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Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz
Press

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Pauline Boudry & Renate Lorenz

par Ilan Michel



(No)Time

Frac Bretagne, Rennes, 12.02-19.09.2021

Pauline Boudry (1972, Lausanne) et Renate Lorenz (1963, Bonn) forment un duo à dimensions variables, augmenté par une troupe de fidèles performeurs au gré des

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projets. Basées à Berlin, elles ont engagé depuis 2007 une « archéologie *queer* », selon leurs mots, consistant à puiser dans les archives filmiques et photographiques des figures « *drag* » des deux derniers siècles, effacées par l'histoire. Leurs œuvres mettent en scène des moments d'utopie oubliés. Ce mécanisme de superposition d'images, qu'elles désignent sous l'expression de « travestissement temporel », fait se télescoper les époques et les protagonistes ; chaque interprète pouvant revêtir plusieurs identités, selon la stratégie du prisme ou de la boule à facettes.

Dès leurs premières installations, Boudry & Lorenz revisitent les discours médicaux du XIX^e siècle codifiant l'ordre sexuel et ses déviances¹. Dans *Normal Work* (2007), le performer Werner Hirsch, collaborateur régulier de leurs projets, rejoue quatre poses inspirées des portraits et autoportraits photographiques d'Hannah Cullwick, domestique dans l'Angleterre victorienne, qui posa en femme de ménage, mais aussi en paysanne, en bourgeoise et en esclave noire. Le journal et la correspondance de ce personnage historique avec son employeur londonien révèlent la nature sadomasochiste de leur relation. Avec *N.O. Body* (2008), la déviance se tourne du côté du *freak*, de la bête de foire : le performeur se tient devant le portrait d'Annie Jones, célèbre femme à barbe de la Belle Époque, identifiée dans les archives du médecin Magnus Hirschfeld, premier à constituer un atlas visuel des sexualités dans les années 1920, fondateur de l'Institut de sexologie de Berlin, détruit par les nazis. Werner Hirsch imite alors l'attitude de l'artiste de cirque et troque ainsi la posture du sujet analysé par celle du professeur. En cela, l'interprète révèle le pouvoir de projection de l'image, intimement lié à sa fonction de contrôle des identités subversives. Dès 2009, en s'intéressant à la figure biblique de Salomé, incarnation de la beauté fatale, les plasticiennes ouvrent leur recherche à la chorégraphie (*Salomania*). Wu Tsang, artiste transgenre sans formation dans ce domaine, réinterprète la danse des sept voiles de la princesse juive chargée de séduire son beau-père Hérode, d'après le film américain muet éponyme réalisé par l'actrice Alla Nazimova et Charles Bryant en 1923. La performer, au visage recouvert de suie, intervient devant l'écran projeté du film d'archive, son ombre formant le double du personnage. Plus loin, elle reçoit la transmission du solo écrit par Yvonne Rainer dans le cadre de son premier long-métrage, *Lives of Performers* (1972). Boudry & Lorenz placent alors leur production dans le sillage des réflexions engagées par cette chorégraphe sur les relations entre l'intime et le politique, le corps et le mouvement de caméra, ou le *reenactment*.



Pauline Boudry & Renate Lorenz, *Salomania*, 2009. Installation avec vidéo HD et 13 documents noir et blanc encadrés / Installation with HD video and 13 framed black and white documents. Courtesy Marcelle Alix, Paris & Ellen de Bruijne Projects, Amsterdam. Collections Museo Nacional Reina Sofia, Madrid (ES) & Kadist Foundation, Paris (F).

Les dernières installations-vidéo de Boudry & Lorenz, *Moving Backwards* (2019) et *(No)Time* (2020), réarticulent les problématiques engagées il y a treize ans avec une légèreté et une ferveur plus prononcées. Si le discours sur le genre et la portée didactique du travail sont toujours présents sous forme de *statement* et d'écrits théoriques rédigés par elles-mêmes et commandés à des critiques, la mise en scène est plus proche de la sensation que du message politique. Réalisée pour le Pavillon suisse de la 58^e Biennale de Venise, *Moving Backwards* fait du déplacement arrière son *leitmotiv*. Cinq performers alternent les marches en solo, en duos et les danses de groupe sur un vinyle réfléchissant. Tout fascine dans ce *display* : la qualité des interprètes qui viennent autant de la *post-modern dance* que du *hip-hop*, faisant varier le *moonwalk* du *break-dance* avant de trouver un unisson sidérant, les vestes et pantalons à sequins, les bruitages qui font résonner les claquements et les frottements de pas, les ralentis et montages inversés provoquant la dilation du temps proche du flottement Gaga (*floating bones*) sur les nappes envoûtantes de la *house music*. Dès la première seconde, la caméra suit l'avancée de l'artiste new-yorkais Marbles Jumbo Radio, chaussures aux pointes inversées. Ce dispositif se retrouve amplifié quand un interprète au drapé fantomatique arpente le plateau avec des bottes à talon haut à deux bouts se réfléchissant sur le tapis de danse – trouble de la perception et sentiment d'inquiétante étrangeté. La présence de la chorégraphe Latifa Laâbissi en oiseau de nuit au sourire expressif et au corps élastique apporte la

complicité nécessaire à la cohésion de la pièce. À plusieurs reprises, le rideau à paillettes fait disparaître le plan, tout comme le véritable rideau qui se ferme par enchantement dans le pavillon. Dissimulant l'écran, le mécanisme matérialise le « quatrième mur » séparant l'audience des acteurs. À la différence qu'ici les spectateurs sont sur la scène où la performance a été filmée, et qu'ils sont entrés par les coulisses avant de sortir par le bar du *night-club*. Ce dispositif de renversement – des interprètes et des spectateurs, de l'image des performers sur le sol du *dancefloor*, de la projection sur la scène où se trouve l'audience – tente de rendre sensible l'indétermination des rôles dans le contexte du spectacle, et la fluctuation des identités. Si le procédé ne permet pas de faire des spectateurs des performers, comme les artistes en émettent régulièrement le vœu², il rejoint les effets de mise en scène développés par Dan Graham qui, dans *Performer/Audience/Mirror* (1975), commentait sa propre attitude avant de décrire celle du public, dos à un grand miroir reflétant l'audience, puis face à celui-ci. Cette logique de distanciation est proche du travail de Boudry & Lorenz qui, en suivant les principes dramatiques de Bertold Brecht, créent davantage d'étrangeté que d'identification entre le public et les acteurs et actrices.



