movement which is *in* time as well. However, I would argue that while resisting the count, the ‘choreography’ of Goat Island is a similar paronomastic operation. The endless circle Goulish travels in *How Dear to Me...* or the literal standing still of Walkey produces a still-act which is ‘the activation of a proposition for an ethics of being that is always an active entanglement with time’.⁶⁹ It is important to note here, then, the difference we might observe between Goat Island’s way of joining dance, or movement (or in fact at points even stillness), to music and the more straight-

⁶⁵ Andre Lepecki, *Exhausting Dance: Performance and the Politics of Movement* (London: Routledge, 2006) p. 62.

⁶⁶ Lepecki, p. 63

⁶⁷ Lepecki, p. 62

⁶⁸ Lepecki, p. 62, original emphasis

⁶⁹ Lepecki, p. 62

forward relation to music that de Keersmaecker's choreography performs. Unlike in *Piano Phase*, in Goat Island's work it is not so much the movement of the dancer obeying the rhythm of the music that allows us to enter pure duration but the uncertainty over waiting.

So what is this ethics, this active entanglement with time and what does it look like outside of performance? This question is related, I would argue, to the role of pedagogy in the company's work and their insistence on the ecology of their practice which came across in their teaching. Above I discussed some of the aspects of teaching and learning in their work and mentioned in particular their use of responding. In 'Letter to a Young Practitioner', a text the company members wrote as encouragement to young performance makers, Mark Jeffery notes: 'The act of receiving, and the acceptance of a gift is an important philosophy we adhere to'.⁷⁰

He goes on to write:

Once the digestion of the gift has been articulated in oneself then we begin to understand the nature and the power of sharing. [...] This idea of ownership becomes a wider participation, and one of interaction and creativity with others.⁷¹

In fact, all company members articulate the significance of valuing collaborators and shared ownership in the letter. As CJ Mitchell notes, 'Give up what seems important to you; it's not yours'.⁷² In this process of gift giving and accepting, the work of perceiving and learning is extended beyond its role in performance out into the 'normal time' of everyday life. The gift becomes, as I pointed out via Derrida in the previous chapter, a gift of giving.

⁷⁰Karen Christopher (ed.) *Goat Island: School Book 2*, (Chicago: The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, 2000), p. 106.

⁷¹ Christopher, p. 107

⁷² Christopher, p. 102

The process of sharing material as a ‘gift’ was sometimes time consuming and in their practice, Goat Island took two to three years to make a performance. This was partly because the individual company members needed to make a living outside of Goat Island. But taking their time also became a proposal to relearn perception. This, then, is the type of ecology that was so central to the company’s working practices. And it is akin to paronomasia. As Lepecki argues, paronomasia ensures that ‘movement belongs more to intensities and less to kinetics; and the appearing body must be seen less as solid form and rather as sliding along lines of intensities’.⁷³ Furthermore, Bailes notes how the relearning, and learning *to see* in particular, becomes in Goat Island’s performance ‘an opportunity to investigate not seeing itself but what it means to be able to perceive things differently so that we become conscious of the politics of looking as an act of construction, a privilege rather than a given’.⁷⁴ The investigation into the construction of looking, then, is a way of slowing down in order to have the time to relearn.

But if both de Keersmaeker’s choreography and Goat Island’s stillness can be considered as paronomasia it is perhaps worth examining how they differ from one another and relate to the question of pure duration. In fact, it seems that the place for realising the flow of duration that Bergson is thinking of could be that of art. Speaking of aesthetic feelings, Bergson contends that, ‘the object of art is to put to sleep the active or rather resistant powers of our personality, and thus to bring us into a state of perfect responsiveness’.⁷⁵ In this state of responsiveness, then, ‘we realize the idea that is suggested to us and sympathize with the feeling that is

⁷³ Lepecki, p. 63

⁷⁴ Bailes, 2011, p. 145

⁷⁵ Bailes, p. 14

expressed'.⁷⁶ Just as we saw with the example of the dancer and the feeling of grace, art 'engages our feelings through an experience of qualities'.⁷⁷ Bergson argues that,

In the processes of art we shall find, in a weakened form, a refined and in some measure spiritualized version of the processes commonly used to induce the state of hypnosis. Thus, in music, the rhythm and measure suspend the normal flow of our sensations and ideas by causing our attention to swing to and fro between fixed points, and they take hold of us with such force that even the faintest imitation of a groan will suffice to fill us with the utmost sadness. If musical sounds affect us more powerfully than the sounds of nature, the reason is that nature confines itself to *expressing* feelings, whereas music *suggests* them to us.⁷⁸

Art addresses us by suggesting feelings instead of operating 'like a physical cause'.⁷⁹ 'It elicits a sympathetic response on our part, a virtual participation in the feeling or idea, which is imprinted in us by the artistic manipulation of qualities'.⁸⁰ Thus, it is perhaps easy to see how the toing and froing of the movement in *Piano Phase* 'suspends the normal flow of our sensations' and even nearly induces the state of hypnosis. We follow the movement and through investing ourselves in its relentless repetition experience a multiplicity of qualities. But what about the stillness and waiting in *Goat Island* when we feel things are done in secret and we are held in the experience without much context? We wait expecting to be told what is happening and why, and yet are left to our own devices. We will not *get* there, instead the performance *keeps* us there and in that sense, one could say that it is a Bergsonian experience in the way it does not allow us to bring our past experiences to bear on the present moment. Yet, in order to have a qualitative progress the act of waiting has to become something else. Otherwise, anticipating, we are still projecting into the future whereas in order to appreciate the flow of time we need to

⁷⁶ Bailes, p. 14

⁷⁷ Guerlac, p. 49

⁷⁸ Bergson, p. 14-5

⁷⁹ Guerlac, p. 52

⁸⁰ Guerlac, p. 52

be here and now and engage with our present feelings. However, one could say that Goat Island's refusal of a climax is similar to that in *Piano Phase*. It does not particularly get us anywhere either.

3 Einstein on the Beach and climatic time

So we have seen in Goat Island's work and in *Piano Phase* a repetition that I have argued is not a straightforward repetition but one where sensations and intensities are in a perpetual state of becoming and the task of recognising is in fact a task of perceiving. It is in fact here that we see a similarity with Gertrude Stein's work I discussed in the introduction. In my next example I turn from the ideas of waiting, not getting there and anticipation to looking at a type of slowness that might, at first glance, look similar to that slowness we encounter in Goat Island's work. I examine this slowness, of going but not getting, in Robert Wilson's *Einstein on the Beach*. Steven Connor calls this certain type of slowness, or a limited flow of information, 'slow going'.⁸¹ I discuss how the experience of slow going manifests itself in *Einstein on the Beach*, work that is at points excruciatingly slow and famous for taking its time. Through considering the experience of time in *Einstein on the Beach*, I demonstrate how, unlike the pure duration in Goat Island's work, it is in fact mediated through space. In so doing, I will discuss the tightly controlled performance space and its relationship with time from the point of view of someone who saw it from the left circle.

Wilson's and Glass' opera was first performed in 1976 and has been since revived in 1984, 1992 and 2012. Its roots are lodged firmly in the minimalist art practices of the mid-1960s where completing the art work is part of the role of the

⁸¹ Steven Connor, 'Slow Going', 1998, <<http://www.bbk.ac.uk/english/skc/slow.htm>> (Accessed 13 March 2010).

spectator. In addition to Glass, Wilson collaborated with Lucinda Childs who choreographed the dance sequences and contributed some of the text. Child's minimalist movement experimentation which mixes simple movement patterns and complex transitions sit perfectly in Glass' music. *Einstein on the Beach* eschews narrative and plot and is, according to Glass, 'a poetic vision'.⁸² The opera's structure is made of acts and scenes but they are more like images and montages of actions. The music of *Einstein on the Beach* grew out of Glass' realisation that 'a piece of music could be organized around the idea of rhythm rather than harmony and melody',⁸³ a discovery that was facilitated by his collaboration with Ravi Shankar in the mid-1960s. To be precise (and precision as we will come to see, is important to this work), there are four acts and five connecting interludes, or knee plays (called that because they act as the joints of the piece). The knee plays seem to function as binding material but their function is more about grounding or repeating. As Stefan Brecht notes, 'they do not link what they separate'.⁸⁴ Instead, they repeat the musical theme of the work and thus bring the work back to its starting point. But whatever else starts from that point, as if anew, starts with a sense of what has just been. Here the act of repetition is one of return and accumulation. That is to say, we keep returning to the beginning or somewhere near the beginning, something we already know. And we depart from it in order to go on yet another excursion into a new act. Thus every knee play brings us back to the same point, a point we recognise, and every scene is pregnant with the preceding sections. In his discussion of Jérôme Bel's work, Lepecki notes how 'repetition unleashes a series of

⁸² Philip Glass, cited in Robert Jones, *Music by Philip Glass* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1995), p. 32.

⁸³ Philip Glass, cited in Lawrence Shyer, *Robert Wilson and His Collaborators* (New York: Theatre Communications Group, 1998), p. 120.

⁸⁴ Stefan Brecht, *The Theatre of Visions: Robert Wilson* (London: Methuen, 1994), p. 367.

differences'.⁸⁵ Similar to what I have been calling the (non)repetition in *Goat Island*, repetition of the knee plays make the familiar strange and points out the subtle difference in every repeating moment.

The opera is and is not about Albert Einstein. Most of the performers are dressed in white shirts, baggy trousers and suspenders and there is a similarly clad figure with a big mop of white hair playing the violin but this is by no means character-based story telling. Rather, the opera uses facts from Einstein's life as common points of reference: Einstein as a keen amateur violinist, the themes of light, space and time, the steam locomotive, the spaceship, a gyroscope (a tool used to measure the rotation of the Earth), travelling across the stage in the Trial scene. Lawrence Shyer argues, as many observers have done, that 'The train and the spaceship both relate obliquely to the life of Einstein, who was born in the age of the steam locomotive and died on the brink of the space age which his pioneering work helped bring about'.⁸⁶ There is mechanical clock time manifested as wristwatches that performers keep looking at throughout the opera. But there is also duration: 'Wilson's slow motion dramatizes time, not as a discrete unit ticked off by a chronometer, but as a flowing succession of states, melting invisibly, indivisibly into each other'.⁸⁷ But as I hope to point out, that duration of a flow of melting states is one of slow going, which, although not contrary, is distinct from Bergson's notion of pure duration.

The opera starts before the audience come in. The curtains are still closed but in the orchestra pit a chorus, dressed in Einstein-'inspired' baggy trouser and

⁸⁵ Lepecki, p. 61

⁸⁶ Lawrence Shyer, *Robert Wilson and His Collaborators* (New York: Theatre Communications Group, 1898), p. 217.

⁸⁷ Arthur Holmberg, *The Theatre of Robert Wilson* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 11.

suspender outfits, is chanting numbers. On a platform next to them, two stenographers count and mime. The first scene of the first act, once the lights have gone down and the curtain has gone up, consists of a train entering the stage. It slowly emerges from stage right and makes its way across. It covers most of the back wall of the stage. Up in a steel tower a boy is throwing down paper airplanes. Centre stage, one of the Einstein figures is walking up and down while gesturing with her arms. Her pacing starts from stage left and in the course of the scene travels 20 metres towards stage right while seemingly only going back and forth. Downstage, a man is drawing in the air, on what I assume is a blackboard in front of him. Upstage, another figure, traverses the stage next to the train as if driving a train herself, her hand gestures indicate that she is operating a machine. Moving alongside the gigantic train, she overtakes it and carries on.

In the second scene of Act 1 a court room is revealed. A jury is trying a defendant. Two judges, one of them an old man, the other a small boy, sit behind a big white desk. An enormous bed is lying centre stage. A figure, dressed like the rest of the cast, sits in the seat of the accused but no one seems to know who is accused and of what. Nor does it seem to matter. Another knee play, followed by Act 2 and a dance sequence where the dancers jump, whirl, twirl and leap in ever changing permutations and combinations, a whirlwind of movement that ends as abruptly as it began. Then another scene with a train, now seen as if from behind the train. A couple are singing an aria, standing on the back of the train. Then, a knee play follows. Sitting there following these scenes (and I use the word following rather than watching as I feel like I am not really watching with any intent, after a while a state of languor takes over and it becomes apparent that waiting for things to happen any faster than they do is not going to help here) I could not say how long

they last. It does not matter of course. They last as long as they last and then a new thing comes along. Another court room scene and another scene on a train. Another scene with a dance sequence follows, performed on a field, underneath a hovering spaceship.

However, there is only seemingly repetition in *Einstein on the Beach*. As I discussed in the first section of this chapter with regards to Reich's music or Goat Island's performances, what repeats here is in fact perpetually changing score. As Maria Shevtsova explains, 'Act 1 has the first train and the trial themes (Train 1 and Trial 1). Act 2 has the first field theme and a new train theme (Field 1 and Train 2). Act 3 has a new trial theme and a new field theme (Trial 2 and Field 2). Act 4 pulls the three themes together (Train, Trial and Field...)'.⁸⁸ Paradoxically, what allows pure duration here as in Reich is systematic structure, or in Shevtsova's words, 'mathematical permutation and combination'.⁸⁹ Such combination and permutation of themes is even more strongly inherent in Glass' compositions based on techniques of 'additive process and cyclical structure'.⁹⁰ As Shevtsova argues, 'It is precisely his procedure of repeating say five notes several times, then six, then seven, then eight and so on, that gives the sensation of addition and return in the one stretch of sound'.⁹¹ It is the perpetual and systematic change in these works which is so similar to what we saw in Goat Island and especially in *Piano Phase*. The repetition of language or, at points, the lack of language also plays a part here. What is sung in this opera is most often numbers and solfège syllables. When spoken word is used it is repeated. In Trial 1, the two judges take turns in declaring: 'This court of common peace is now in session.' The repeated declaration ceases to be a

⁸⁸ Maria Shevtsova, *Robert Wilson* (London: Routledge, 2007), p. 90.

⁸⁹ Shevtsova, p. 90

⁹⁰ Glass, cited in Shevtsova, p. 90

⁹¹ Shevtsova, p. 90-91

simple spoken statement and becomes a chant, merging in with the sung material of the opera.

It might be useful to pause here for a while to consider the shared ideas and notions in both Glass' and Reich's work. The music of both composers is often described as minimalist although they have been more or less reluctant to accept such categorisation. There are, however, common interests in their work which are clear to see. Although Glass and Reich were not aware of each other's work from the start nor have they been influenced by each other (despite studying at Juilliard at the same time), their work was made in a similar cultural climate from the mid-1960s onwards. Thus they both independently developed their interest in reductive repetition. One common influence was Michael Snow's film *Wavelength* (1967). From early on, the focus in Glass' and Reich's work was rhythm, not pitch. Glass worked in India with the sitar player and composer Ravi Shankar who became an important influence for him. From Indian music Glass picked up the use of cyclical structures which is the joining of cycles of different beats. It produces an effect similar to wheels inside of wheels where at some points the wheels which are going around separately come into contact. After returning from India, Glass also began an exploration of additive processes. His *I+I* from 1968 for one player and an amplified tabletop was his first composition using an additive process. The composition has two given rhythms which 'should be combined in continuous, regular arithmetic progressions'.⁹² Glass gives some examples of how these units could be combined, for example: 1+2; 1+2+2; 1+2+2+2; 1+2+2; 1+2. However, after the free experimentation of *I+I*, Glass' music starts to use a strict additive

⁹² Keith Potter, *Four Musical Minimalists: La Monte Young, Terry Riley, Steve Reich, Philip Glass* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 270.

process which, like phrasing in Reich's work, offers 'a way into a musical structure which may otherwise seem merely aimless'.⁹³

Keith Potter notes that *Einstein on the Beach* 'is bounded by a clear cadential progression in C major'.⁹⁴ Glass uses a five chord cadential pattern 'which occupies a central position in the opera's overall structure, integrating local harmonic motion and long-range tonal planning'.⁹⁵ Over the course of the second and third act the formula ends up 'making the phrase resolve a half-step lower'.⁹⁶ Glass notes that as a formula that invites repetition 'it is particularly suited to my kind of musical thinking'.⁹⁷ In fact, what this particular section does is avoid 'the potential monotony of having long stretches of music in one key'.⁹⁸ Potter contends that this section 'derives much of its impact in *Einstein*, indeed, from its sharp contrast with other, more harmonically static, sections'.⁹⁹ Thus, despite the seeming unity, or even monotony of the music in *Einstein on the Beach*, 'individual sections use different tonalities to articulate a totality which, especially when experienced in the theatre, exhibits a surprisingly conventional approach to such matters as proportion and climax'.¹⁰⁰ Perhaps here we find a difference between Glass and Reich whereby *Einstein on the Beach*, for all its (non)repeating and seemingly lingering and waiting music, actually has a climax and a spectacular one at that. In fact, the whole of the opera is spectacular and as such is constantly, although almost invisibly, geared towards that climax or finale. There is fulfilment whereas with *Goat Island* and

⁹³ Potter, p. 272

⁹⁴ Potter, p. 326

⁹⁵ Potter, p. 330

⁹⁶ Potter, p. 330

⁹⁷ Glass cited in Potter, p. 330

⁹⁸ Potter, p. 330

⁹⁹ Potter, p. 330

¹⁰⁰ Potter, p. 326

Reich's *Piano Phase* we are indeed left waiting not knowing whether there is anything to wait for.