Pauline Boudry & Renate Lorenz, *Opaque*, 2014. Installation avec film Super 16 et vidéo HD / Installation with Super 16film and HD video, 10'. Courtesy Marcelle Alix, Paris & Ellen de Bruijne Projects, Amsterdam. Collection FRAC Lorraine, Metz (FR)



Le rideau est apparu dans le travail commun des deux plasticiennes à l'occasion de l'installation-vidéo *Opaque* (2014). Dans une piscine désaffectée, un rideau noir dissimule deux représentants d'une organisation clandestine, avant de s'ouvrir sur un second rideau rose aux motifs zébrés, dans lequel les interprètes se camouflent. Une épaisse fumée de la même couleur occulte l'ensemble. Quand les performers se révèlent, c'est pour prononcer un discours inspiré du jeu de masques blancs portés par les Noirs de la pièce de Jean Genet, *Les Nègres* (1958) et du « droit à l'opacité » prôné par Édouard Glissant³. Ces dispositifs, qui mettent en cause notre place de voyeur autorisé, visent également à affirmer l'autonomie du décor, des costumes et des accessoires. Aussi, à la fin de *Moving Backwards*, le rideau prend-il vie dans une forme de ballet mécanique. Les chaussures bicéphales, les épaulettes en cheveux, les masques ou la lumière stroboscopique des néons qui s'activent à ce moment précis : tout concourt à autonomiser l'objet, devenu « concurrent de l'acteur⁴ » selon les mots du dramaturge polonais Tadeusz Kantor. Plus encore, cette possibilité de faire du décor un partenaire à part entière rattache la conception de Boudry & Lorenz à la revendication du hors-champ tel que l'avait mis en évidence le critique de cinéma André Bazin. Si le cadre de la peinture isole le système de la représentation de son environnement, celui de la caméra agit comme un cache mobile. En fragmentant l'espace de l'action, il implique l'existence de ce qui existe imaginativement au-delà de ses limites⁵. Ce n'est pas un hasard si dans *Toxic* (2012), les artistes font endosser au performer ces mots de Jean Genet lors de son interview pour la BBC en 1985 : « J'ai rêvé que les techniciens de ce petit film se révolteraient, assistant à la préparation d'un film, ils n'ont jamais le droit à la parole. Comment ça se fait ? Et je pensais qu'ils seraient assez culottés pour me chasser de la place et prendre ma place. Et néanmoins, ils ne bougent pas⁶. » Ces caractéristiques se retrouvent dans la dernière vidéo-installation du duo, *(No)Time* (2019), présentée et co-produite par le Frac Bretagne⁷. La mise en scène cherche à y donner l'illusion que nous sommes face à une improvisation en coulisse. Le rideau est alors remplacé par trois jalousies automatiques traversées d'une lumière jaune irradiante tandis que les néons vacillants sont, cette fois-ci, synchronisés aux événements de l'action filmée et relégués dans la salle suivante : ce qui est vu est toujours connecté à un autre espace à découvrir.



Pauline Boudry & Renate Lorenz, *Moving Backwards*, 2019. Installation vidéo HD / HD video installation, 21'. Courtesy Marcelle Alix, Paris & Ellen de Bruijne Projects, Amsterdam.

Le scénario de ce second volet a été simplifié, voire systématisé. Chaque danseur arrive face public après avoir traversé une porte coulissante automatique, présente son solo – inspiré du classique, du *dance-hall*, du *hip-hop* ou de la performance *drag* –, puis revient improviser avec un partenaire, faisant fi de l'audience, comme si chacun était libéré de la pulsion scopique⁸. Cependant, nous sommes bien face à une représentation. Le dispositif oriente même le *show* du côté de la consommation, tel que Dan Graham a pu le mettre en évidence dans des installations sur moniteurs derrière des vitrines commerciales. L'adresse au visiteur signée par les artistes à l'entrée de l'exposition cherche à relativiser cette impression, voire à nous faire entrer dans une forme de communion avec les interprètes : « Lorsque vous pénétrez dans l'installation, une porte coulissante automatique vous invite à entrer dans une zone de dilation et de suspense. C'est peut-être la porte du capitalisme tardif qui vous appelle, mais qui, en même temps, vous enchaîne (...). Ou alors, il s'agit de la porte vers un plaisir promis qui ne tient pas toujours ses promesses. La porte pour les fantômes. La porte pour s'échapper. La porte qui pourrait vous changer, pendant que vous la franchissez. La porte entre le *backstage* et la scène (...) ». Le rôle du *statement* préliminaire, sorte de didascalie, contextualise la portée politique de la proposition artistique – dilatation de la temporalité contre temps néo-libéral, linéaire et accéléré – et exprime l'interaction attendue du public. « Nous vous invitons à participer à nos expériences de danse », peut-on lire. Il est pourtant peu probable que les visiteurs trouvent la jouissance en participant à cette improvisation : d'une part, les mécanismes mis en place par l'œuvre ne cessent de nous en tenir à distance – à l'inverse des effets d'absorption que Michael Fried a soulignés dans la peinture du XVIII^e siècle⁹ ; d'autre part, la complicité des danseurs et des danseuses ne leur est



pas destinée. La déclaration inaugurale a surtout pour objectif de contrôler l'interprétation de l'œuvre. En effet, la multiplication des pistes de lecture semble moins affirmer la liberté du spectateur que de l'auteur, qui investit la structure scénographique de toutes ces significations, « littéralement et dans tous les sens », ainsi que l'écrivait Rimbaud. C'est ce que montrait Diderot, avec impertinence, dans son roman *Jacques le Fataliste et son maître* (1778–1780) dans lequel l'intervention intempestive du narrateur exprime le rapport de force avec le lecteur sous la forme d'un provocant pacte narratif.





Pauline Boudry & Renate Lorenz, *(No)Time* (capture / screen), 2020. Vue de l'exposition / Exhibition view «*(No) Time*», Frac Bretagne, Rennes. Photo: Aurélien Mole. Courtesy des artistes et / Courtesy the artists and Ellen de Bruijne Projects, Amsterdam & Marcelle Alix, Paris.

Plus fondamentalement, au sein des deux projets, les performers se travestissent avec des objets devenus prothèses : épauettes en cheveux aux allures de parures de chamane, masques ou tentacules de colliers de perles. Dans *Improvisation télépathique* (2017), performance filmée réinterprétant une partition de 1974 écrite par Pauline Oliveros, compositrice de musique minimaliste et électronique, quatre performers interagissent avec les accessoires et le décor qui les entourent. Avec gravité, ils adoptent les postures induites par des socles blancs téléguidés et cherchent à rendre leur corps équivalent aux choses inanimées présentes sur scène. Déjà, des vapeurs de fumée, des masques de pampilles et de cheveux qui oblitèrent l'identité de leur propriétaire, avant que les projecteurs de la salle d'exposition ne s'emballent. Dans une esthétique réfrigérante, proche de l'homme-machine, le dispositif expérimente une utopie paradoxale : celle du cyborg, mi-humain, mi-animal, prompt à devenir invisible et indéterminé pour résister à la persécution¹⁰. La fiction prend alors le contre-pied du constat que faisait Carolee Schneeman cinquante ans plus tôt¹¹. Sa réponse ne cherchait pas à être *queer*, mais à explorer l'imagerie et la sensation érotiques, abandon sensuel, comique et libérateur, du point de vue féminin. L'ambition de Boudry & Lorenz est plus militante, démonstrative. Judith Butler a théorisé la performativité du genre, c'est-à-dire le rôle du discours dans la construction d'une identité hétéronormée qui se fait passer pour originale¹². C'est bien le discours du transgenre qui intéresse les deux plasticiennes, pour sa capacité à



révéler la supercherie, à jouer le rôle de simulacre – de copie de la mascarade. En restituant une vie propre aux fétiches du *drag*, elles tentent de les sortir d'une représentation aliénante. Les objets dont se servent les protagonistes des films se trouvent alors monumentalisés. Les sculptures présentées dans l'antichambre de chaque installation nous confrontent directement à leur matérialité, et donc à leur étrangeté : panneau de cheveux synthétiques derrière le bar du pavillon suisse (*Kukeri II*, 2019), chaînes dorées et argentées suspendues au mur ou fragments du tapis de danse découpé en monochromes géométriques au Frac Bretagne (*Wall Necklace Piece (I Know Where I Come From)*, 2020 ; *Dancefloor Piece*, 2020). Quelque peu anecdotiques face à la puissance des vidéos, et vendues de façon autonome sur le marché de l'art, les sculptures cristallisent cependant la fascination pour le *freak* – quand l'une fait du *bling-bling* une entrave de luxe, l'autre *relooke* la peinture abstraite d'après-guerre, dont « l'irruption du corps physique » a des airs de cousin Machin. C'est justement cette dimension du travail que Renate Lorenz théorise dans son essai *Queer Art: A Freak Theory*¹³, en faisant de la « monstruosité » exhibée dans les *freak-shows* un levier de renversement du pouvoir opéré par les marginaux, au point d'en faire une méthode de « dénormalisation » mise en œuvre par les arts visuels. Pour reprendre Deleuze et Guattari, même une minorité a à devenir minoritaire¹⁴.

En 2016, au moment de l'élection de Donald Trump aux États-Unis, Boudry & Lorenz livraient une vision sombre et bouleversante de la contestation politique. Dans l'installation-vidéo *Silent*, la musicienne Aéra Negrot se tient debout sur un pupitre tournant au centre d'Orianenplatz, à Berlin, là où un camp de réfugiés s'est dressé de 2012 à 2014. Dix micros braqués sur elle sont prêts pour la conférence de presse, qui ne vient pas. L'artiste interprète *4'33"* de John Cage (1952). Sa voix silencieuse laisse entrer les interférences de la ville, le bruit vivant du quotidien qu'une salle de spectacle aurait éteint. Puis soudain, quittant l'estrade pour un banc public, sa voix de diva *groovy* aux basses saturées se met à chanter¹⁵. Tandis que la parole publique est abandonnée au profit de l'imperceptible, les artistes semblent désormais avoir fait de la danse une stratégie de résistance. Tenir le rythme, guetter tard dans la nuit, la grâce qui se soulève.

. . .

1. Michel Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité*, vol. 1, *La volonté de savoir*, Paris, Gallimard, 1976, 211 p.
2. Voir la conférence donnée à la Rijksakademie d'Amsterdam, le 11 mars 2020, URL : <http://vimeo.com/410189830>, ou le *statement* de *Telepathic Improvisation* (2017) présenté au Contemporary Arts Museum de Houston, en 2017, et au Centre culturel suisse de Paris l'année suivante.