Reich's 1965 composition *It's Gonna Rain* established the technique of phasing but his *Piano Phase* 'first explored phasing in live performance and then extended its implications by incorporating a wider range both technically and stylistically'.¹⁰¹ Although there was a new emphasis on pitch, for Reich the overarching thing was still rhythmic structure. Like Glass, Reich was influenced by and interested in non-Western music. Potter notes that his 'aesthetic approach to non-Western music was...governed by his already familiar constructivist attitude'.¹⁰² *Piano Phase* made clear to Reich that such music using phasing could indeed be played live instead of playing along or against a recording. Although the piece is not improvised but very carefully constructed it is not, according to Reich, necessary to read the notation while playing. Reich argues that 'what you have to do to play the piece is to listen carefully in order to hear if you've moved one beat ahead, or if you've moved two by mistake, or if you've tried to move ahead but have instead drifted back to here you started'.¹⁰³ He goes on to say that, 'the psychology of performance, what really happens when you play, is total involvement with the sound; total sensuous-intellectual involvement'.¹⁰⁴

I would argue that there is a difference between the music and approach of Reich and Glass. The difference is one of expectation and conventionality and can be perhaps described through a joke which Glass recounts in a documentary on his work. Glass says the joke is often told to him and it goes like this:

¹⁰¹ Potter, p. 153

¹⁰² Potter, p. 206

¹⁰³ Reich, p. 52

¹⁰⁴ Steve Reich, *Writings about Music* (Halifax: Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1974), p. 52.

Knock knock.
Who's there?
Knock knock.
Who's there?
Knock knock.
Who's there?
Knock knock.
Who's there?
Philip Glass.¹⁰⁵

I would suggest here that the joke and the work of Glass are similar in the way the joke needs the punch line and Glass' music somehow needs or at least promises a satisfying end point. In this vein, one could imagine that a similar joke on Reich would go something like:

Knock knock.
Who's there?
Knock
Knock who's
There knock
Knock
Who's Steve?
Knock knock...

And so on. Despite the similarities in the two composers' work, it is Glass' music which follows a more predictable (although in no way unadventurous) structure.

Bonnie Marranca argues that Wilson's 'landscapes stage the passage of time'.¹⁰⁶ Marranca's point is an important one here because it actually reveals

¹⁰⁵ Glass, in *Glass: A Portrait of Philip in Twelve Parts*, dir. by Scott Hicks, 2007.

something significant about Wilson's treatment of time. That is, in *Einstein on the Beach* at least, time is travelling across the stage. We can see the movement of time. Or to put it differently, the experience of time here is spatialised. In one way it is easy to begin to think of the work as a flow of time that is an invitation to pure duration. Wilson's and Glass' 'poetic vision' is a dreamscape where ideas flow into each other. As Wilson states, 'This is not a rational way of working, it's intuitive. Slowly the pieces fall together and add up. More meanings emerge in my theatre because more than one thing is going on at the same time'.¹⁰⁷ Its actual demand, then, is for endurance coupled with a long attention span. Or, attention span is not quite the right word. It is not so much about attention, I would suggest, than it is about attunement or attuning. Watching *Einstein on the Beach* there is a sense that things are moving slowly or not moving at all. But look away for a while or close your eyes and suddenly things look a bit different. Things are not going as slowly as one might think. It is also relative, of course, the slowness of things. As Connor notes, 'We mistake the experience of slowness as a simple negative measure; if only things could go more quickly, in the queue, during pain or unhappiness'.¹⁰⁸ But do we wish for things to go quicker in the theatre? Are we not supposed to give ourselves over to the duration? We know how long this performance is, we are aware this will last four and a half hours. Slowness here then draws attention to the difference between the measurement of time and our perception of it. *Einstein on the Beach* is an invitation to notice things and to be surprised, an unravelling and a subtle but constant anticipation. This evident slowness, or a limited flow of

¹⁰⁶ Bonnie Marranca, 'Robert Wilson and the Idea of the Archive: Dramaturgy as an Ecology', in *Ecologies of Theatre: Essays at the Century Turning* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), p. 39.

¹⁰⁷ Holmberg, p. 97

¹⁰⁸ Connor, 1998

information, Connor calls 'slow going'. Unlike going slowly which 'is something we attempt to do to time',¹⁰⁹ slow going is 'the experience of a loss of temporal relativity; when things are going slowly, the scale of measurement itself begins to elongate, to attenuate, to dissolve'.¹¹⁰ In fact, 'We cannot apply measure to this movement of slow going, because it is itself the only scale against which to measure the refusals and remissions of elapsing time of which the hectic interval of human life is composed'.¹¹¹

Imagine this: a boy is standing in a steel tower, or a crane. He stands, he walks forward. Or he stands. Underneath, a man in a red jacket is standing and drawing. A woman in a white shirt and suspenders is walking back and forth, dancing. Red sneakers. Boy stands, walks forward, a steam train is emerging from stage left. The music travels up and then down, swirls like the dancer. How many times? Five minutes. Twenty minutes. The boy is throwing paper airplanes from his steel tower, a crane. The steam train travels across, it is covering the back of the stage, leaving the back of the stage in its enormous shadow. The music travels up and down, the train travels. 20 minutes. 30 minutes.

Or it's like this: a court scene, again, but not the same. A prison too. A jury, two judges, a clock, prison bars. 'I was in this prematurely air-conditioned super market and there were all these aisles and there were all these bathing caps that you could buy that had these kind of Fourth of July plumes on them. They were red and yellow and blue I wasn't tempted to buy one but I was reminded of the fact that I had been avoiding the beach'.¹¹² And again. Some movement. Someone moves. The music repeats, or otherwise does its thing. Climbs up and up and comes down and

¹⁰⁹ Connor, 1998

¹¹⁰ Connor, 1998

¹¹¹ Connor, 1998

¹¹² *Einstein on the Beach*, The Barbican, London, 10 May 2012.

down. Not much moves except the gyroscope which is suspended above downstage. Or does it? Slowly like the Earth would move and rotate.

Marranca argues: ‘This contemplative mergence of cosmic time and theatrical time (the macrocosm and microcosm theme are elaborated in [Wilson’s] special attention to scale) outlines the utopian dimension of late twentieth-century performance which Wilson so consummately elucidates’.¹¹³ In some ways, slow going is evoking cosmic time. For Connor, ‘Slow going is always the failure to be there, to have been there, in that condition of slow going that will have been going on, as we so serenely say, all the time’.¹¹⁴ What *Einstein on the Beach* so beautifully elucidates is that cosmic time is a slow going where we fail to be present, or to meet up. That cosmic time is not about being on time but in time.

The passage of time that Marranca refers to is here most crucial and we see it in the train, slowly gliding forward across the stage. It is in these moments when we see the train traverse the space or the gyroscope making its way slowly across that the idea of time is articulated. And the idea of time is presented to us as movement across space. It is here that we see that Wilson’s treatment of time and therefore *Einstein on the Beach* is indeed anti-Bergsonian. The unravelling of time is an actual unravelling that happens in space whereas in *Goat Island* time only passes through time. The horizontal and vertical lines that dominate the stage images in *Einstein on the Beach* are time that we see actualised in space. Bergson argues that, ‘it is principally by the help of motion that duration assumes the form of a homogeneous medium, and that time is projected into space’.¹¹⁵ The movement of the train across the space thus quantifies time.

¹¹³ Marranca, p. 39

¹¹⁴ Connor, 1998

¹¹⁵ Bergson, p. 122

Slow going, then, in *Einstein on the Beach* is the convergence of things moving or going slowly like that gyroscope, and things moving fast, like the dancers in Act 2, scene 1, whirling and jumping on stage and staying there, whirling and jumping. Staying on and carrying on; the permeability of a stage image. It is saying look at this, this is enough. This unravels and carries on. Such a slow going and unravelling is possible partly because of the absence of narrative. The opera which is not about Einstein is also in some ways about Einstein. ‘What’s important’, says Wilson, ‘is that we come into the theatre sharing something. In a sense, we don’t have to tell a story because the story’s already been told’.¹¹⁶ In this case it is the well known figure of Albert Einstein and the reliance that everybody knows something about him or his work. Such an assumption is playfully referred to during one of the knee plays when the choir mime brushing their teeth while singing. They finish by sticking out their tongues while the popular picture of Einstein sticking out his tongue is projected behind them. The image of a group of Einsteins sticking their tongues out is perhaps the strongest reminder of the influence for the work. For Glass, ‘It’s very much in line with the idea that the audience brings something real to the experience, that the audience completes the work. That’s a generational belief and something I grew up with in the theatre.’¹¹⁷ Brecht argues that *Einstein* differed from Wilson’s earlier work ‘by its vacuity: tho in fact not without content, it took one in as pure surface, aesthetically; by being composed but not developing: its content divorced from its form, an actual structuration may be inferred, but its apparent structure is a mere formality’.¹¹⁸ For Brecht, ‘One watches appearances

¹¹⁶ Wilson, cited in Stefan Brecht, *Robert Wilson: The Theatre of Visions* (London: Methuen Drama, 1994), p. 360.

¹¹⁷ Lawrence Shyer, *Robert Wilson and His Collaborators* (New York: Theatre Communications Group, 1898), p. 215.

¹¹⁸ Brecht, p. 360

and enjoys them aesthetically.¹¹⁹ Although, as we have seen, the formality of the structure is not a case of being ‘mere’ anything. Its formality is crucial to how the work is able to function as slow going. What Brecht seems to imply here is that there is a certain kind of emptiness perhaps at the heart of *Einstein on the Beach* or else around it, or permeating it. That we, in some way, watch emptiness. Whether or not spectators complete the work by bringing something real to the experience, as Glass contends, we are presented with an emptiness which is, I suggest, part of the experience of slow going. Slow going where, as Connor notes, the scale of measurement begins to dissolve.¹²⁰ What is important here, however, is that it only *begins* to dissolve. It does not completely dissolve, there is always something ticking over as it were, ticking to measure time. Slow going, we observe here, is not the same as pure duration.

Indeed, the way *Einstein on the Beach* invites the spectator to experience time is inseparable from its use of space and that is what makes his approach to theatre so anti-Bergsonian. This is evident in his thinking, as Wilson argues: ‘Time exists through space. It is the space around the time that is the construction. And the time around the space. Neither exists without the other’.¹²¹ The control of space is remarkable in this opera. As is apparent from the discussion above, in his approach to theatre Wilson eschewed the prevalence in art that was against illusion in the 1960s. Indeed, Wilson’s preference for the traditional theatre set-up makes him different from his theatre and performance contemporaries. Instead, he ‘prefers a strictly defined space’.¹²² He goes on to say: ‘Everywhere, wherever you are, there

¹¹⁹ Brecht, p. 375

¹²⁰ Connor, 1998

¹²¹ Jan Linders, ‘Time has no concept: An interview with Robert Wilson’, in *Theaterschrift*, No. 12, 1997.

¹²² Miguel Morey and Carmen Pardo, *Robert Wilson* (Barcelona: Ediciones Poligrafia, 2003), p. 27.

are a lot of things to see. It is very difficult to see and hear well in an open space. When you really want to see and hear something, a theatre with a proscenium is still the best'.¹²³ In an interview, Wilson states that he can see himself going to the theatre where a piece is playing non-stop and where the audience could simply pop in for a quarter of an hour.¹²⁴ And in some ways, *Einstein on the Beach* is an attempt, to an extent, at an installation type durational performance. The work does not have an interval but the audience are allowed to leave the auditorium and come back to their seats during the work's 4.5 hour duration. This 'relaxed' or 'open house' mood is enhanced by the gradual beginning where the first 20 minutes are performed with the house lights on as the audience arrives to take its seats. However, despite its invitation to come and go, the rest of *Einstein on the Beach* is played with the house lights off, which appears designed to discourage movement out of the theatre. What appeared to happen at the performance which I attended at the Barbican, however, was that some spectators were leaving their seats fairly early on in the performance. It seemed that knowing that one could leave at any point made people take breaks early before the traditional time for an interval would have been reached. For some the way to take a break was to nod off for a while. Although, *Einstein on the Beach* as an opera is not particularly long when one compares it to other operas such as *Faust* which lasts around three hours and forty minutes. Neither is *Einstein on the Beach* an installation or an endurance test comprised of one or two repetitive actions like a durational performance-installation, nor is it as long as such performances. It is not even one of Wilson's longest works; his *Life and Times of Josef Stalin* (1973) and *The Life and Times of*

¹²³ Morey and Pardo, p. 27

¹²⁴ Quoted in Holmberg, p. 126

Sigmund Freud (1969) were both twelve hours. As we will come to see, the fact that it is framed by a proscenium arch is significant to its concept.

According to Holmberg, of all of Wilson's work *Einstein on the Beach* in particular is theatre of images in which '[s]pace speaks'.¹²⁵ As Holmberg states, 'Wilson's drawings were the genesis of *Einstein on the Beach*; the rest of the production – music, text, staging – was built around them'.¹²⁶ Wilson, who trained as an architect, 'regards the stage not only as a flat picture space, but also as a sculptural volume to be composed'.¹²⁷ He works with drawings and storyboards. Robert Stearns makes the comparison between Wilson's working process and editing a film: 'Frames of thought, personal experiences, previous images, time, space, and color suspended in his memory provide the basic elements'.¹²⁸ The work is the outcome of the cutting, splicing and reordering of these elements. It is interesting to note that, as Stearns points out, Wilson's drawings 'both precede and follow the realization of a performance'.¹²⁹ According to Stearns, 'After a production, even when photographic documentation abounds, he continues to draw and redraw the images, reviewing his initial visualizations'.¹³⁰ In some ways, the stage production is only a link in the chain that is Wilson's artistic process. The performance seems in this way almost like a by-product. As Stearns notes, 'It is as though the drawings are more real than the physicality of the finished work'.¹³¹ It is this two-dimensional flat plane of Wilson's drawings that is shaping the way *Einstein on the Beach* is figured on stage and also how it treats time as something to

¹²⁵ Holmberg, p. 80.

¹²⁶ Holmberg, p. 86

¹²⁷ Stearns, p. 37

¹²⁸ Stearns, p. 37

¹²⁹ Stearns, p. 37

¹³⁰ Stearns, p. 37

¹³¹ Stearns, p. 37

depict through and across space. Such flatness is evident in the train that travels at the back of the stage in the first scene of act 1 or the enormous bus that similarly emerges from stage left, this time downstage, in the final scene. Reminiscent of cardboard cut-outs, they are made of something sturdier but are essentially painted canvases, the illusion of depth drawn on them. Or the painted set in act 4, scene 1 which covers the length of the stage. Painted on it is the facade of a tall brick building, like a power station. At the top window an Einstein figure is writing down equations in his notepad. A crowd is gathering on stage to see him while a saxophone solo is played at the bottom of the building. The strong lines and the angular, sculptural forms of the whole set are, in fact, like a drawing lifted up from the drawing table to stand upright. The use of strong lines in *Einstein on the Beach* does not erase the depth of the stage space but they are important to the position of the spectator.