3. « C'est pourquoi je réclame pour tous le droit à l'opacité. Il ne m'est plus nécessaire de « comprendre » l'autre, c'est-à-dire de le réduire au modèle de ma propre transparence, pour vivre avec cet autre ou construire avec lui. », Édouard Glissant, *Introduction à une poétique du divers*, Paris : Gallimard, 1996, 144 p.
4. « L'objet a cessé d'être un accessoire de la scène, il est devenu le concurrent de l'acteur. », Tadeusz Kantor, *Leçons de Milan*, Arles : Actes Sud, 1990, 89 p.
5. André Bazin, *Qu'est-ce que le cinéma ?*, Paris : Éditions du Cerf, 2011, 372 p.
6. Nigel Williams, entretien avec Jean Genet, BBC, Londres, juillet 1985.
7. « (No)Time », Frac Bretagne, Rennes, 12.02- 23.05.2021.
8. Plaisir visuel ressenti au cinéma face aux images de femmes du point de vue du regard masculin. Laura Mulvey « Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema », in *Screen*, vol.16, n°3, Londres, automne 1975.
9. Michael Fried, *Absorption and Theatricality. Painting and Beholder in the Age of Diderot*, Berkeley-Los Angeles : University of California Press, 1980, 249 p.
10. Donna Haraway, « Manifeste cyborg : science, technologie et féminisme socialiste à la fin du XXème siècle », 1991.
11. « Je dis « je me sers de matériaux » mais j'ai souvent l'impression qu'ils se servent de moi comme vision d'où ils ré-émergent dans un monde visuel qui ne pourrait parler sans eux. », Carolee Schneemann, « From the Notebooks (1962-1963) », *More Than Meat Joy. Complete Performance and Selected Writings*, New York : Documentext, 1979, pp. 9-10.
12. Judith Butler, *Gender trouble*, New York : Routledge, 1990, 172 p., tr. fr. Paris : La Découverte, 2006, 283 p.
13. Renate Lorenz, *Queer Art: A Freak Theory*, Bielefeld : Transcript, 2012, 179 p., trad. fr. Paris : Éditions B42, 2018, 197 p.
14. « (...) mais il n'est un tel sujet qu'en entrant dans un *devenir-minoritaire qui l'arrache à son identité majeure* », Gilles Deleuze et Félix Guattari, *Capitalisme et schizophrénie 2 : Mille Plateaux*, Paris : Minuit, 1980, 648 p, p. 357.
15. « Chèr·e président·e, votre profil est vague. Vous n'avez ni bras, ni jambes. Pas de ventre, pas de sexe et pas de tête. Votre ennemi·e est votre amant·e. J'ai besoin de maquillage, de sous-vêtements et d'hormones ! Cher visiteur·se, êtes-vous optimiste, quand notre pays est en guerre ? guerre ? guerre ? »

Image en une : Pauline Boudry & Renate Lorenz, *(No)Time* (capture / screen), 2020.
Vue de l'exposition / Exhibition view «(No) Time», Frac Bretagne, Rennes. Photo:



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Aurélien Mole. Courtesy des artistes et / Courtesy the artists and Ellen de Bruijne Projects, Amsterdam & Marcelle Alix, Paris.

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Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz

JOAN

In a glowing fifteen-foot-wide projection, a figure walks into the video frame, taking measured steps despite the fact that the individual's orange sneakers are on backward, such that the toes are awkwardly pushed into the shoes' heels. Over the next nineteen minutes, four other performers move in and out of the slowly tracking frame, carrying out various other reverse gestures in brief vignettes. The premise of the film, titled *Moving Backwards*, 2019, is explained in a letter written by the artists Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz on the occasion of the work's debut this past summer in the Swiss pavilion at the Venice Biennale. Their contemplation of what it means to move backward initially arose from their despair at the rise of reactionary politics and the seeming reversals of leftist gains. Retrograde policies tend to affect the most vulnerable communities, but



In the last few minutes of the video as it was installed at Joan, a ringing techno beat filled the room as the on-screen performers seemed to abandon measured movements in exchange for something closer to improvisation, calling to mind Jack Halberstam's remark that "queer time for me is the dark nightclub." The screen went blank, but the music continued, and white lights suddenly overwhelmed the dark space outside the video in the gallery, flashing in time with the music and inviting the watcher to become an agent of the artists' provocation: Maybe you could start by dancing backward.

—Ashton Cooper



Pauline Boudry & Renate Lorenz

Judith Rodenbeck

The Berlin-based artists explore the problems and potentials of backward movement.



Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz, *Moving Backwards*, 2018. Image courtesy the artists.

Pauline Boudry & Renate Lorenz: *Moving Backwards*, JOAN, 1206 Maple Avenue, Los Angeles, through February 16, 2020



Legendarily, women fighters from the Kurdish mountains of northern Syria would sometimes wear their shoes backward in order to confound trackers. It's an elegant if simple technique, distressing in its acknowledgment of vulnerability as these guerrillas are picked off person by person, yet powerful, too, as an act of resistance, even defiance. This gesture of "tactical ambivalence" and of "turning disadvantage into a tool," as Berlin-based artists Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz put it, provides both a lesson and a kind of score or instruction for *Moving Backwards*, their installation currently on show at JOAN in Los Angeles. (It was previously seen, in a slightly different configuration, at the Venice Biennial's Swiss Pavilion in the summer of 2019.) Boudry and Lorenz read backward movement in broad ideological terms, taking sharp notice of the political and social regressions of our age. But, inspired by the Kurdish women fighters, they also explore how it might serve as a practice of what the Anishinabe writer Gerald Vizenor has dubbed *survivance*: survival and resistance.

The word "installation" is used advisedly here: the work's primary element is a floor-to-ceiling screen onto which is projected a looped twenty-minute film featuring five dancers, matched to a pulsing soundtrack that blasts from a pair of humongous speakers, barely visible in the darkened gallery. Other elements, though crucial to the work's overall staging, initially seem incidental. They include a black-Marley-covered wooden platform, a discreet display of props, and a newsprint journal of letters on the subject of moving backward written at the invitation of Boudry and Lorenz by an international array of artists, theorists, and activists (most are queer and/or gender nonconforming; their missives datelined Berlin, Tehran, Berkeley, Qamishli, São Paulo, Mumbai, Cairo, Paris, Los Angeles, etc.).



As they do here, Boudry and Lorenz have made an ongoing practice of working collaboratively with performers (most, like their epistolary interlocutors, queer and feminist). *Moving Backwards* draws together dancers fluent in a range of choreographic styles—from postmodernism to krumping—to experiment with the possibilities, potentials, and confoundments of backward movement. If these dancers fall within a familiar range of professional norms in terms of size, ability, and what I’ve come to call premenopausal physicality, this is a pointed accumulation of dance styles and queer identities—and though it may be impolitic to hazard the observation, it nonetheless seems important precisely in terms of politics to note that all the visible bodies have some tethered relation to the female.

This is a sodality of difference-in-relation, an assemblage of Amazons. Where classical Western dance is structured by symmetries, along with corps, elevation, and the phallic toe shoe, here asymmetries rule—or the queer symmetry of, say, Boudry and Lorenz’s specially designed double-fronted shoes, which appear both onscreen and as objects in the installation. The dancers deploy their individual kinetic and theatrical skill sets and virtuosity autonomously or in coordinated groups in a darkened stage space, accompanied by that club beat. Filmed dead on, they are projected near life-sized, relatively expressionless yet fully confrontational, establishing an awkward dialogue with the viewer.



Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz, *Moving Backwards*, 2018. Image courtesy the artists.

The presentation of queer and gender-nonconforming people in their physical power and discrete virtuosity, eschewing traditional dance's couple-form and occasionally directly returning the indifferent gaze of the camera (and by implication me and you), is a challenge—but it's compelling, too, as a "join us" kind of strategy, amplified by the music and the often-demotic kinetic vocabulary. The camera tracks back and forth, reiterating the horizontality of the dance floor like a dumb surveilling machine, its movement so slow, smooth, and autonomous that it largely slips below the level of attention, to be noticed only when we look at the dancers' grounded feet. More subtly, three segments of the film are in fact run backward—meaning the dancers themselves, echoing the Kurdish fighters, are actually moving in the opposite direction than they appear to be. As the camera tracks, it both captures and misses what we, in fact, are watching.



In a letter from Tehran, curator Azar Mahmoudian echoes Boudry and Lorenz's canny mash-up of Michael Jackson's iconic 1983 televised performance of the backslide and Walter Benjamin's Angel of History—his face turned back toward the past, his wings pushed forward by the future. "During the massive suppression of leftist political dissidents in the early 1980s in Iran," she writes, " 'Moon Walking' became a thing. It was stunning and fulfilling to watch. Pretending you are walking ahead, but actually moving backward, as if the ground under your feet were slipping back, or a storm were irresistibly propelling you . . ." More recently the step has been queered in artist Klara Lidén's video work, *The Myth of Progress (Moonwalk)* (2008), in which the butch, white, female (and European) artist moonwalks through a grim city nightscape, inviting personal catastrophe while bearing witness to urban desolation.

But here the mood is very different. Boudry and Lorenz insist (as they have in multiple projects) on a club structure signified by the raised platform of a dance floor. As installed at JOAN, that platform stands directly facing the projection, whose width determines its dimensions, creating a quasi one-to-one relation between platform and projection—and by extension between occupants of the platform and the bodies in the projected image. Pounding and insistent sound evokes the nightclub. Some people use the platform as seating; a few stand on it, or walk or hesitantly dance across it. For Boudry and Lorenz, clubbing represents a provisional utopic social space, "a means of coming together, re-organizing our desires, and finding ways of exercising freedoms."



Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz, *Moving Backwards*, 2018. Image courtesy the artists.

Seen the first time, with at least a dozen fellow visitors—the punch of the music’s bass lines and beats vibrating the fleshly multiplicity of more-than-one-body—the projected plus viewing company made for an odd shuttling between senses of voyeurism and participation, of surveillance and tactical giving way. Later, visiting the gallery alone, I felt impatient and uncoordinated, despite the promised liberation of dancing on the platform by myself. I had wondered what the sound would feel like lying on the platform. And the answer was: nothing. But when you’re standing, with your weight distributed across the soles of your feet, the sound vibrates up through those two planar surfaces in a powerful, bodily invitation to join that small cell of *guérillères*.

Judith Rodenbeck is a Los Angeles-based critic and (very) occasional performer. She teaches in the Department of Media and Cultural Studies at the University of California in Riverside.



BIENNALE

Le Pavillon suisse, discrètement subversif

Biennale d'art contemporain - Jusqu'au 24 novembre 2019

PAR ANNE-CÉCILE SANCHEZ · L'ŒIL

LE 17 JUILLET 2019 - 247 mots

VENISE / ITALIE

En dehors du Pavillon lituanien, récompensé par le Lion d'or, mais que peu de gens auront la chance d'apprécier autrement que comme le décor vide d'un opéra en attente d'être joué, le Pavillon suisse fait partie des propositions qui se démarquent de cette 58e Biennale.