According to Miguel Morey and Carmen Pardo, in Wilson's theatre, space is the horizontal line and time is the vertical line crossing the frame. They argue:

Two lines that trace the pictorial frame of the scene, that cut through it. The vertical divides the scene into a space on the right and a space on the left, two separate parts. The horizontal, running through that space, traversing the two parts from one side to the other, institute an above and a below; and above and below that are set in motion by the vertical and at the same time, as separate parts, negated by it. These two dynamic lines are capable of creating other geometries inside themselves, triangles, trapezoids or even circles, showing that time and space are malleable, the products of a mathematics, a counting that has become body, geometry. A vertical line and a horizontal intersect at the starting point of any possibility of experiencing time and space.¹³²

Morey and Pardo's analysis makes clear how time is figured as a line on stage along, or intersecting, with space. They go on to argue that what brings depth and

¹³² Morey and Pardo, p. 58

breadth to the work is the diagonal line, ‘the line that actualizes the depth of field...always the longest trajectory inside a closed space’.¹³³ Furthermore, Morey and Pardo add that in Wilson’s work ‘the structures often form a diagonal’.¹³⁴ In *Einstein on the Beach*, for example, it is the line in the first scene which the performer pacing centre stage ‘traces with rapid movements, a diagonal that is articulated with the slow movement of the train at the back of the scene, a woman passing by and a man writing on an imaginary blackboard’.¹³⁵ In the same scene, a horizontal line keeps repeating. The train that travels across the stage slowly stops as a line of light beams at it from the opposite side. The light stops and the train carries on, making its own horizontal line from stage left. Again, the line of light from stage right stops the train. After a while, the train carries on. And a third time.

Similarly, the spaceship in the penultimate scene is made of horizontal and vertical lines, a grid or a cube made of smaller cubes filling the back wall. Hanging mid way in the air, glass boxes cross the space carrying a single passenger and an alarm clock. One glass box traces a horizontal line as it moves across the stage while the other describes a vertical line travelling up and down. These glass boxes with their passengers replicate an earlier image from act 4 scene 2. It is in this scene that the importance of lines is realised to full effect. The stage is empty and black apart from a bar of light lying horizontally on the floor. It also replicates an earlier image, the line of light that was the bed in Trial 2. The bar of light rises slowly from its horizontal line to a vertical line. Once vertical, it carries on its upward journey and disappears finally into the ceiling. This ‘light show’ is accompanied by an aria without words sung by a mezzo soprano. One could see in this bar of light a clock

¹³³ Morey and Pardo, p. 64

¹³⁴ Morey and Pardo, p. 62

¹³⁵ Morey and Pardo, p. 64

hand counting time as it does in a clockwise movement. This interpretation of the bar of light is, in fact, very revealing. It is the exact image Bergson gives in his example on the quantity of space. Bergson uses the image of a clock in explaining how we project time into space when we count it. When we add numbers or time together we project units onto space which are distinct from one another. And because they are distinct we can keep them in space without them merging into one unity and thus are able to add them to other single units. Bergson argues:

I say e.g. that a minute has just elapsed, and I mean by this that a pendulum, beating the seconds, has completed sixty oscillations. If I picture these sixty oscillations to myself all at once by a single mental perception, I exclude by hypothesis the idea of a succession. I do not think of sixty strokes which succeed one another, but of sixty points on a fixed line, each of which symbolizes, so to speak, an oscillation of the pendulum. If, on the other hand, I wish to picture these sixty oscillations in succession, but without altering the way they are produced in space, I shall condemn myself to remain forever in the present; I shall give up the attempt to think a succession or a duration. Now if, finally, I retain the recollection of the preceding oscillation together with the image of the present oscillation, one of two things will happen. Either I shall set the two images side by side, and we then fall back on our first hypothesis, or I shall perceive one in the other, each permeating the other and organizing themselves like the notes of a tune, so as to form what we shall call a continuous or qualitative multiplicity with no resemblance to number. I shall thus get the idea of pure duration; but I shall have entirely got rid of the idea of a homogeneous medium or a measurable quantity.¹³⁶

The rising bar of light is like the minute hand of a clock tracing a succession of points in space and thus quantifying time. To think time without quantifying it is a challenge that the consciousness finds near impossible. Bergson writes:

‘Consciousness, goaded by an insatiable desire to separate, substitutes the symbol for the reality, or perceives the reality only through the symbol’.¹³⁷ Holmberg states

¹³⁶ Bergson, p. 52

¹³⁷ Bergson, p. 128

that in Wilson's work, 'the structure of space is the plot' in the work.¹³⁸ In *Einstein on the Beach*, then, the plot is of recurring lines that define the space; the horizontal and vertical lines emphasising the flat plane of the canvas, the drawn image, and the horizontal line realising the depth of the performance space where we see time being unravelled across the stage, opened up like a scroll of film. Stearns notes that 'The diagonal recurs throughout the later works as both line and plane. As a sum of vertical and horizontal forces, it is versatile: it can suggest expanding space, velocity, a bending force in tension, recumbence, a pathway for ascending or descending or a dynamic balance or imbalance.'¹³⁹

The stage as a canvas also requires that the space of the auditorium succumbs to its configuration. As such *Einstein on the Beach* has to be viewed from a fixed position in the theatre space. Moreover, I would add, *Einstein on the Beach* is to be watched from the seat of the king, the seat perfectly situated and offering the best view of the stage. This is often referred to by Robert Wilson as the 'Bob seat', implying the centrality of the director. I will briefly discuss the historical importance of that central seat in the theatre space after which I will highlight how it defines the spatial experience of Wilson's theatre, and the connection it has to his notion of time. Simon Jones writes of the 'perspectival genealogy' of the proscenium arch theatre where monarchs and rulers were placed 'at the point of optical convergence, which mirrored the vanishing point on stage where all the lines of perspective illusion met'.¹⁴⁰ The theatres of the sixteenth and seventeenth century France and Italy, for example, placed the ruler in the seat with the best view in the house, with

¹³⁸ Holmberg, p. 85

¹³⁹ Stearns, p. 37

¹⁴⁰ Simon Jones, 'Fugacity: Some Thoughts Towards a New Naturalism in Recent Performance;', in *The Wooster Group and Its Traditions*, ed. by John Callens (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2004), pp. 141-156 (p. 142).

‘all others placed further away, literally by degrees, from the plane and the attitude of the perfect vision, as they were placed further away politically and socially’.¹⁴¹ The concern in the theatre space was to see the monarch and to be seen by the monarch as well as to be seen by others being seen by the monarch. As such, the mirror up to Nature that theatre held was one where ‘the illusion of the stage [was] *repeating* the fiction of power’.¹⁴² This meant that the monarch was the external reference point by which the theatre justified its very existence. Jones goes on to argue that, ‘when the bourgeois classes claimed the playhouses for themselves’, rather than getting rid of such a privileged seat, ‘they set up king Nature as the earthly representative of their god Capital *in the place of*...the ousted authority’.¹⁴³ Thus, in the democratic theatre, Nature takes the role of the monarch and we judge theatre by its capacity effectively to replicate nature.

According to Jones, then, Naturalism democratised the seat of the king which became the most expensive seat in the house. But, in theory at least, anyone could sit in it. The democratisation of taste that went along with the democratisation of the seat of the king was ‘not the radical dispersal it appeared, as long as the idealized spectator, soon to become *a critic*, remained in his seat’.¹⁴⁴ What did happen, Jones argues, was the crisis of proof, or in other words things happening, or things taking place off scene, out of this frame of the proscenium.¹⁴⁵

Although the place and the position of the seat of the king remained the same when changing over to the seat of Capital, the ‘novel social procedures it accounted for’ changed. The mirror became the frame, or in Zola’s terms, the

¹⁴¹ Jones, p. 142

¹⁴² Jones, p. 142, original emphasis

¹⁴³ Jones, p. 142, original emphasis

¹⁴⁴ Jones, p. 143, original emphasis

¹⁴⁵ Jones, p. 143

‘transparent screen’ through which the Object is viewed by the Subject. In all this, the frame becomes the medium. In Naturalist theatre,

the fold of the frame is turned ninety degrees about the center point of the line of the proscenium arch, to make a center-line that bisects the stage and the spectatorium. Upon this new axis the scene is played; and the points are plotted along this center-line in terms of before and behind the gaze, what is on and what is off scene, interior and exterior. So the more one speculates the scene, literally goes into it, the more one ‘discovers’ that nothing is ‘really’ there; and the more one speculates on the outside, the more one ‘realizes’ the actions that can only happen on stage before one’s very own eyes.¹⁴⁶

Representation takes (place) centre stage at the ‘dead centre’ where the proscenium arch and the centre line cut: ‘The event is grounded where these two lines cross; and the lines of the force are centripetal, setting the frame and dividing the participants, in order that they can bring the outside in and be brought to join hands across the *dead center*’.¹⁴⁷ For Jones, the character of the Naturalist stage ‘is to be found in the *cleaving* of the spectator and the actor, staged in both senses of the term *to cleave*: a sundering along the fold of the proscenium, and a joining of the line between subject and object’.¹⁴⁸ I would argue that Wilson’s theatre, however, obliterates the centre line and reinstates the seat of the king as the absolute monarch of the theatre space. But at the same time it maintains the medium of the frame. The result is that it draws a line from either end of the stage up to the back wall of the auditorium, defining an area facing straight to the stage. This is where the work should be seen from, or, this is its *dead centre*. Thus, the ones not sitting in the line descending from the seat of the king are outside. In this configuration, they are not seen by the monarch because his gaze is taken by the all-devouring stage and moreover, they

¹⁴⁶ Jones, p. 143-4

¹⁴⁷ Jones, p. 144, original emphasis

¹⁴⁸ Jones, p. 144, original emphasis

cannot see all of the stage. They are not devoured nor can they devour. They can see the ruler/critic/director and his kingdom but not its mirror. In this way, the three dimensional screen loses its depth, acquired by the diagonal line, and becomes, for those outside, a flat plane.

4 The wrong place

Bersani notes that Wilson's theatre 'could be thought of as engaged in decentralizing the audience's attention'.¹⁴⁹ Unlike in what Bersani chooses to call 'traditional theatre' where we know where the main action is and which has an investment in the centrality of the major characters, in Wilson's theatre 'we frequently are unable to see and hear everything going on at any one moment'.¹⁵⁰ The effect of this is that we are 'continually discovering that we [are] in the 'wrong place' – or, more accurately, that there was no right place, or that there were always other places'.¹⁵¹ Or to put it differently, 'nothing is ever entirely anywhere'.¹⁵²

But this nowhere-ness of the audience's attention does not translate into the nowhere-ness of the psychological place of the spectator. Sitting in the left circle in the Barbican, my view of the stage was of the stage left corner while completely missing the stage right corner.¹⁵³ I saw dancers arriving in the wings panting after dancing and jumping under the spaceship, only to catch their breath quickly to go back on again. A preparatory stand, one foot stretched out in front of the other, arms held to the side, ready to propel the body into a forward moving pirouette. And since

¹⁴⁹ Bersani, p. 284

¹⁵⁰ Bersani, p. 284

¹⁵¹ Bersani, p. 284

¹⁵² Bersani, p. 285

¹⁵³ I ended up in this seat because I could not afford the more expensive seats, the seat of Capital, in the stalls.

I could see into the wings on stage left I could not see the jury in the Trial as they stood on the stage right line. Their singing was without a source or body, simply coming from somewhere... So despite the invitation (or to be more precise, permission) to come and go which is further evoked by the 'invisible' beginning where the spectators arrive, the space of the theatre in *Einstein on the Beach* is a closed space where the attention is directed towards the stage and its tightly controlled frame. The frame projects outwards or else, sucks inwards, but only along the line of its boundary. Those outside the frame, looking in at an angle, get left outside of the pull of the performance. There is in fact a right place to see this performance.

As I look down from my seat in the left circle towards the stage in my field of view I can see, in the first instance, the stage with its right corner missing. I can see the orchestra pit and the orchestra. I can see the stage left wings. But I can also see the audience on my right, in the stalls. Changing my position on my seat after a couple of hours of sitting I look at the audience members in their seats in the stalls, illuminated by the light emanating from the stage, the dead centre of Wilson's spectacle. I am reminded here, as I was at *Marina Abramović Presents...* that while we share space, we do not share time.

Although there is relatively little movement in and out of the auditorium during *Einstein on the Beach*, some audience members are taking naps. Towards the end of the opera I start to feel tired too. Wilson has stated that during his longest pieces, such as *The Life and Times of Sigmund Freud*, audience members sometimes fall asleep and that they connect to the work on a different level or in a different

way.¹⁵⁴ For Martin Heidegger, 'sleep is not simply an absence of consciousness'.¹⁵⁵ Heidegger argues: 'extremely animated consciousness pertains precisely to sleep, namely that of dreams'.¹⁵⁶ I think of this as I begin to drift off in the middle of the final spaceship scene. The music that has been incessant in my head for the past four hours becomes a cloud of sound, encasing me and my heavy head. I drift between the monologues coming from the stage and the black shimmer of my eyelids that are weighing down. Sleep is not a dichotomy of conscious and unconscious. Wilson's work is often referred to as a dream; images that are distorted or that do not quite make sense, the lack of narrative or coherence. However, in dreams things happen fast, things move and change fast. Here we are still, after twenty minutes, watching the trial scene or the train scene or the spaceship in a field scene. Wilson's theatre gives time to see the detail. Unlike in a dream, one cannot take it in in one go. Furthermore, unlike the Naturalist stage which Jones discusses there is no crisis of proof in *Einstein on the Beach*. Everything we see we believe is all there is, it is so much, so big, that there could not be more of it. There is no space off scene for it. It is like Wilson is showing us his hands: I am putting it all out here so you can see that there are no secrets.

It is this last point which bears the biggest difference between my two case studies here: that despite the quantification of time and the fixation on counting and numbers in Goat Island's work the crucial aspect of the work is that one settles into waiting. Since nothing is promised, the waiting becomes a way to get rid of boredom. In *Einstein On the Beach*, however, one is waiting because one knows to wait. There is an indication here in the work that something will indeed take place at

¹⁵⁴ Quoted in Holmberg, p. 82

¹⁵⁵ Martin Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude* trans. by William McNeill and Nicholas Walker (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), p. 61.

¹⁵⁶ Heidegger, p. 61

the end (or even before). There is a promise here that one's boredom will be relieved.

Marranca, in her 1977 article, argues that, 'It is indeed questionable whether Wilson will lead us to higher consciousness. Theatre must be more than something to gape at or lose oneself in'.¹⁵⁷ She criticises theatre critics who are content with stating that *Einstein on the Beach* cannot be described but has to be experienced, that 'the analysis of it is either 'inadequate' or 'irrelevant''.¹⁵⁸ For Marranca, such writing on the work ignores the 'cultural contradiction' at the heart of the opera's appearance at the Metropolitan Opera in 1976. Marranca goes on to discuss the position of avant-garde theatre especially in America at the time and contends that such theatre is, especially in Wilson's case, making increasingly close friends with the art market and business. But what Marranca finds particularly problematic in Wilson's theatre is his escapism. I have attempted to describe the performance in a way that brings out its climatic nature. While in *Goat Island's* work the waiting is uncertain since we do not know what we are waiting for or indeed if there is anything to wait for (but we do know we need, or even want, to wait) in *Einstein on the Beach* we know that there will be something at the end of the waiting. There is no good time to leave one's seat at *Einstein on the Beach* as one will never know if something surprising begins to take place.

¹⁵⁷ Bonnie Marranca, 'Robert Wilson, The Avant-Garde and the Audience', in *Theatre Writings* (New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications, 1984), pp. 116- 122 (p. 122).