Intitulé « Moving Backwards », il prend la forme d'une installation et d'un film signés Pauline Boudry et Renate Lorenz. Le duo a voulu que l'on y rentre comme par les coulisses pour se retrouver face à une scène que révèle le glissement d'un rideau pailleté. L'écran sert littéralement de cadre à une performance filmée qui met en mouvement l'idée d'un retour en arrière sur lequel Pauline Boudry et Renate Lorenz ont souhaité s'interroger. Cette théâtralisation formellement très simple suggère une relecture de l'Histoire comme processus idéologique de construction des identités, sexuelles, sociologiques, culturelles. La scène filmée est précisément celle sur laquelle les spectateurs se tiennent, ainsi invités en quelque sorte à danser leur propre chorégraphie. Dans *Improvisation télépathique* – qu'on avait pu voir l'an dernier au Centre culturel suisse –, Pauline Boudry et Renate Lorenz exploraient la manière dont « les autres prennent part à notre désir d'imaginaires politiques et sexuels alternatifs ». Avec *Moving Backwards*, elles semblent vouloir franchir un pas de plus en nous invitant symboliquement à monter sur scène et à devenir acteurs de... la suite ? En première page du journal distribué à la sortie du Pavillon, elles imaginent : « Des rencontres étranges pourraient être le déclencheur agréable de quelque chose d'inattendu. » Ça se danse.

INTERVIEW

Artists

Pauline Boudry
& Renate Lorenz:

Dancing IN THE Swiss pavilion

The duo explain why their Venice Biennale presentation *Moving Backwards* is actually a step forward.

Interview by Hannah McGivern

During the preview days of the Venice Biennale last month, Switzerland's biennial position in the Giardini had the air of a nightclub. A queue of VIPs waited out of the nondescript door to the exhibition of the Berlin-based artists duo Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz. *Moving Backwards*. The multimedia was not academic: Boudry and Lorenz describe their position as a "conceptual club", and its centerpiece is a film showing five glamorous, gender-fluid dancers cutting loose on a black-lacquered stage. The central motif of moving backwards – which the dancers in seven perform quite literally – is both a rebellion to regressive politics and a proposed route to freedom. In a newspaper handed out to visitors, the artists lament the anti-immigration measures taken by European governments and the rise of hate speech, but they also evoke the inspirational story of female Kurdish guerrilla fighters wearing their shoes backwards to evade enemies in the mountains since "we are up for working disorientation into a tool," they write. "Let's collectively move backwards!" Here, they tell us more about collaborating with activists, shaking up viewers' expectations and making room for history.

THE ARTS AND CRAFTS How did you discover that female Kurdish guerrilla fighters wore their shoes backwards as a survival technique? What resonated with you about the "tactical ambivalence

of this movement", as you write in your letter to visitors of the Swiss pavilion? **PAULINE BOUDRY AND RENATE LORENZ** We came across the story through close friends and oral history. We have been attracted to the recent women's revolution in Raqqa and the inspiring Kurdish women's movement. When we heard about this survival technique, we immediately thought it should become the starting point for our project.

Witnessing the political backsliding in terms of gender, sexual rights or the rights of refugees, and the general feeling of being forced to move backwards, we wanted to think of strategies of resistance. This is why we suggested "moving backwards", but in the way that the Kurdish women did. In recent times they are moving backwards, because their shoes leave traces in one direction in the snow. But actually, they are moving forwards.

In the film, we further complicate the idea: the performers move backwards or walk forwards while wearing their shoes backwards. Parts of the dancers were reversed, and the performance started to dance from that way. We reversed other parts of the film digitally, but in a subtle way, which requires attention to detail. Conceptually, we like to understand the idea of feminist progress in the social as well as in the economic realm, and the idea that we always know what the right direction is.

The performers in your previous films embody specific historical figures, such as Kathy Acker and Jean Genet. You have described the practice of writing



different time periods as "temporal drag". How has that evolved in *Moving Backwards*, and why?

The idea of temporal drag is precisely not to ask performers to "embody" historic figures, but to stage encounters between a performer and remnants of a past moment, like one of Genet's texts or interviews. In their (2022), Werner Hirsch in female drag re-enacts a TV interview that Genet gave to the BBC, for instance, without trying to "be" Genet. We are interested in the co-presence of different temporalities, and of spacing up

a past moment that was not properly lived or actualized in the past, to give it another try. That's not so different from the backward movements, where one usage of the concept could be to step back and try again, with more force or with more pleasure.

You work with artists you admire rather than casting actors. How did you assemble the performers for this film? Werner Hirsch and Lotte Lohmann approached us; Werner had already

The centerpiece of the presentation is a film featuring five gender-fluid dancers cutting loose on a black-lacquered stage

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20

INTERVIEW

Artists

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

performed in many of our films, while we exchanged documentation with Laila and felt there was a close relationship between our works. Adhine Jumbo Kadio had previously worked with our friend Andrei Goyu and we admired their dance style. We started rehearsing with Marbles in New York and developed some of the basic movements together. We didn't know Sach and Julie beforehand, but we had seen Julie performing (eventually with the Michael Clark Company) and were inspired with Sach's fierce Krump dance when she was introduced to us. They all brought in parts of their choreographic work and it was our task to facilitate an encounter between the different approaches and choose the steps that movements might support and emphasize our concept. Most importantly, we choreograph the relationship between the camera, the viewer's gaze and the performances.

The film is only one part of a theoretical "abstract club" environment that transforms the Swiss pavilion. What inspires you about the nightclub? The Swiss pavilion has a strong architecture which is elegant but very 1960s. In the past, the architecture sometimes took too much importance, while some aspects of it didn't receive much attention at all. We used the white covers of the garden – industrial gray panels – to cover up the entrance and make the architecture disappear. Instead, it looks like the entrance of a club. We built a black pathway to bring the audience – literally following backwards – directly on to a white stage that we have divided like the "pokering table", the main rooms of the pavilion.

The audience watches the film from the very stage where it was shot, meaning they are in the position of participating in a possible future performance. Another pathway leads them behind a large structure that resembles a bar, putting them in the position of a bartender. Through 100 paintings on the bar show the fun and clubs we like in Berlin, where we met, loved and friends. The garden garden, which has often been neglected in the past, becomes a meeting point or a place to read the newspaper. We speak of an "abstract" club since we don't mean to mimic a club. Rather, we want to conjure up images of a place where a variety of encounters might happen, where lights, sounds and objects might take over, where we let loose and allow fantasies to go wild.

Visitors assume the position of performers by entering the pavilion on stage. Do you see the public as performative participants in the world? The work is very much about the



The artist duo (right) explore resistance practices in *Moving Backwards* (Odeon), mixing female Marbles' guerrilla techniques with urban dance and elements of underground culture



"We like to challenge the viewer's position and produce a sense of the unexpected"

relationship to the audience. We like to choreograph the audience as we want to avoid easy ways of getting an overview and arriving at categories too fast. We like to challenge the position of the viewer and produce some kind of intimacy and sense of the unexpected. In his essay about the film, André Lajedat writes that the clapperboard at the end is almost a signal to the audience to start their own performance now. We like that very much.

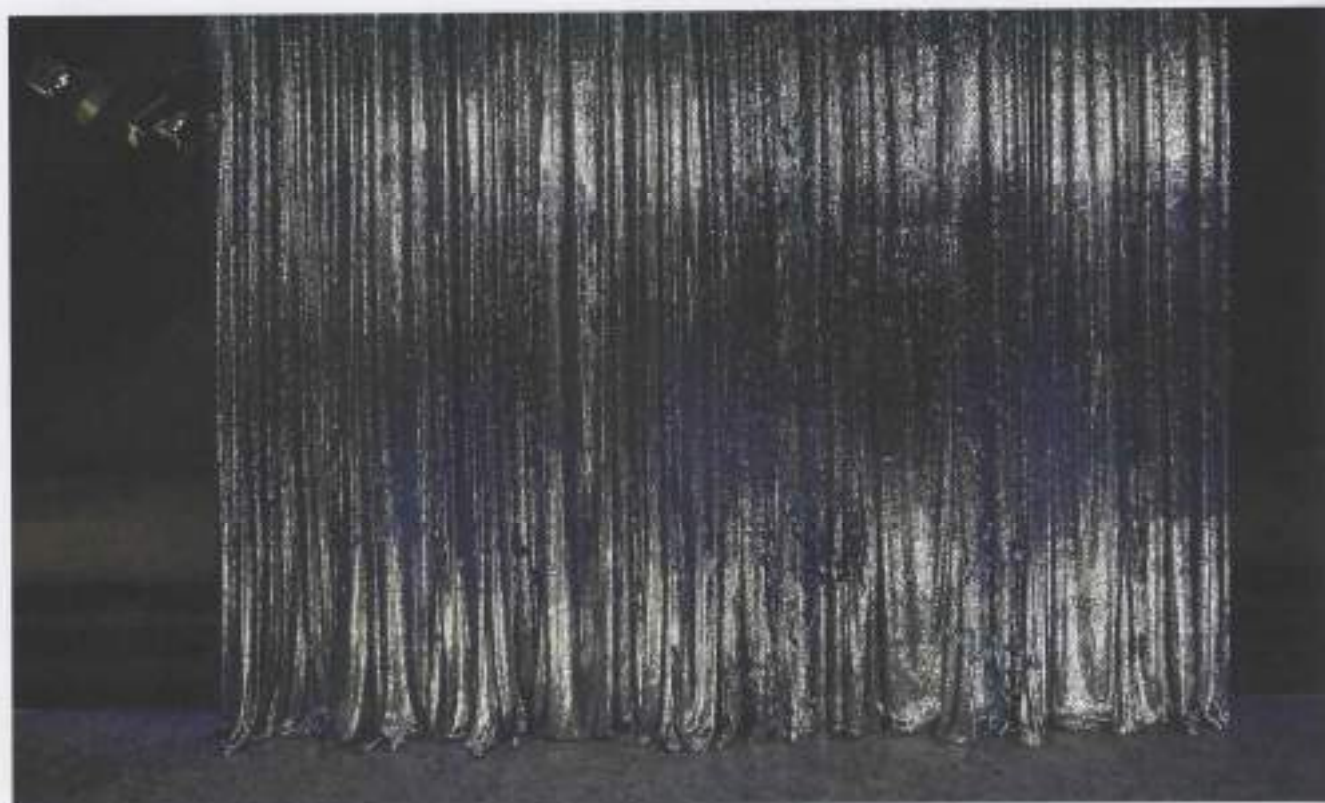
What prompted the idea of creating a newspaper with letters to the audience, and inviting so many collaborators? It is important for us to show that our ideas can influence culture people's thoughts, creative and activities. Going through the process of writing, then that something is

starting to build, what Guyard Chikovsky Serevi calls a "planetary" perspective. The concept of moving backwards connects with different contexts, which makes it so much deeper and more interesting. We also like that the format of writing can be diverse, from a poem to a poem, from conceptual writing to an academic text.

You have both worked together since 2005. What does it mean to make art as a duo? Does this affect your creative process? If so, how?

We always liked the idea of being more than one. We regularly work with various friends, whose other personas are Heidi Dietz, Antonia Reiter and Agnès B. We have long-term collaborations for all the stages of producing a work. Recent cinema films a thematic performance background and Pauline has played in different bands, so the concept of collaborative work has always been part of our practice. The two of us share all the roles and tasks of production.