¹⁵⁸ Marranca, p. 116

Chapter 5

The Art of Leftovers: Memory, Matter and Decay

1 Performance vanishes

How does performance's matter remain? And how can performance remain through its matter? Does it matter? How does matter matter? These questions form the core of this chapter in which I consider temporality, remains and embodied memories within performance. I posit that thinking about performance as always disappearing fails to account for the different temporalities that are in operation within performance. In so doing I challenge the claim that performance disappears the moment it appears, an idea that has been prevalent in performance theory since its inception in the 1960s.

For Antonin Artaud, theatre was 'the only place in the world where a gesture, once made, can never be made the same way twice'.¹ The notion of performance as transient and ephemeral was similarly, if more forcefully, articulated by Marcia B. Siegel who argues: 'Dance exists at a perpetual vanishing point'.² Furthermore, Herbert Blau contends that 'In theatre, as in love, the subject is disappearance'.³ Most famously, perhaps, it is Peggy Phelan's book *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* from 1993 that has become the strongest voice in the debate on performance as vanishing. Phelan argues that 'performance betrays and lessens

¹ Antonin Artaud, *Theatre and Its Double*, trans. by M.C. Richards (New York: Grove Press, 1958 [1938]), p.75.

² Marcia B. Siegel, *At the Vanishing Point: A Critic Looks at Dance* (New York: Saturday Review Press, 1972), p. 1.

³ Herbert Blau, *Take up the Bodies: Theater at the Vanishing Point*, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1982), p. 94.

the promise of its own ontology' when it partakes in reproduction.⁴ For Phelan, 'Performance's only life is in the present'.⁵ What is at stake here, then, is visibility. As Phelan argues, 'there are no left-overs' or copies.⁶ Thus, 'live performance plunges into visibility – in a maniacally charged present – and disappears into memory'.⁷ Phelan advocates that the politics of visibility are also concerned with the unique and hard-won position of performance in visual culture. It is not that, as Phelan's argument is sometimes read, performance leaves no traces, no archival objects or representations but that its ontology is based on a value of emptiness. As Phelan argues,

performance art is vulnerable to charges of valuelessness and emptiness. Performance indicates the possibility of revaluing that emptiness; this potential revaluation gives performance art its distinctive oppositional edge.⁸

However, Philip Auslander argues: 'It is not realistic to propose that live performance can remain ontologically pristine or that it operates in a cultural economy separate from that of the mass media'.⁹ According to Auslander, the relationship between live and mediated events is 'historical and contingent'.¹⁰ Indeed, Auslander contends, 'historically, the live is actually an effect of mediatization, not the other way around. It was the development of recording technologies that made it possible to perceive existing representations as 'live''.¹¹ I will examine the contested relationship between liveness and the record further in the second part of this chapter, but for now I would like to point out how both

⁴ Phelan, p. 146

⁵ Phelan, p. 146

⁶ Phelan, p. 148

⁷ Phelan, p. 148

⁸ Phelan, p. 148

⁹ Philip Auslander, *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture*, 2nd ed., (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 45.

¹⁰ Auslander, p.51

¹¹ Auslander, p.51

Phelan and Auslander seem to be in agreement over the fact that live performance disappears. Auslander argues that,

Disappearance, existence only in the present moment, is not, then, an ontological quality of live performance that distinguishes it from modes of technical reproduction. *Both live performance and the performance of mediatization are predicated on disappearance*: the televisual image is produced by an ongoing process in which scan lines replace one another, and it is always as absent as it is present; the use of recordings causes them to degenerate.¹²

Furthermore, as Rebecca Schneider points out, Phelan and Auslander agree on one other aspect: ‘the live does not record’.¹³ In her recent contribution to the debate on performance remains, *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment*, Schneider challenges Phelan’s insistence on disappearance and asks: ‘does an equation of performance with impermanence, destruction, and loss follow rather than disrupt a cultural habituation to the imperialism inherent in archival logic?’.¹⁴ Focusing on American Civil War re-enactments, performance re-enactments and the still in performance, Schneider considers the possibility of performance remaining through so far invisible, or bodily, traces; in short, performance which ‘resists a cultural habituation to the ocular’.¹⁵ For Schneider, then, the question is as follows: ‘in privileging an understanding of performance as a refusal to remain, do we ignore other ways of knowing, other modes of remembering, that might be situated precisely in the ways in which performance remains, but remains differently?’.¹⁶

Often at stake in the definitions of performance as ephemeral is the assumption of time as linear within performance. But how might we conceptualize

¹² Auslander, p. 45, emphasis added

¹³ Rebecca Schneider, *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment* (London: Routledge, 2011), p. 92.

¹⁴ Schneider, p. 99

¹⁵ Schneider, p. 98

¹⁶ Schneider, p. 98

performance's time? Schneider notes, 'The theatre, after all, is a temporal medium – but a temporal medium in the crease or fold of its own condition'.¹⁷ Questioning Phelan's description of time within performance as 'a maniacally charged present', Schneider argues:

Is the live really only a matter of temporal immediacy, happening only in an uncomplicated now, a "transitory" present, an im-mediate moment? Is a "maniacally charged present" not punctuated by, syncopated with, indeed charged by other moments, other times? That is, is the present really so temporally straight-forward or pure – devoid of a basic delay or deferral if not multiplicity and flexibility? Does it not take place or become composed in double, triple, or multiple time[...]?¹⁸

Schneider questions assumptions around performance's linear time and suggests that a focus on re-enactments and the links between performance and different media might help us to discover the myriad ways in which temporality functions in performance. I will quote Schneider's book at length in this chapter as it is a seminal contribution to performance studies' engagement with ephemerality. To add another aspect to this investigation, I turn to the notions of decay and ruin.

I investigate the matter in decay to explore how that might help to rethink performance's life in terms of cycles and multiplicity of different temporal frames rather than linearity. In particular, I focus on the notion of the ruin. As Brian Dillon suggests, 'the cultural gaze that we turn on ruins is a way of loosening ourselves from the grip of punctual chronologies, setting ourselves adrift in time'.¹⁹ Writing of ruins, Dylan Trigg argues:

Unfinished, the ruin comes to be experienced, not as a [sic] temporally emplaced, but haunted. [...]The ruin is not the same as its previous (active) incarnation. Now, an altered place emerges, which retains the shadow of its old self, but simultaneously radically destabilizes that presence.²⁰

¹⁷ Schneider, p. 89

¹⁸ Schneider, p. 92

¹⁹ Brian Dillon, *Ruins* (London: Whitechapel Gallery and MIT Press, 2011), p. 11.

²⁰ Dylan Trigg, *The Aesthetics of Decay: Nothingness, Nostalgia, and the Absence of Reason*, (New York: Peter Lang, 2006), p. 131.

The notion of decay here, then, is one of fragmentation. The unfinished ruin is complete in its decaying state. As such, this notion of decay contests reason as something which ‘predominantly depends upon an image evoked in the already-lived past to construct an indeterminate present’.²¹ In so doing, this idea of decay is indebted to Walter Benjamin’s theorisations of ruins in his *The Origins of German Drama* and *The Arcades Project*. Benjamin argues: ‘In the ruin history has physically merged into the setting. And in this guise history does not assume the form of the process of an eternal life so much as that of irresistible decay’.²² For Benjamin, ‘by dint of their wasted constitution, ruins shatter the myth of rational progress and permanency, in their abundance and in their necessity’.²³ However, in focusing on the ontological value and the literal meaning rather than on the allegory of decay, Trigg’s philosophy, which I examine here, deviates from Benjamin’s theorisations. So in relation to performance, how does decay alter things and what can it say about performance’s temporality and liveness? It is the essence of performance, its liveness, that is questioned in the debates on performance remains and I will examine how Trigg’s ideas on ruins might help us conceptualize the temporality of performance. What is this ‘altered place’ that emerges, as Trigg argues, and how does it destabilize presence?

In this chapter, I form a picture of performance as a material practice and, more specifically, a practice with considerable material remains, while considering Schneider’s arguments around ‘remaining differently’. In particular, I focus on the notion of decay and the temporality of matter, emphasising decay as a process of

²¹ Trigg, p. xxii

²² Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. by J. Osborne, (London: NLB, 1977 [1963]), p. 177-8.

²³ Trigg, p. xxviii

lasting and transformation rather than dying and disappearance. In so doing, I wish to raise two main questions: firstly, how to think about those things that become something else when they fall apart and secondly, how can performance ‘remain differently’ through transformation of substance? The first section will examine these questions through three examples, the first of which looks at the work of Alastair MacLennan. I will examine how MacLennan’s ‘actuations’ (MacLennan’s term for his work which combines action art and installation) engage with (often rotting) matter and animal flesh and how the temporality of this matter in decay contributes to the multiplicity of temporal frames in MacLennan’s work. I focus on MacLennan’s work because it allows for the consideration of the cyclical and live nature of decay to be emphasised.

Questions around decay will be developed into considerations of ruins in the second part, which will discuss *The Dust Archive*, a book archiving a collection of performances that visited the Leeds Met Studio Theatre before its demolition. Through *The Dust Archive* I will examine how space remembers and what significance and efficacy there is in ruins. *The Dust Archive* allows for an examination of space to be focused on here and renders the inevitability of material remains explicit. The third and final artwork I will discuss is Doris Salcedo’s *Shibboleth*, which was part of the Unilever Series at Tate Modern in 2007. I consider *Shibboleth* as belonging to a temporal medium in the way it was destroyed or erased after its tenure. In so doing, I examine what questions the artwork raises about the ‘liveness’ and ‘nowness’ of material remains.

All these three examples I examine ground the discussion on decay in tangible matter and allow a shift away from allegory and melancholy. The second section will continue the troubling and questioning of assumed ends and beginnings

of performance and suggests that re-thinking performance and its temporality through reappearance rather than disappearance draws out central questions on agency, authenticity and documentation. In order to do so, I will firstly examine a project by Performance Re-enactment Society, whose work opens up, I argue, a useful way of thinking about agency, memory and re-enactment in performance documentation. The second example is a reading of Bill Morrison's *Decasia*, a 70-minute film made of found, rotting film. I argue that *Decasia* poses questions on ideas on the ontological value of decay and the production of different kinds of knowledge. By focusing on decay and memory, I wish to investigate how the different mediums of performance, photography and film deal with memory, decay and documentation and their possible disappearance from (and reappearance in) the archive.

2 Alistair MacLennan: actuation as archive

MacLennan's actuations engage with tangible, often rotting, material such as old, found objects like shoes or playing cards, and natural materials such as soil, pig heads and fish. Although there is extensive documentation of MacLennan's work, mostly in the form of photographs and film, the artist maintains that 'there are some things that can't be documented'.²⁴ MacLennan goes on to say: 'Some will say it's unfortunate that all those traces have not been fixedly 'documented', and in some sense its [sic] true. In another sense however, for me, how this is, is a document in itself'.²⁵ Here MacLennan identifies the multiplicity of temporal frames that simultaneously exist in his works. Roddy Hunter notes that 'MacLennan's work

²⁴ Robert Ayers., 'Nothing's Finished; Nothing Is – listening to Alastair MacLennan', *Live Art Letters: A Live Art Journal*, a series of booklets commissioned by Nottingham Trent University Live Art Archives.

²⁵ Ayers, p. 11

‘actuates’ unexpected syntheses and initially incongruous juxtapositions of materials, forms, and media [...] Pluralities of dialogues emerge, ebb and flow over the extended duration of an actuation’.²⁶ Both Hunter and MacLennan refer to the pluralities of people’s memories and their engagement with the work. As MacLennan notes, in the actuations, ‘nothing’s finished, nothing *is*’.²⁷

This idea of performance as ‘becoming’ is a useful and increasingly familiar one in recent discussions of performance’s temporality. I am thinking here especially of the Deleuzian definition of the term (via Henri Bergson). For Deleuze, as Laura Cull articulates, ‘Time is not a discrete ‘now’ that beings occupy or are contained by; time is immanent to what lives and as such what lives is ceaselessly becoming, self-differentiating, creative’.²⁸ But I would like to consider here the different time frames that are in operation in these actuations. I would argue that in addition to the interweaving and syncopated trajectories of people and their presence in the work, there is also a different temporality, that of matter. What is, for example, the time of rotting flesh in MacLennan’s work? MacLennan’s actuation *Emit Time Item* in Toronto (1999) consisted of a long table placed diagonally in a room and over the work’s 30-hour duration MacLennan set the table with plates, cups, black balloons, dead fish and pigs’ ears. Paul Couillard notes how ‘The pigs’ ears completely changed colour over the 30 hours. They dried out and became quite

²⁶ Roddy Hunter, ‘A Place to Place; A Sight to See’, in *Alastair MacLennan: Knot Naught*, ed. by Gray Watson and Roddy Hunter, (Belfast: Ormeau Baths Gallery, 2003), pp. 177 – 184, (p. 181).

²⁷ Ayers, p. 11, original emphasis

²⁸ Laura Cull and Matthew Goulish, ‘A Dialogue on Becoming’, in *Theatres of Thought: Theatre, Performance and Philosophy*, ed. by Daniel Watt and Daniel Meyer-Dinkgräfe, (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), pp. 55-64, (p. 56). The notion of becoming is also an important one to the idea of ruins and decay which I examine in this chapter: ‘Ruin is the place of becoming, the place of truth, the place in which reason is absent and the Nothing is present. Through being overlooked, the ruin has been reclaimed, and thus rendered open to the indeterminate’ (Trigg, p. 249).

red; one could see scars developing'.²⁹ This gradual transformation of the flesh is heightened by the long duration of the actuation.

The process of rotting and decaying and the temporality of such operations are not so much outside of the time of performance but interweave it. Here, the flesh, the object, teeters between being what Caitlin DeSilvey calls an artefact – 'a relic of human manipulation of the material world' and an ecofact – 'a relic of other than human engagements with matter, climate, weather and biology'.³⁰ At the end of *Emit Time Item*, MacLennan sets fire to the 30 paper planes resting on the plates. They burn out quickly, turning into grey fragile strips, their swift destruction accentuating the different temporal frame of the animal flesh. In other works, the actuation is followed by an installation, such as in (the reworking of) *Unseeing Trace* in 2003. Performed in Ormeau Baths Gallery in Belfast, the actuation, which similarly consisted of a table with plates, cups and pig heads, ran for seven-and-a-half hours non-stop on 25th February and the following installation stayed in the space for the subsequent four days.³¹ Furthermore, for an installation in Krakow in 1992 entitled *A Wake*, MacLennan brought in a dead bird he had found on the street in Belfast.³² Similarly, for the ShowReal Festival in Tel Aviv in December 1993, MacLennan used a dead turtle he had come across on the beach. The bodies of the animals might be dead, but they are not still. Instead they are in the perpetual process of transformation.

Furthermore, their decay is not started by the performance but was already in process. Or to put in another way, the bodies of the animals are not dead, or at least

²⁹ Paul Couillard, 'TIME TIME TIME: Interview with Alastair MacLennan', 1999, <<http://performanceart.ca/index.php?m=pubarticle&id=26>> (Accessed 8 July 2011).

³⁰ Caitlin DeSilvey, 'Observed Decay: Telling Stories with Mutable Things', *Journal of Material Culture*, **11**:3, 2006, pp. 318-38, (p. 323).

³¹ 26 February – 1 March 2003.

³² December 1992 - January 1993.

dead in the sense of still. They are here and they are happening, still. The focus here on decay is thus on cyclical processes. Seen in this way, the actuations are thus not only imbued with the time of people present but the flux of the past and present of the decay of matter. The now of the performance is an interrelation of the past of the flesh (of the dead turtle or bird), their decaying present, and inevitable further and future decay, which is increasingly evident in the matter in the now, the present moment. Here, to quote David Gross, ‘objects have to fall into desuetude at one level in order to come more fully into their own at another’.³³ The result is a tangible process of decay; both a haunting ghost and a haunted presence/present. The temporality of matter spills and leaks.

As Gross suggests, the decay of objects facilitates a cycle where each part goes through several processes of transformation in order to partake in the cycle. In this way, the actuation also becomes an archive or a repository of sorts for the rotting flesh. Taking flesh as flesh and bone as bone, it thus resists and undoes the logic of the archive as Schneider articulates it: ‘flesh can house no memory of bone. In the archive bone speaks memory of flesh’.³⁴ Therefore, seen as punctuated and cyclical rather than linear time, performance here does not follow the archive’s logic and disappear because it cannot reside in its material traces. Instead, as DeSilvey contends, ‘decay reveals itself not (only) as erasure but as a process that can be generative of a different kind of knowledge’.³⁵

In fact, I would disagree with DeSilvey on her point about erasure and argue for a stronger emphasis on the production of a ‘different kind of knowledge’. Or as

³³ David Gross, ‘Objects from the Past’, in *Waste-Site Stories: The Recycling of Memory*, ed. by Brian Neville and Johanne Villeneuve, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), pp. 29-37, (p. 36).

³⁴ Schneider, p. 100

³⁵ DeSilvey, p. 323

Alan Read argues on the political efficacy of performance's ends: 'Something *ends*, it does not die or disappear, this is the inevitability of a beginning that is a far more fragile and worthwhile invitation to political analysis and empowerment. [...] One ending inaugurates another beginning'.³⁶ The slowness and apparent aimlessness of MacLennan's actions and presence in his work deploy time as material and thus brings out the vitality of the processes of decay. Performed as part of *Marina Abramović Presents...* in 2009 in Manchester, MacLennan's actuation *Warp Wrap* ran from 3-19 July for three hours each evening. Performed in one of the smaller rooms in the Whitworth Art Gallery, the actuation had his oft used set of a table placed diagonally with a mountain of soil, fish and pigs' heads on top of it. Most of the floor was covered with neat rows of old shoes.

When I enter the room, MacLennan is sitting on a chair in the corner. On his lap he has a tree branch, on his head a shoe. The room is filled with a dull but potent smell, a combination of the rotting fish and pig flesh lying on the soil, the old shoes and the bodies of the spectators in this rather small room. MacLennan sits with his eyes closed. From the documentation after the event I see that he moved around the space, that he sat with a shoe on his head and stood holding the branch in different places in the room. But for now he simply sits and does not move, seemingly unaware of all the people watching him. The smell in the room is becoming too much and my tired mind and body will not stay in the room for long. Exploring processes of meditation, MacLennan's actions are slow and considered and the actuations become processions or ceremonies which go on longer than most spectators are able to follow and sit through. MacLennan moves with his eyes half closed, paying attention to every detail of his actions to the point where they begin

³⁶ Read, p. 67, original emphasis

to feel aimless. But this period of stretched out time in his processional work brings out the liveness of decay. There is a purpose to the tasks MacLennan has given himself and although the work is experienced as slow, almost with a sense of endlessness, the decaying organic matter does not tend toward death but towards cyclical processes.

Unlike in some endurance art, where death comes close and there is a genuine risk of dying or an emphasis on the mortality and the ephemerality of the body, MacLennan's work is a re-affirmation of liveness. As Gray Watson states, 'One of the several pairs of polarities which especially interests [MacLennan]... is that of wounding and healing'.³⁷ MacLennan's ritualistic mode of performance with its emphasis on endurance and continuation is a different proposition from, for example, Stuart Brisley's *And for today... nothing* (1972), which was a two-week performance where the artist lay in a bath tub filled with black water for two hours each day. Pieces of offal were placed around the bathroom and in the bath and over the course of the show's two weeks the offal decayed attracting flies and feeding maggots. The bathroom, which was in Gallery House in the Goethe Institute in London, had low lighting and its door was ajar, creating a sense of obscurity as to what the room held inside it. I place this performance here in parallel with MacLennan's work to draw out the differences, despite the seemingly apparent similarities of materials in both artists' work.

As acts of preservation themselves, MacLennan's actuations question not only the form of the archive (the archive in which 'bone speaks memory of flesh') but also the processes of preservation (or the subject that makes the decision on

³⁷ Gray Watson, 'A Poetic Invitation', in *Alastair MacLennan: Knot Naught*, ed. by Gray Watson and Roddy Hunter, (Belfast: Ormeau Baths Gallery, 2003), pp. 9-27, (p. 9).

what is worth preserving). The next example considers this issue from the perspective of space and place. In 2008 the director of Leeds Met Studio Theatre Annie Lloyd and Alexander Kelly, co-artistic director of Third Angel, wrote a history of sorts of Leeds Met Studio Theatre, titled *The Dust Archive*. The book marked the departure of Lloyd as artistic director as well as the demolition of the studio. In it, Lloyd and Kelly have written a short piece on every show they could remember that had visited the space during Lloyd's directorship. Lloyd writes that they wanted to 'create an archive of dust', carrying 'the physical residue of performances collected in corners of the space'.³⁸ The title of the book evokes the image of the dusty archive or the notion of the archive as good for only collecting dust. But it also suggests that dust itself is worth archiving or collecting, indeed that dust might have something to tell us. Each show has its own transparent page where a short memory is written on tracing paper, its spot on the floor plan corresponding to its spot in the studio. The dust in this archive, then, refers to the spatially located memories, the tiny particles of thoughts and images that have been left behind in the mind.

However, there is also actual dust. Page eleven has a list of 'everything we found when we swept up', 'beneath the heating units, stage left'.³⁹ The list includes things like pencil shavings, sand from two different shows, polystyrene fragments, tomato seeds and much more. Here it is evident that no matter how thoroughly a show has been cleared up, done with, erased, something material remains and haunts the space. Performance has its clever ways of staying and continuing *to take place*. Interrupting the linear forward marching of time, the space becomes a ruin. Trigg

³⁸ Annie Lloyd and Alex Kelly, *The Dust Archive*, (Leeds: Leeds Metropolitan University Gallery, 2008), n.p.

³⁹ Lloyd and Kelly, 2008

argues: ‘What remains in the ruin is the trace of a past, fragmented and *unable to be situated in an overarching narrative*, fusing with the ruin’s decay in the present’.⁴⁰

What is important here is how, as Trigg articulates,

ruins evade a static, and thus nostalgic, image of the past by rendering memory ambiguous.[...]If the fragmented quality of the ruin were restored to a totality, it would lose its status as a ruin and instead be reduced to a monument.⁴¹

The way performance takes place, I argue, is through return and repetition; performance returns and comes up again and again in fragments of dust which resist monumentalization. In the case of *The Dust Archive*, to borrow from Carolyn Kay Steedman, dust

is not about rubbish, nor about the discarded; it is not about a surplus, left over from something else: *it is not about Waste*. Indeed, Dust is the opposite thing to Waste, or at least, the opposite principle to Waste. It is about circularity, the impossibility of things disappearing, or going away, or being done.⁴²

Moreover, there is a further significance, I believe, to the dust in the archive, to all those bits of polystyrene and tomato seeds. When it comes to encounters with dust, as Phil Dunham points out, questions are raised about ‘what (if anything) is consistent or whole about our bodies, and where (and indeed whether) a line can meaningfully be drawn between the human and nonhuman worlds’.⁴³ As the final sweeping of rubbish at the studio shows, in such spaces the tiniest dust particles begin to trouble the boundaries between human bodies and nonhuman worlds. It acts as a reminder that we are made of dust. Every day the human body produces and sheds dust while other types of dust get carried off the floor, furniture and air on to the human body. Joseph A. Amato argues that, ‘A target of laboratory analysis on

⁴⁰ Trigg, p. 131, added emphasis

⁴¹ Trigg, p. xviii

⁴² Carolyn Kay Steedman, *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002), p. 164, original emphasis.

⁴³ Phil Dunham, cited in DeSilvey, p. 332

the one hand, and of cleaners of all sorts on the other, dust has lost its ancient and metaphorical powers. It no longer declares the passage of time and the mortality of all living things'.⁴⁴ But I would argue that the dust in *The Dust Archive* does exactly that, it records performance as a dusty archive and an archive of dust, circulating, refusing erasure.

3 Materiality of things

I am going to pause here to set up some ideas about materials and materiality. My approach here is partly in line with what Daniel Miller calls 'the humility of things'.⁴⁵ Miller argues that objects have an 'unexpected capacity to fade out of focus and remain peripheral to our vision and yet determinant of our behaviour and identity'.⁴⁶ Objects are, of course, evident and do physically constrain or enable, but they are important 'often precisely because we do not see them'.⁴⁷ This is not so much to assert the importance of materiality of performance, its materiality isn't in question here, but to begin to pay attention to specific ways in which we might engage with those materials.

In discussing the materiality and materials in performance, I take my cue from Tim Ingold who draws an important distinction between the material world and the world of materials. In his article 'Materials against Materiality' Ingold attempts to emphasise materials and their properties over the materiality of the object. He questions a certain type of focus in material studies on materiality that has, in the end, nothing to do with materials or matter. Ingold's article is a call for

⁴⁴ Joseph A. Amato, *Dust: The History of the Small and the Invisible*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001), p. 160.

⁴⁵ Miller, p. 5

⁴⁶ Miller, p. 5

⁴⁷ Miller, p. 5

‘taking materials seriously’.⁴⁸ His argument centres on the way properties of materials emerge in the interaction between its environments. According to Ingold, all materials, like humans, ‘are, in the first place, organisms, not blobs of solid matter with an added whiff of mentality of agency to liven them up. As such, they are born and grow within the current of materials, and participate from within in their further transformation’.⁴⁹ Here he also includes all sorts of matter from falling snow and frost to fungal bacteria. The distinction between artefacts and natural objects is, Ingold suggests, a difficult and unnecessary (and often impossible) one to make.

I cite Ingold here in order to find a way of thinking about two interrelated things. One of them is the materiality of performance and how objects and matter come into contact and interact with the immateriality of performance. The second is the duration of different materials and the way in which we might think about these different temporalities when refiguring performance’s linearity. I demonstrate these two points here briefly before moving on to my bigger case studies. My first example is from theatre. That materials or matter might have something to tell us as themselves is thrown into relief by stage props in Naturalist theatre. In such theatre, people, the actors on stage, have mastery over the objects and the objects become to mean or signify whatever the narrative of that performance requires. However, in her article ‘Human Remains: Acting, Objects, and Belief in Performance’, Aoife Monks delivers an account about a certain human skull that found its way on to the stage in the Royal Shakespeare Company’s production of *Hamlet*. The skull was that of Andre Tchaikowsky, a classical pianist, and Holocaust survivor.

⁴⁸ Tim Ingold, ‘Materials against Materiality’, *Archaeological Dialogues*, Vol. 14, No. 1, pp. 1-16, (p. 14).

⁴⁹ Ingold, p. 12

Tchaikowsky had been diagnosed with terminal cancer in 1979 aged only 46 and he bequeathed his organs to medical research and his skull to the theatre.

Tchaikowsky's skull did not, however, play (or stand in for) Yorick's skull to the end of the 2008-9 production. The media found out the secret of the 'real state' of the skull and the RSC decided to replace it with a replica. According to the director Greg Doran, the attention that the skull was getting was threatening to 'topple the show'.⁵⁰ The twist to the story came after the production's successful run in London when it was announced that it was in fact Tchaikowsky's real skull that had been on stage all the time. The news that it had been swapped for a replica was a ruse to stop audiences thinking about it. As Monks notes, 'Andre Tchaikowsky continued to play Yorick under the cover of semiotic subterfuge'.⁵¹

The underlying assumption in employing a real skull was that the realness of this object would carry its realness into the realm of acting and that the world on stage would become more real too. Doran noted that he had wanted 'to make the performance as real as possible'.⁵² Such an approach is characteristic of the Naturalist stage. For example, as Monks argues, in Stanislavskian acting theory, objects

function as vehicles for transformation within the actor, and the reality of these objects is crucial to the successful production of truthful acting. [...]By focusing closely on an object, actors are transformed by it, forgetting themselves in the process, while at the same time transforming the object by incorporating it into their theatrical world.⁵³

⁵⁰ Doran, cited in Simon de Bruxelles, 'At last for Yorick: Bequeathed skull stars in Hamlet', *The Times*, 26 November 2008.

⁵¹ Aoife Monks, 'Human Remains: Acting, Objects, and Belief in Performance', *Theatre Journal*, Vol. 64, No. 3, 2012, pp. 355-371, (p. 371).

⁵² Doran, cited in de Bruxelles, 2008

⁵³ Monks, p. 360

The problem here is, though, that rather than being caught in the realm of illusion or become only a medium through which the immaterial world of the play is accessed, ‘the ‘realness’ of these artifacts [run] the risk of piercing the illusion, uncoupling the dramatic sign from its referent’.⁵⁴ Thus, Tchaikowsky’s skull, which brings to the fore issues of the inerasable or undeniable property of materials and matter, interrupts the flow of illusion and theatrical time and stops the audience from going beyond the material world presented on stage (or happening despite of it). Here, then, we see objects and materials acting out their properties in the interactions with their environments.⁵⁵ Of course, bodily remains such as skulls, as well as dust to some extent, carry a degree of agency that is harder to ignore than a vase or a teapot standing on a table in *A Doll’s House*. Placing a real skull on stage interrupts the flow of illusion in theatre in the same way a bodily remnant, or a rotting fish, asserts its own duration, into the ‘real time’ of live art.

In thinking about the properties of materials, Ingold draws attention to the duration of different matter. His article asks the reader to find a stone, water it and place it on the desk while reading. At the end of the article, Ingold asks the reader to observe how the stone has changed. It has changed colour as it has dried. It looks different but does it look more or less ‘stony’, or to put it differently, where is its ‘stoniness’? It is in this short examination of the stoniness of their chosen stone that the reader can also mark something about the duration of the stone. We might say

⁵⁴ Monks, p. 362

⁵⁵ ‘We begin to confront the thingness of objects when they stop working for us: when the drill breaks, when the car stalls, when the windows get filthy, when their flow within the circuits of production and distribution, consumption and exhibition, has been arrested, however momentarily. The story of objects asserting themselves as things, then, is the story of a changed relation to the human subject and thus the story of how the thing really names less an object than a particular subject-object relation.’ Bill Brown, ‘Thing Theory’, *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 28, No. 1, 2001, pp. 1-22, (p. 4).

that it is difficult to think about or see the time it takes for something like a stone to change. And yet stones do change, they have their own duration.

Next I would like to read this medium of stone through another medium, that of performance. There is perhaps something of the inter(in)animation at work here in Ingold's discussion of properties of materials. The term inter(in)animation is one which Schneider uses via Fred Moten and John Donne. Fred Moten's term 'interinanimates' refers to 'the ways live art and media of mechanical and technological reproduction, such as photography, cross-identify, and, more radically, cross-constitute and 'improvise' each other'.⁵⁶ For Schneider, the inter(in)animate encounter is one 'that requires syncopation or cross-temporality'.⁵⁷ It is to read media through each other in order to move meaning 'into chiasmatic reverberation across media and across time in a network of ongoing response-ability'.⁵⁸ In my second example I want to think about the stoniness and the duration of stone and how that might come into contact with other times in other ways, into the present moment.

This example is from the British Museum's exhibition of Ice Age art.⁵⁹ The exhibition gathered together several objects from as far back as 40,000 years ago. Objects made of bone, carved in intricate detail, female and animal figures telling, according to the exhibition curators, the story of the first modern mind. They were perhaps a surprising reminder of the abilities of people living further back than one mind can completely comprehend. One of them was a puppet with moving limbs and made in a way that when seen in the light of a fire it would cast a shadow on the

⁵⁶ Schneider, p. 7

⁵⁷ Schneider, p. 163

⁵⁸ Schneider, p. 164

⁵⁹ 'Ice Age Art: Arrival of the Modern Mind', British Museum, 7 February – 2 June 2013.

wall of the cave (we are told in the text relating to the object). This, according to the exhibition information, was the first example of performance art.

Such objects were a strong reminder that the experience of time and duration is different in different times. We might not be able to comprehend or at least would easily forget that these art works are in themselves a measure of time and that that measure would have meant different things to people whose lives were shorter than ours. The time that it takes to carve a bone to portray two reindeer swimming, say, 30,000 years ago differs from the duration that we would now afford to a piece of carved bone. The exhibition is made up of glass cases with the exhibited objects accompanied with short pieces of text about their origin and purpose.

After such a simple layout where the objects were allowed to, in some way, ‘speak for themselves’, the exhibition leads into a room (or to be more exact, a thorough-fare space between two exhibition rooms) with a long seat against the back wall. On the opposite wall, a projection of a wall of cave paintings is slowly moving. It moves as if it was moving along the cave, or as if one looking at it was moving along a cave. It fades into darkness and back into light again, as if the cave was lit by a fire. The temporary exhibition wall that the cave paintings are projected on is protruding and curving, mimicking a cavernous wall. The information panel at the entrance to this space informs the viewer that the images are from the caves of Chauvet, Lascaux, Pech Merle and Niaux in France and El Castillo in Spain, painted between 34,000 and 14,000 years ago. It states that the installation shows ‘how painters worked with the form of the rock surfaces to create great friezes or tiny images hidden in niches’.⁶⁰ The idea behind this slowly moving cave painting on the

⁶⁰ Information panel in the exhibition.

cavernous wall seemed to be to animate an art work that cannot be brought to the museum.

According to Andrew Cochrane, one of the curators of the exhibition, the installation seeks to represent the experience that a viewer would have of the images when visiting the caves.⁶¹ Cochrane notes that visiting the caves is often a disorientating experience where the environment produces different effects on the human body. He goes on to say:

Being so far underground, and feeling so small, in a massive chamber can be difficult to comprehend. They are dangerous places – the surfaces and cavernous heights aside, cave bears and cave lions often visited them in the Ice Age. When you interact with cave art, it is in such conditions.

This part of the exhibition, then, aims to create the authentic conditions of the cave and to transport the viewers to the cave where this wall painting is from, as if we were there. Furthermore, Cochrane points out that the cave paintings are often invisible when looked at straight on. Instead, they have been painted to appear only from certain angles and use the uneven surface of the walls. Cochrane calls them ‘a powerful and interactive performance’. The projection of the images on the gallery wall simulates the conditions of the cave but also alludes to the altered states of consciousness that people might have been in when interacting with the paintings. Cochrane notes: ‘There are ideas that the images are affective; that they stimulate; that they are representations of ‘entoptics’’. The Ice Age exhibition aims to produce (some of) that affect with the help of technology. The exhibition does not go as far as creating the atmosphere of a cave with a more specific space (this is just an exhibition space with blue grey walls) as some museums in their bid for interaction and haptic experience might do.

⁶¹ Email exchange with the author 22 May 2013. All subsequent quotes from Cochrane are from this interview.

I mention this exhibition here because it was a striking attempt at inter(in)animation. Watching the paintings glide over the cavernous wall, I found it puzzling as to what I was asked to look at here. (A small boy of perhaps eight years old is sitting on the bench, turning to his parents he asks, 'what is this?'. He might have, of course, meant what are the cave paintings (the information on the paintings was on a small panel outside the room) but it also sounded like a question about the room's purpose). It seemed to me that a photograph of the cave paintings would have given a clearer picture of them (since of course the cave itself can't be brought to the museum). But it also seems that that is not the purpose of this projection. Its purpose was to inter(in)animate a still work that is far away - to bring it to the museum viewers, or more accurately, to take the viewers to the cave. However, in its inter(in)animation it managed to make the artwork seem distant and distorted. And that was because film's way of 'improvising' the cave paintings ignored their duration and temporality. It lost the caveness of the cave and the lived experience of the paintings.

My third case study continues along this line of stoniness in some way. In October 2007, a crack opened up on the floor of the Turbine Hall at Tate Modern. A fine hair fissure left the west entrance and travelled down the inclined concrete floor, widening as it went. It followed a snaky path underneath the mezzanine leaving forked out lines randomly dispersed. It reached the other end of the hall disappearing underneath a glass wall. In its attention to Doris Salcedo's *Shibboleth* (2007-8) the press seemed to focus on two main issues: how the crack was made and how dangerous it was. *The Guardian* brought in an award winning architect and two builders to look at the work to solve the mystery of its installation. The three professionals could not agree. In the end, Mr E, a builder working in the Tate at the

time of the installation and wishing to remain anonymous, tells how it was produced. According to Mr E,

They dug a dirty great trench about a yard wide and a yard deep... Then they brought in lorry-load after lorry-load of cement and poured it in, using 10-foot sections of what looked like carved polystyrene moulding to form its sides.⁶²

Other accounts say that the walls were made elsewhere and installed in the Tate.

Another large area of interest for the press was the amount of injuries that occurred to viewers. Both of these concerns evidence an emphasis on the realness of this space: this is a real crack; there is real danger. As Tate Director Nicholas Serota said, 'It has taken five weeks of work here with very considerable disruption to the hall. It's not an illusion - it's there, it's real'.⁶³ And yet, as every question about the specifics of the work's installation was met with a friendly but stern silence, a sense of mystery about *Shibboleth* prevailed. As Richard Dorment wrote in his review for *The Telegraph*:

With part of your mind, you completely accept the reality of the cracked floor, but, with the other, rational part, you wonder whether what your eyes see can possibly be true. The effect is disconcerting because you find yourself trapped between knowing and not knowing.⁶⁴

The opening, which for Salcedo 'refer[s] to the evil of racism, the divide between the black and white halves of humanity', is such an assault on the building that it 'will, at the end, bring the whole building down'.⁶⁵ As Eyal Weizman states, 'A crack is not a static state but a stage in a process of gradual shear that might expand

⁶² Jon Henley, 'Cracked!', *The Guardian*, 10th October 2007, pp. 6-7, (p. 7).

⁶³ Nicholas Serota, cited in 'Salcedo causes a rift at Tate Modern', *The Guardian*, 8th October 2007, <http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2007/oct/08/art3>, (Accessed 3 July 2011).

⁶⁴ Richard Dorment, 'Doris Salcedo – a glimpse into the abyss', *The Telegraph*, 9th October 2007, <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/art/3668416/Doris-Salcedo-A-glimpse-into-the-abyss.html>>, (Accessed 3 July 2011).

⁶⁵ Dorment, 2007

and tear through a building's structure and skin along the line of least resistance'.⁶⁶ So the line that disappears underneath the glass wall and continues, we believe, on and on unseen can and will destroy the whole building. As real as the crack is when you put your hand down it and touch its wire mesh walls it is thus also an illusion, faux, theatrical.⁶⁷

At the end of the tenure of the installation the crack was filled up again to allow for new artworks in the series. It became clear that there will be no gradual shear or decay. The filling-in has halted and distilled the process that the cement and its layers would have otherwise gone through. Now, a discernible trace on the floor remains. In fact, one can see the whole length of the crack. The cement used for the filling is slightly darker than the rest of the floor. It is also less smooth. One feels they could have done (had they wanted to) a slightly better job with filling and hiding it. But the remains of *Shibboleth* seemed to have been important to its whole concept. Serota said at the time, 'There is a crack, there is a line, and eventually there will be a scar. It will remain as a memory of the work and also as a memorial to the issues Doris touches on'.⁶⁸ But what I would like to suggest here is that the scar is more than something left over, that, in fact, there is no original and remains; it is all *Shibboleth*, it is still *Shibboleth*. The somewhat paradoxical choice of words in an article in the Guardian at the beginning of the installation illustrates this: 'The

⁶⁶ Eyal Weizman, 'Seismic Archaeology', in *Doris Salcedo: Shibboleth*, ed. by Achim Borchardt-Hume, (London: Tate Publishing, 2007), pp. 30-39, (p. 33).

⁶⁷ I refer here to Josette Féral's description of theatricality. For Féral, 'theatricality is the result of a perceptual dynamics linking the onlooker with someone or something that is looked at.' Josette Féral, 'Theatricality: The Specificity of Theatrical Language', *SubStance*, Vol. 31, No. 98, 2002, pp. 94-108, (p. 105).

⁶⁸ Nicholas Serota, cited in Dalya Alberge, 'Welcome to Tate Modern's floor show – it's 167m long and is called *Shibboleth*', *The Times*, 9th October 2007, p. 33.

installation will be removed in April next year when the crack will be filled in'.⁶⁹

The installation is removed, in other words it goes somewhere else, when the fissure is filled. I suggest that it remains but, that its darker, less smooth line is freed from illusion.

Whereas in 2007 the fracture appeared to continue on and on as it disappeared underneath a glass wall, now that the glass panel is gone the darker cement line grazing the floor stops suddenly at the penultimate floor slab. It lies underneath and amongst new artworks that take over the Turbine Hall and between installations when the hall is empty one can see the crack as if it was still open. Except that now I delight in walking on top of it from one end to the other without the hazard of falling in and do not wonder how it was made. To borrow Dorment's words, I am not in between knowing and not knowing but re-enacting those encounters that took place with its earlier manifestation. It is no more real or faux, or live for that matter, than before but, to borrow from Schneider, 'contains the palimpsestuous reality effect of faux upon faux that gives us, so promisingly, the transitivity of the real, which is to say its mutability, its availability for and as change'.⁷⁰ No more live, then, but perhaps '*durational live*'.⁷¹ The distilled *Shibboleth* in its durational liveness remains and in its remains resist forgetting and decay.

Through the examples I have discussed here I have explored Schneider's question of how performance can 'remain differently' by considering the possibility of conceptualizing it as a material practice. In so doing, I have contested the claim

⁶⁹ The Guardian, 'Salcedo causes a rift at Tate Modern', *The Guardian*, 8th October 2007, <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2007/oct/08/art3%20Monday%208%20October%202007>>, (Accessed 3 July 2011).

⁷⁰ Schneider, p. 177.

⁷¹ Schneider, p. 177, original emphasis

that equates performance's life with disappearance and have instead argued that temporality in performance is a crossing of different times. For Phelan, the politics of visibility raises one crucial question: 'what would it take to value the immaterial within a culture structured around the equation 'material equals value'?'⁷² By focusing on material remains I do not mean to state that performance can only remain through tangible matter. But I do wish to suggest that in ignoring the different temporalities existing and acting in performance we ignore both the entangled relationship between human bodies and non-human matter and the different kinds of knowledge that matter in its decay can produce. This is evident in MacLennan's actuations which engage with rotting matter and animal flesh. In the multiplicity of temporal frames, the actuations become repositories for the flesh. Here, it is not only performance's temporality but also the notion of the archive that has been reconceptualized as something which does not resist decay but partakes in its processes. The fragmentary nature of decay and ruins is significant here.

The fragments of left-overs and dust particles in *The Dust Archive* emphasize the impossibility of eradicating the materiality of performance. Furthermore, if, as Steedman argues, dust is not about waste or the discarded, then the final sweeping of the studio floor (which produces the material remains of performances from over the years that have been haunting the space) reveals the processes of transformation of substance. And it is these processes that draw attention to performance as perpetual becoming. I discussed how the idea of remains is central to the concept of *Shibboleth*. In fact, such a severe assault on the building could hardly go unnoticed even after the crack had supposedly gone. The fissure on the floor of the Turbine Hall implied the gradual destruction of the whole building

⁷² Phelan, p. 5.

but instead of tearing the building apart the fissure remained and will not let us forget. Here, then, it is not so much about the material remains or their decay but more about the mimetic remains of people's memories. I walk to the other end of the hall along the fissure and instead of falling in I remain on top of it.

4 Memory and re-enactment

Above I discussed the material remains of performance in tandem with other forms and media such as books and exhibitions to point out that materials act in the same way whether in the performance event or on their own. I have also attempted to highlight the impossibility of eradicating the materiality of performance. I suggested that its materiality not only becomes most prominent when it comes to the remains of left-overs (as we saw in *The Dust Archive*) but that those remains are also processes which produce different substances and knowledge. But what about embodied knowledge and memory? How do they remain in documentation? In her study or rethinking of performance in the Americas, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*, Diana Taylor focuses on repertoire instead of archive. For Taylor, the repertoire 'enacts embodied memory: performances, gestures, orality, movement, dance, singing – in short, all those acts usually thought of as ephemeral, nonreproducible knowledge'.⁷³ Taylor places these embodied and nonreproducible acts in opposition to writing, which she sees as historically privileged over those practices included in the repertoire.

Taylor argues: 'Even though the archive and the repertoire exist in a constant state of interaction, the tendency has been to banish the repertoire to the past'.⁷⁴

⁷³ Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), p. 20

⁷⁴ Taylor, p. 21

That is because, as Taylor contends, the liveness of embodied memory ‘exceeds the archive’s ability to capture it’.⁷⁵ In other words, performance disappears when it enters the archive, because it stops being performance and becomes something else (for example, video). However, seen as repertoire, these embodied and performed acts continue to ‘generate, record, and transmit knowledge’.⁷⁶ Therefore, as productive as Taylor’s emphasis on repertoire as a set of reiterative performances is, it nevertheless maintains the binary between archive as that which is material and performance as that which cannot be held in the archive. In other words, it does not trouble the notion of the archive. Schneider asks:

Does the logic of the archive, as that logic came to be central to modernity, in fact *demand that performance disappear* in favour of discrete remains – material presented as preserved, as non-theatrical, as “authentic”, as “itself”, as somehow non-mimetic?⁷⁷

Furthermore, speaking of oral histories (which become archival objects only through their recording and saving), Schneider asks:

Do not such practices buttress the phallogentric insistence of the ocularcentric assumption that if it is not visible, or given to documentation or sonic recording, or otherwise “houseable” within an archive, it is lost, disappeared?⁷⁸

I approach Schneider’s question here with the media of photography and film with a short detour to re-enactment in order to investigate and trouble the boundaries of those media and to examine mimetic remains.

I would like to begin with Martha King re-enacting Pina Bausch’s *Café Muller* and *The Rite of Spring* which were presented as a double bill at Sadler’s Wells in 2008. The image of Martha’s re-enactment was taken as part of The Performance Re-enactment Society’s project at *The Pigs of Today Are the Hams of*

⁷⁵ Taylor, p. 20

⁷⁶ Taylor, p. 21

⁷⁷ Schneider, p. 100, original emphasis

⁷⁸ Taylor, p. 101

Tomorrow conference in Plymouth in January 2010. The Performance Re-enactment Society is a collaboration between three Bristol artists who are interested in playful as well as critical re-enactments of performances and this project was made with photographer Hugo Glendinning. Participants selected their most memorable moments from a performance they had attended to the Society's archive and that moment was then recreated and photographed. Most of the re-enactors came with their props and costume at the ready and some had meticulously rehearsed a scene to re-enact as faithfully as possible. Others came with an idea for an image which was then worked on by Glendinning and the participant. Martha arrived with a bag of sand, some miniature chairs, a slip and a vague idea that she wanted to fall, these elements being the strongest impressions she had from witnessing the double bill.

I stand at the back of the room as Martha re-enacts a fall, amidst a pile of sand and tiny scattered chairs. Glendinning moves around Martha trying to get a good angle and Martha falls. There is a painful thud every time she hits the floor. Her body remembering the painful thuds from *Café Muller* where a woman and a man repeat a gradually accelerating sequence in which the man lets the woman go off his hold and she drops to the floor. There is something in Martha's fall of the painful yet pleasurable repetition. Repetition which starts as pleasurable, both physically and mentally satisfying, but which turns into pain (again, both mental and physical) and yet is impossible to stop. Thud after thud, bruise after bruise, the performance happens again and again, it reappears and remains. As discussed in the previous section, performance does not happen in and follow the rules of linear time but does, in fact, reappear and travel back, forth and sideways and is syncopated with other times and other moments, and in so doing troubles the distinction between now and not-now. After all, performance always happens now and it is now

every time performance happens. In other words, performance happens every time a viewer sees the work. Writing of re-enactments, Schneider argues, ‘There is, instead, a certain superabundance to re-enactment, like a run-on sentence, as if an event in time, refusing to be fully or finally ‘over’ or ‘gone’ or ‘complete’ pulses with a kind of living afterlife in an ecstasy of variables, a million insistent if recalcitrant possibilities for return (doubling as possibilities for error)’.⁷⁹ Martha’s re-enactment does not (only) move backwards to *Café Muller*’s fall but forward, on and on. But what is Martha’s fall as re-enactment, and as a photograph or documentation?

Schneider argues, ‘An action repeated again and again and again, however fractured or partial or incomplete, has a kind of staying power – persists through time – and even, in a sense, serves as a fleshy kind of ‘document’ of its own recurrence’.⁸⁰ The question, then, for Schneider is: ‘Might a live act even ‘document’ a precedent live act, rendering it, in some way, ongoing, even preserved?’⁸¹ In this act of distilling a whole performance into one single instant, a flash of the camera, comes together *Café Muller*’s fall, Martha’s repeated and repeating fall, throwing into high relief assumptions not only about the liveness of a performance but also about its authorship and authenticity. In this case, where is the original, where is the liveness, or more accurately, non-liveness? The generally assumed dichotomy of performance as live and photography, as well as re-enactment, as the record of the live is in question here. The minimalist sculptor Carl Andre gets to the heart of this dichotomy when he states: ‘Art is a direct experience with something in the world, and photography is just a rumour, a kind of

⁷⁹ Schneider, p. 29-30

⁸⁰ Schneider, p. 37

⁸¹ Schneider, p. 37

pornography of art'.⁸² For Andre, although not talking exclusively about live performance, photography is only a trace or a shadow of what art can do.

I contest this claim with some examples below. However, before I do I would like to briefly consider that the notion of rumour might actually be useful in the context of live performance. Vanessa Agnew argues that, 'Reenactment's central epistemological claim that experience furthers historical understanding is clearly problematic: body-based testimony tells us more about the present self than collective past'.⁸³ Agnew's argument rests on the assumption that body-based testimony, as she calls it, or embodied memory is not a reliable tool for knowing history. In so doing, it ignores the efficacy of affective engagement and what we might now call, after Andre and Agnew, bodily rumours. For if those painful and pleasurable thuds are Martha's rumour then it is a powerful one. It says: this is how it happened and keeps happening.

The second image I turn to is Bob Whalley and Lee Miller's re-enactment of Forced Entertainment's *Club of No Regrets* as part of the same Performance Re-enactment Society event in Plymouth. What is important to note here is that Glendinning who took the photograph of Whalley's and Miller's re-enactment also took the images of the Forced Entertainment performance in 1993. Two, interrelated, things are interesting here I think. One of them is the illustration of how images of performance circulate. Many of us are perhaps familiar with the original images of the Forced Entertainment show and even more of us are, I suspect, familiar with images from *Café Muller* or *The Rite of Spring*. If you are familiar with Bausch's work, you will recognise the chairs and the soil, and the fall in

⁸² Carl Andre, cited in Alice Maude-Roxby, 'Live Art on Camera: Introduction', in *Live Art on Camera: Performance and Photography* (Southampton: John Hansard Gallery, 2007), pp. 1-7, (p. 5).

⁸³ Vanessa Agnew, 'Introduction: What is Reenactment?', in *Criticism*, Vol. 46, No. 3, 2004, pp. 327-339, (p. 335).

Martha's photograph. We know the fall. Therefore, those images of performances that circulate and become stills do not or have not in fact distilled a performance but in incorporating into itself other people's memories of those falls (*Café Muller*) and that struggle in a talcum powder blizzard (*Club of No Regrets*) they travel sideways and in loops. They keep on circulating.

Secondly, what is also highlighted here is the new approach to performance's photographic documentations. It is an approach whereby photographers such as Glendinning and Manuel Vason who take on 'artistic collaborations', stage individual scenes to camera rather than photographing a performance as it is being performed (to an audience). This approach, as Alice Maude-Roxby argues, 'opens up a consideration of the significance of photographic documentation as it has changed from the nature of a relic (where the action took place once) to part of a practice, which incorporates representation of performance within it'.⁸⁴ Vason's collaborations with performance artists have resulted in two publications, *Exposures* (2001) and *Encounters* (2007), in which 'performance work is either restaged anew or uniquely developed, but, in any case, specifically for [Vason's] camera'.⁸⁵ They are what Schneider terms as 'inter(in)animate':

... casting collaboration beyond singular sight invites a way of reading what takes place (and where and when) that pushes any event or any seemingly singular *thing* off of itself and into a mobile space, a transient space, a creative space (a future space as it is always more than one – it is always *between*).⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Maude-Roxby, p. 6

⁸⁵ Dominic Johnson, 'Passing Intimacies: Manuel Vason's Photographic Encounters', in *Manuel Vason: Encounters*, ed. by Dominic Johnson, (Bristol: Arnolfini, 2007), pp. 10-17, (p. 10).

⁸⁶ Rebecca Schneider, 'The Document Performance', in *Manuel Vason: Encounters*, ed. by Dominic Johnson, (Bristol: Arnolfini, 2007), pp. 34-36, (p. 36), original emphasis.

Dominic Johnson argues that in their denial of ‘the posture of an authentic record of the real’⁸⁷ these collaborations do not become iconic, like so many pieces of performance documentation.

5 Repetition and iconic images

I discuss this issue through my last example from the Performance Re-enactment Society’s project in Plymouth. Martin O’Brien’s re-enactment, after Bob Flanagan’s *Nailed*, is an even more explicit remake of an image than those of King and Whalley and Miller. At the end of his 1989 performance Flanagan nailed his penis to a plank of wood. The most recognisable image that survives of that one-off performance is that which O’Brien’s image re-enacts. He stands naked with his penis resting on a plank of wood, holding a hammer in one hand and a nail in the other, ready to hit. O’Brien’s image reflects the fact that the trend of re-enactment that has recently become more prevalent in live art and performance often focuses on (mainly 1960s and 70s) performances that have only been performed once and of which only written descriptions and photographs remain. In the absence of other material the scarce images have become iconic as they circulate within the discourses on performance histories. As Tracey Warr argues, ‘the very incompleteness and paucity of photographic documentation enhances its iconic capacity – encouraging the development of legend by giving us enough but nothing too definite’.⁸⁸

Marina Abramović’s *Seven Easy Pieces* in 2005 is an interesting example of this as her re-enactment of VALIE EXPORT’s *Genital Panic/Action Pants* (1969) was of a performance that probably never took place. The description that has been

⁸⁷ Johnson, p. 12

⁸⁸ Tracey Warr, ‘Image as Icon: Recognising the Enigma’, in *Art, Lies and Videotape: Exposing Performance*, ed. by Adrian George, (London: Tate, 2003), pp. 30-37, (p. 36).

circulated about the original performance is that VALIE EXPORT walked into an erotic cinema in her leather trousers with an exposed crotch and while holding a gun challenged the men watching porn to look at ‘the real thing’. As Amelia Jones discusses in her article on *Seven Easy Pieces*, this description is in fact a myth and the only action performed in these ‘action pants’ was posing for photographs. Not being able to receive answers from EXPORT on the full nature of the performance, Abramović decided to re-create the original performance as an image. Jones argues,

Speaking her work through mythification, EXPORT...has shown a sharp attention to how history works – making the images mean something discursively but in contradiction (or at least contrast) to what occurred with the physical body and in material spaces at the time... EXPORT’s self-mythifying act prompts later reenactors such as Abramović to fantasize the work in ways that may or may not be connected to an ‘original’ durational event.⁸⁹

In all her six re-enactments Abramović ignored the length or form of the original performance and instead performed every piece for six hours. In so doing, Nancy Spector contends, Abramović ‘freely conflated each performance and its documentation to create a hybrid format, one that disregards the conventional hierarchy between the lived and the recorded’.⁹⁰ Abramović’s re-enactment and its motivation as a preservation of live art history is decidedly different from O’Brien’s who used his recreation of Flanagan’s image to playfully acknowledge and examine his own position as a post-Flanagan performance artist with cystic fibrosis.⁹¹

However, both use iconic images to re-enact iconic images, a process that at least seemingly short-circuits or cuts out performance. I would also like to raise here the

⁸⁹ Amelia Jones, ‘The Artist Is Present: Artistic Re-enactments and the Impossibility of Presence’, in *The Drama Review*, Vol. 55, No.1, 2009, pp. 16-45, (p. 30).

⁹⁰ Nancy Spector, in *Marina Abramović: Seven Pieces*, ed. by Nancy Spector, Erika Fischer-Lichte, Sandra Umatum and Marina Abramović, (Milan: Edizioni Charta, 2007), p. 39.

⁹¹ Martin O’Brien, ‘A Dialogue with Ron Athey’, in *Martin O’Brien Performance*, <<http://martinobrienperformance.weebly.com/dialogues-ron-athey.html>> (Accessed on 20 Nov 2011).

question of whether O'Brien's image after Flanagan has more efficacy or agency because it is re-enacting a one-off performance compared to the other two examples of Bausch and Forced Entertainment where repetition is an essential part of the genre. What is the significance of keeping 'alive' performances that are designed to be seen only once, such as Flanagan's *Nailed*? And what is the significance of keeping it 'alive' through another body, or a similarly ailing body like that of O'Brien's? Is the repetition of Bausch's work antithetical to disappearance?

In her article on performance and precarity in late capitalism, Shannon Jackson notes how types of virtuosity circulate in art practices. One of the discourses on virtuosity declares the perhaps familiar expression to performance practitioners: 'if you rehearse, you can't be a performance artist'.⁹² The assumption here is of course that forms of theatre that require practice (developing vocal skills or bodily coordination for example) regards virtuosity as excellence and must be critiqued or resisted. This same critique views the "unpractised' as progressive'.⁹³ A part of the significance of live art's real time is that it does not repeat, that real time happens only once. To flip this assumption on its head, however, would be to say that repetition is always theatrical, or that whatever repeats is always the same. And that repetition creates not a flow of time but a non-progressive state where the repetition is only pedalling air, not moving anywhere. (That is to say, not only is it not moving forward, in a linear fashion, but it is not moving back or sideways either.) The question here then is, is the re-enactment (or re-imagining in the case of *Seven Easy Pieces*) a repetition of the real time of the one-off event in the past? Or

⁹² Jackson, p. 17

⁹³ Jackson, p. 18

is it a repetition that does not rely on virtuosity but takes into account, what I might call here, the progressive pedalling of repetition?

Hayley Newman's project *Connotations – Performance Images (1994-1998)* explores this question of performance documentation through images that were taken over one week in 1998 but were exhibited as an archive of an artist's career over four years. The images are performed 'fakes' of performances that never took place. *Connotations*, then, is an attempt to form a 'subjective performance canon'.⁹⁴ Some of the photographs are 'mimicking, misinterpreting, and re-expressing what already existed in the canon, while at the same time creating, or at least imagining, new performance works'.⁹⁵ *Crying Glasses*, for example, is a response to Adrian Piper's *Catalysis IV* from 1970. In the documentation that resulted from Piper's performance, we see Piper 'sitting on a bus with a white towel stuffed in her mouth'.⁹⁶ In her *Crying Glasses* Newman is sitting on the tube wearing glasses which produced tears running down her face through a small pumping system. For Newman, 'Through these particular processes of authentication and attention to detail, *Connotations* extends beyond theatre, mimicry and parody to acknowledge contradictions between the artifice and realities of performance art'.⁹⁷ While the relationship between live art practices and photography has been visible from the start, theatre's connection to photography has been decidedly more implicit.

Schneider considers the still (pose) and tableaux vivants in theatre in order to trouble the distinction between performance as live and photography as a record. For Schneider, the unrecognised significance of the theatre still has led to 'an

⁹⁴ Hayley Newman, 'Connotations – Performance Images (1994 – 1998)', in *Live: Art and Performance*, ed. by Adrian Heathfield, (London: Tate, 2004), pp. 166-175, (p. 168).

⁹⁵ Newman, p. 168

⁹⁶ Newman, p. 173

⁹⁷ Newman p. 170

(historically faulty) absolutist distinction between performance remains'.⁹⁸ She goes on to contend: 'The live aspect [of performance] – its in-timeness – appears to elude arrest. In line with this logic, we consider (perhaps shortsightedly) that a moment is past (i.e. no longer live) the moment an image appears to remain – appears that is, to still'.⁹⁹ We might also think here of early photograph and daguerreotype portraits made in the nineteenth century which show people looking at pictures of their loved ones. Many such daguerreotype pictures, Geoffrey Batchen states, 'feature images of people holding daguerreotype cases, allowing them to display someone else's portrait within their own. Sometimes the case is open, sometimes not'.¹⁰⁰ Schneider points out that photography's addiction to death 'may indeed be on the part of modernist habit of thought about photography, rather than a condition of photography itself'.¹⁰¹

It is therefore important to emphasise the focus on liveness and the presence of others in my daguerreotype example. Similar to these daguerreotype portraits, Whalley's and Miller's struggle amidst talcum powder is a portrait within a portrait, a syncopated portrait. Perhaps this is what Schneider means by her call to think 'through 'mutually disruptive energy'' which 'implies that the bygone is not entirely gone by and the dead not completely disappeared or lost, but also, and perhaps more complexly, the living are not entirely (or not only) live'.¹⁰² She goes on to say, 'It is one time passing on to and as another time, but also *not quite passing*. One time almost but not fully passing in and as another time'.¹⁰³ It is useful here also to think

⁹⁸ Schneider, p. 168

⁹⁹ Schneider, p. 142

¹⁰⁰ Geoffrey Batchen, *Forget Me Not: Photography and Remembrance*, (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2004), p. 12.

¹⁰¹ Schneider, p. 222, endnote 8

¹⁰² Schneider, p. 15

¹⁰³ Schneider, p. 15, original emphasis

how, as Batchen points out, in the early days of photography, ‘Individuals and families would sit for their photographic portraits, their heads usually supported by a standing metal device to keep them steady during the relatively long exposure.’¹⁰⁴ Therefore, ‘if one wanted to look lifelike in the eventual image, one had to pose as if dead’.¹⁰⁵ Stillness, then, does not equate the end or disappearance of performance, nor is live completely live but also pretending to be dead. Or in Read’s words, an end is a beginning.

6 *Decasia* and decay

Thinking archive, then, through these mutually disruptive energies might prove useful in examining the notion of archive. As Taylor argues, ‘Insofar as it constitutes materials that seem to endure, the archive exceeds the live’.¹⁰⁶ But what if the live is not only or entirely live? Taylor goes on to assert that one of the myths attending the archive is that ‘the archive resists change, corruptibility, and political manipulation. Individual things – books, DNA evidence, photo IDs – might mysteriously appear in or disappear from the archive.’¹⁰⁷ Old film is a case in point and this brings me to the final example. As Andre Habib points out, ‘specialists estimate that about 80% of cinema’s first 30 years has disappeared’.¹⁰⁸ (This is not to say that digital media isn’t in danger of disappearing.) And as Taylor points out, while some material disappears from an archive so does other material appear and seemingly belong to no one, and such is the case of Bill Morrison’s film *Decasia* from 2002. It was made out of various black and white decayed fragments of orphan

¹⁰⁴ Batchen, p. 17

¹⁰⁵ Batchen, p. 17

¹⁰⁶ Taylor, p. 19

¹⁰⁷ Taylor, p. 19

¹⁰⁸ Andre Habib, ‘Thinking in the Ruins: Around the Films of Bill Morrison’, *Off Screen*, <http://www.horschamp.qc.ca/new_offscreen/cinematic_ruins.html> (Accessed on 25 august 2011).

nitrate film which were found in old archives (called orphan film because they have been abandoned by their owners or copyright holders, thus not really belonging to anyone).

Decasia was made to accompany Michael Gordon's symphony of the same name. The film is made up of material from mainly the early days of cinema to the 1920s when the standard 35mm film was composed of a strip of nitrate cellulose, a layer of gelatine, and an emulsion of silver salts. The film is not narrative based but made up instead of recurring scenes like those of whirling dervishes. The main effect of the film however is its decay. Nitrate film is highly flammable and deteriorates fast if not stored in correct temperatures and what we see in the 70-minute *Decasia* is its perishing, decomposing, vanishing. The result is a spectre that seems on all accounts to eat itself. The whirling dervish and the merry-go-round that we see in the film are apt examples of a film that goes round and round, echoing Mary Ann Doane's proposition that 'film makes visible not a knowledge of the original but a certain passing temporal configuration'.¹⁰⁹ Doane says of the medium of film, 'Once the present as contingency has been seized and stored, it ineluctably becomes the past. Yet this archival artefact becomes strangely immaterial; existing nowhere but in its screening for a spectator in the present, it becomes the experience of presence'.¹¹⁰

The binary condition that film can be archived but that a film is also an archive (as discussed above with regard to the work of Alastair MacLennan) is an idea evident in *Decasia*. Halted in its decaying process, the film (material) comes to exceed the boundaries of its medium as already non-live, past, dead. It spills, leaks

¹⁰⁹ Mary Ann Doane, *The Emergence of Cinematic Time: Modernity, Contingency and the Archive*, (London: Harvard University Press, 2002), p. 23.

¹¹⁰ Doane, p. 23

and weaves its way through. Or following Schneider, it not only goes back and forth but sideways. *Decasia*'s decay is also a ruin of sorts. Josh Pollard argues:

'Breakage, decay and attrition have the potential to create entirely new kinds of substance, and often novel and unimagined points of connection between different materials and ontological states'.¹¹¹ Thinking memory and documentation through ruins, then, allows us to shift emphasis on processes of transformation and what Pollard calls 'unimagined points of connection between different materials'. It is also important here how, as Trigg argues, 'ruins evade a static, and thus nostalgic, image of the past by rendering memory ambiguous'.¹¹² Therefore, to trouble the assumed boundaries between live performance and re-enactment, and live performance and the mediums of film and photography is to question the role of the still or the dead, or disappearance.

In these examples I have discussed here re-enactment is not any more re- than it is pre-enactment or post-enactment, it is perhaps just enactment. And if photography is about being still in order to be live instead of being live in order to be still then does the still really make performance or us disappear? And if photography is also about the dead, the people in daguerreotype cases whether they are open or shut, then, again, what is re-enactment? And if decay is a process of transformation then archive becomes something else all together and in that archive the dervishes keep whirling, Martha keeps falling after Bausch and Bob and Lee struggle to be freed from their chairs while talcum powder falls and falls and falls.

To round up this discussion of archives, documentation and labour both living and refusing to die (or go away), I would like to briefly consider the

¹¹¹ Joshua Pollard, 'The Art of Decay and the Transformation of Substance' in *Substance, Memory, Display: Archaeology and Art Re*, ed. by Colin Renfrew, Christopher Gosden, and E. DeMarrais, (Cambridge: McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, 2004), pp. 47 – 62, (p. 55).

¹¹² Trigg, p. xviii

economical implications of archiving and of taking care of the non-disappearing. In particular, I am thinking here about the possibility of archiving the living. This might sound very much like something Schneider and Taylor refer to in their writing on repertoire and the bodily transmissions of remains. However, the thought I am pursuing here is somewhat different. At a recent *Performing Documents* conference in Bristol,¹¹³ Lisa Newman proposed that we begin to think about the body of work of artists as needing documenting at the moment it is made and about the artist as an archive. Newman's provocation arose out of a conversation about the economic implications and costs of archiving. What does it cost to document performance and what if we began to invest in the upkeep of the artist as archive? Considering the living and the not-yet-happened labour of the artist as an archive in process also places the focus on the categorisation of different archives. How do we invest in archivable work and in fact, what qualifies as archivable?

It is clear that Schneider is invested in the re- of re-enactment (or reappear). In an aside (a step aside, a syncopated aside), I would like to note that the reversal of that re- becomes an er-, the sound of a hesitation, something uttered when nothing else is forthcoming. A pause to think, to gather thought. There is something of that hesitation, I would suggest, in performance's temporal drag but also in the archive where things can stop for a while, to gather thought, to be inbetween.

¹¹³ *Performing Documents*, organised by University of Bristol, held at Arnolfini, Bristol, 12th – 14th April 2013.

Conclusion

In this thesis I have examined two central research questions. Firstly, what is the relationship between capitalist production and its methods from the 1960s onwards and the material conditions of performance's temporality during that time? Secondly, I have asked whether a focus on the materiality of performance can change the way we view the relationship between performance and time. In the course of answering these questions I have charted the importance of flexible accumulation and just-in-time production to capitalism and the labour markets and have argued that the rise of such systems in the 1960s were reflected in concerns for and a certain type of anxiety over what was happening to time. This chronophobia morphs into a different kind of interest in time with the approach of the millennium in the late 1990s. Just-in-time production speeds up life in the 24 Hour Society and I have examined how the character of this society affects and is reflected in the material conditions of making and viewing performance. I have argued that reading performance and its relationship to time and duration in conjunction with the changes in capitalist production during this time reveals some important aspects about performance's duration and its material conditions. In so doing, I have traced performance studies' history and attempted to address the claims that have been made about the central place of temporality in the discipline.

On and on

I would like to briefly discuss two sound works here which will help to bring together the ideas examined in this study and draw some conclusions. These works are two attempts at (seemingly) achieving endlessness and I focus on them to

emphasise the tendency in much of the performance work discussed in this thesis to, on the one hand, calculate time and, on the other, to document time through lived experience. These two works are Jem Finer's *Longplayer* and John Cage's *Organ2/ASLSP*, 1000 years and 638 years long respectively. Both of these works began at or near the millennium, although for different reasons.

Longplayer was conceived to mark time's passage at the cusp of our most recent celebration of time, the millennium. It started to play simultaneously in London and in Sydney, Australia on 31 December 1999. *Longplayer* is a composition for six musicians playing Tibetan singing bowls by hand and designed to play for a thousand years without repetition. To achieve this, the composition is made up of six short pieces of music. One section from each piece is playing simultaneously at all times chosen by *Longplayer* in such a way that 'no combination is repeated until exactly one thousand years has passed'.¹ *Longplayer* is constructed like a Steve Reich composition where sections of different lengths are combined so a cycle of a piece of music is constantly shifting. The *Longplayer* website states:

Every two minutes a starting point in each of the six pieces is calculated, from which they then play for the next two minutes. Each starting point is calculated by adding a specific length of time to its previous starting point. For each of the six pieces of music this length of time is unique and unvarying. The relationships between these six precisely calculated increments are what gives *Longplayer* its exact one thousand year long duration.²

Theoretically speaking then, *Longplayer* is possibly endless, carrying on for an eternity, coming back to its starting point every 1000 years. The main concern when making *Longplayer* seems to have been its survival and the enormity of the task of

¹ *Longplayer* website, <<http://longplayer.org/what/how/>> (Accessed 15 January 2013).

² *Longplayer* website

maintaining *Longplayer* is already clear. Currently played by computers but adaptable to (foreseeable) technological changes, how best to ensure the continual survival of *Longplayer* beyond any one human being's life?

A major part of the project has been the development of strategies for keeping the music going. Although at the moment *Longplayer* can be streamed live on the internet, the problem remains that the internet is a medium which, as the makers admit, 'depends on a vast, complex, and somewhat unstable technological network for its broadcast and a high technological 'overhead' for its reception'.³ The website lists radio, mechanical devices and technology used in deep space missions as possibilities for future media for the project. *Longplayer*, then, does not so much display a suspicion towards technology or about what technology is doing to time as the work discussed in Chapter 1 as it does examine the effects time has on technology. If technology was becoming all pervasive for Marcuse in 1964 at the turn of the millennium time is taking a hold of technology.

Wertheim and Wertheim suggest that '*Longplayer* aims to beat the clock at its own game, using micro-time to build macro-time in a brave attempt to reconstitute a meaningful dimension in our temporal experience'.⁴ It seems that the work shares some of the concerns I have been examining in this thesis not only around what is happening to time in the latter part of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century, but how to halt or affect time's effects. Wertheim and Wertheim's proposition that *Longplayer* is engaged in a game to beat the clock at the clock's own game suggests firstly that the clock (or more precisely perhaps, time) is playing a game at all and secondly that it cannot only be beaten but *needs* to be beaten. But

³ *Longplayer* website

⁴ Wertheim and Wertheim, p. 6

what exactly is that game? It seems to me that this game is to march on incessantly and the way to beat the clock is to take hold of time, to control it, to build a relationship with time that somehow makes sense of the world. In the case of *Longplayer*, that is to attune to a rhythm that beats differently from the 24 Hour Society. It is to imagine a time a thousand years away and to negotiate the gap between then and now. In that way, *Longplayer* reflects an interest in time rather than an anxiety about it, especially on the cusp of the millennium, as we attempt to grasp the duration of a millennium and yet are reminded of the precarity of the future (the millennium was after all received amidst fears of the millennium bug and the computer chaos it could possibly cause). But rather than give into chronophobia, *Longplayer* settles into the long wait with a distinct understanding of technology's unpredictability.

Longplayer makes no claims for endurance. In fact, listening to it is a very pleasant experience. The Tibetan singing bowls produce a vibrating bell sound, like an invitation to prayer or meditation. The constant variation of notes keeps *Longplayer* going forward while at the same time lingering at every point.

Organ2/ASLSP's invitation to think time and its passing is somewhat different as it is actually more difficult to grasp this composition in its entirety. In a small town of Halberstadt in Germany John Cage's composition *ASLSP*, which was written in 1985, is being played by a purpose-built organ. *Organ2/ASLSP*, which is to be played as slow as possible, will play until 2639. The performance started in 2001 and its duration was determined by the years lapsed since the invention of the first organ in 1361 in Halberstadt. The organ changes notes once or twice a year. The changing of the notes of the organ in Halberstadt requires a person to do it and an audience gathers to witness this momentous occasion. Although both compositions

take their time they do not seem to invite or make claims for wasting time. They do, however, remind us that endlessness and infinity can be produced by something simply being longer than a human life. As one of the organisers in Halberstadt, Michael Betzle, has said: ‘I have to accept the distinct possibility that I shall die before the concert is over’.⁵

Since *ASLSP* begins with a silence the first year and a half were silent. The first note was played in 2003. For Cage, silence is as important as sound and a central element of music. Cage argues:

If you consider that sound is characterized by its pitch, its loudness, its timbre, and its duration, and that silence, which is the opposite and, therefore, the necessary partner of sound, is characterized only by its duration, you will be drawn to the conclusion that of the four characteristics of the material of music, duration, that is, time length, is the most fundamental. Silence cannot be heard in terms of pitch or harmony: It is heard in terms of time length.⁶

As discussed in Chapter 4, we see this same way of marking time through silence in Goat Island’s work, for example, when *September Roses* begins with a 55 second silence. *Organ2/ASLSP*’s silence, however, is a slightly different proposition from the indeterminate sense of waiting in *September Roses*. Both *Longplayer* and *Organ2/ASLSP* are aiming for durations that are ungraspable in terms of a human life. Their demand for time is not an interruption in our busy daily life but a commitment spanning generations. *Organ2/ASLSP* is intended to play as slow as possible and the performance in Halberstadt is by no means the longest the composition could be. But even its 639 years (and particularly its first, silent, year and a half) marks time in a way that is difficult to see.

⁵ Michael Betzle, cited in Karen Christopher, ‘Silence is a Memorial’, in *Small Acts of Repair: Performance, Ecology and Goat Island*, ed. by Stephen Bottoms and Matthew Goulish (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 106-108 (p. 108).

⁶ John Cage, in *John Cage*, ed. by Richard Kostelanetz (London: Allen Lane, 1971), p. 81.

Furthermore, despite being played by machines, both *Longplayer* and *Organ2/ASLSP* require human labour power in order to continue to play. *Longplayer* can be listened to via a live stream on the Internet as well as at several listening posts over the world. In London, for example, its listening post is in the Lighthouse at Trinity Buoy Wharf. However, although the composition plays constantly the listening post is only open during the weekends. Here too, then, we must consider the material implications of the human labour and the space required to keep these works going.

For example, in Chapter 4 I referred to the employment of time in Goat Island's practice and in their working process. The company took two or even three years to make a performance during which time they did several work-in-progress showings. This long period of time taken to make work and the attention to duration manifested in the performances are part of the same project: the belief in the importance of *taking time*. However, what is more important about the company's working process is that they take a long period of time to make a performance because of financial implications. The company funded their work through art funding and residencies and all company members needed to make a living amidst the rehearsal process. This issue of making a living while working as an artist (or, making a living as a working artist) was taken up in Chapter 3 where I discussed short performance work and the implications short duration bears on the economy of theatre. Wilson's work is equally relevant in that discussion. Marranca's concern over the tight relation between Wilson's work as art and the art market that supports it is a revealing one when considering the, somewhat astronomical, costs of staging a work like *Einstein on the Beach*. In this study I have attempted to unpick the

perceived (and sometimes misconstrued) relationship between performance and the economic market it functions in.

I started that investigation in Chapter 1 where I discussed how performance, as it emerged within visual art circles towards the late 1960s, was seen as impermanent, immaterial or disposable. And it was its impermanence which was, in a way, performance's response to the demands of the throw-away society. Kinetic art and happenings were seen as non-commercial and ephemeral. One could not own them or purchase them, only support them. Such logic has prevailed in the thinking around performance and this is clear from Marranca's argument on Wilson's approach to funding his work. In Chapter 3 that examination led me to ask, what does performance sell? Lobel's *Carpe Minuta Prima* investigates this question and probes at the assumptions about the divides between a performer's and spectator's labour. The financial transaction of recorded minutes of spectators' time that *Carpe Minuta Prima* deals in also problematises, in some very productive ways, performance's ontology of emptiness that Peggy Phelan advocates. Making visible both the time and the labour of performance, Lobel's project questions assumptions around performance's temporality.

In the same chapter I also asked what one gets from being there, at a performance, when work like Creed's *Work no. 850* and its sprinters in the Tate only seem to present a fragment of what is really going on. I compared it to circuit-based sport where the spectator only experiences a moment out of a longer event. Here I would like to point out a further importance of Creed's *Work no. 850* and suggest that sprinting is in fact the perfect paradigm to capitalism. Both sprinting and capitalism depend on the ability to produce something very fast. The work of sprinting is measured in the act (the current world record for men's 100 metre sprint

is 9.58 seconds) but as in capitalist production what we do not think about and what that measurement of 9.58 seconds does not account for is the labour time it takes to train or produce the athlete's sprinting body that is able to run that fast.

In the introduction I noted how much early research on time and performance has made a connection with media and technology, emphasising real-time systems in technology and their relationship with the accelerated time in the 20th century or time-based media and the possibilities of merging body time and computer time. This connection between time and technology was examined in Chapter 1 where I discussed Toffler and MacLuhan's ideas around the throw-away society and the domination of technology. What Toffler and MacLuhan do not see or admit to seeing is that the technology they discuss was not invented separately from the society and its perceived needs. It was invented to facilitate capitalist production, it is a tool that the capitalist society needs in order to function like late capitalism needs to function.

I have also considered in what terms time is being discussed and considered. I pointed out Lehmann's misunderstanding of the character of time in his statement that time can be shared like a cake. I suggest that it is in fact Barnett Newman who articulates an accurate notion of time when he writes: 'Only time can be felt in private. Space is a common property. Only time is personal, a private experience. ... Each person must feel it for himself'.⁷ As I discussed, since time is only a measure of movement, time itself cannot be divided as if it was an object. Thus, when we speak about sharing time, whether it is in a four-hour durational performance or a one to one encounter, we are, to be accurate, sharing space.

⁷ Newman, p. 175

Finally, I have traced how just-in-time production develops and grows from the 1960s onwards and how subsequently around 2005 the issues that rise from flexible accumulation's demands begin to be theorised and discussed in terms of precarity and the precarious life in late capitalism. Around this time, then, leftist cultural studies grow weary of the far left's ideas around innovation, among other things, and an emphasis on taking time and paying attention to the stoniness of a stone, for example (as Ingold's article instructs us), starts to be articulated. While a lot of the contemporary work that I have looked at has some direct debt to the work I discussed in Chapter 1, especially to Nauman, it is worth pointing out that it is MacLennan who has been making the same work since the 1960s and yet he has none of the anxiety of chronophobia. MacLennan is perhaps the most attuned to how performance studies and new materialism is now thinking about temporality.

In focusing on the wider material conditions of performance with an emphasis on the diverse ways in which time comes to constitute our experience of it, I have in effect argued for taking time seriously, or at least, to not take it for granted. It is hoped that this study has begun to develop a new approach to understanding performance as situated at the centre of a network of time, temporality and materials and that it has suggested paths for further research into the central position of performance in a commodity culture.

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