• Pauline Reiter and Heidi Dietz's *Moving Backwards* is being shown in the Swiss pavilion at the Venice Biennale until 24 November



SUISSE (GIARDINI)

PAULINE BOUDRY ET RENATE LORENZ

Commissaire/Curator: **Charlotte Laubard**

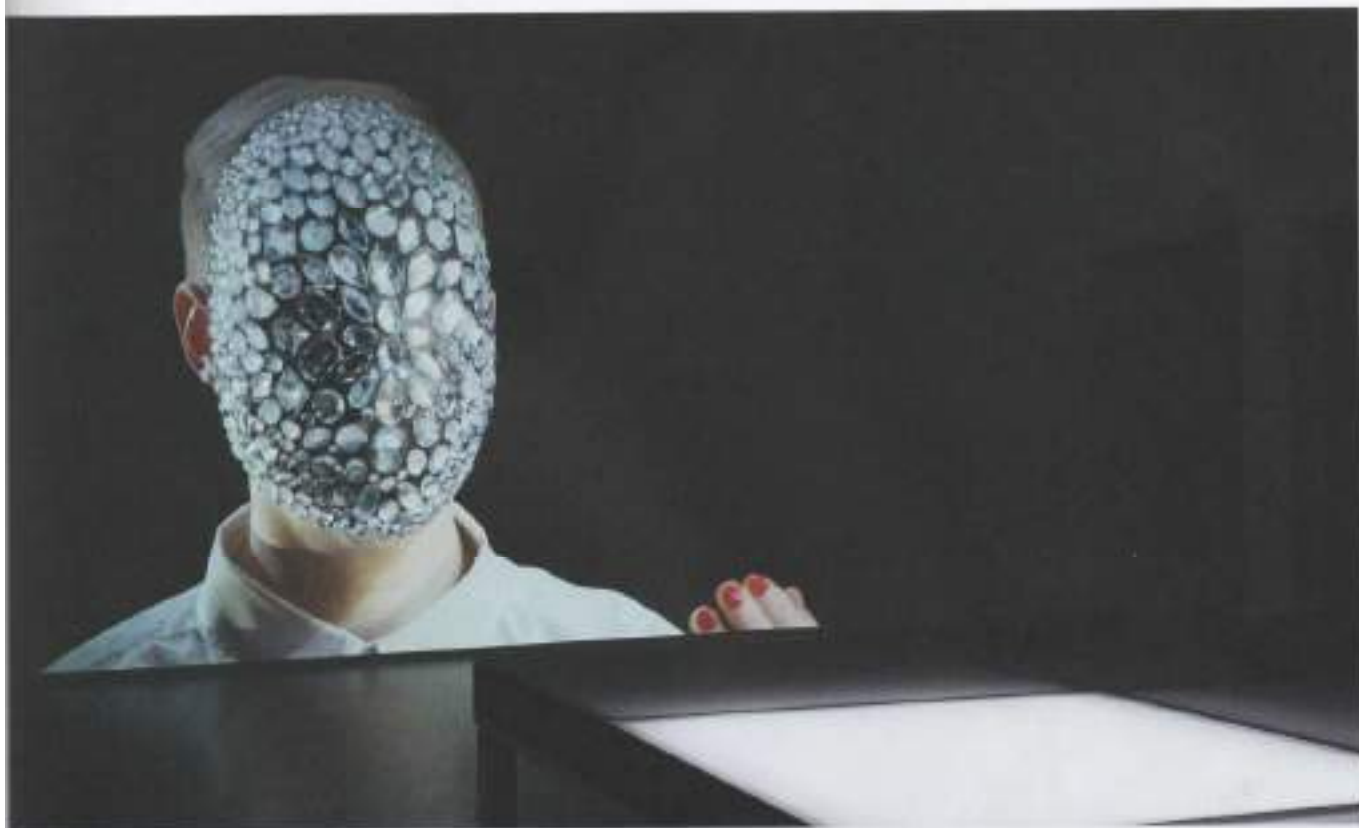
■ Pauline Boudry et Renate Lorenz investissent le pavillon suisse, à l'invitation de la curatrice Charlotte Laubard. Leur proposition a pour nom *Moving Backwards* (Retour en arrière), belle figure de retournement du temps et du mouvement. Le duo d'artistes, qui travaille à Berlin depuis 2007, puise justement dans l'histoire à travers des documents du passé pour interroger le genre. Elles travaillent à faire remonter à la surface du réel les moments effacés, refoulés et les non-dits de l'histoire qui touchent les corps et leur perception pour envisager la possibilité d'un futur queer, détaché des binarismes.

Moving Backwards, c'est aller en arrière, se déplacer vers l'arrière, revenir en arrière ou régresser, mais c'est aussi « bouger ». Et ce mouvement est important, celui qui permet de déjouer la linéarité normative, une certaine logique du monde, et d'explorer ce qui appartient aux marges, celles de l'espace commun comme celles du temps. *Moving Backwards*

c'est, dans le même mouvement, la régression et la résistance. Aux forces régressives et réactionnaires du temps présent, elles opposent des retours en arrière dans lesquels puiser pour trouver d'autres formes d'action. C'est une manière d'illustrer ces tensions qui habitent notre époque, celles qui voient la crispation travailler de l'intérieur ce mouvement d'élargissement des identités sexuelles. À Venise, les deux artistes imaginent une large installation filmique immersive dans laquelle on pénètre comme dans une boîte de nuit. Un seul film prend tout l'espace, dans lequel évoluent cinq performeurs. Julie Cunningham, Werner Hirsch, Letifa Laebissi, Marbles Jumbo Radio et Nach, qui expérimentent des mouvements de retour en arrière. Les spectateurs sont invités à entrer dans une chorégraphie qui appelle à la rencontre des corps, des attitudes, des identités multiples dans une expérience physique et sensorielle. « La survie ne peut venir que de

l'échange, de l'hybridation, de l'ouverture aux autres », dit la curatrice, contre les attitudes d'essentialisation. Pour cela, s'immerger. La puissance subversive de la nuit et de ses effets de retournement joue ici à plein. Le modèle en est la boîte de nuit LGBT, la mythique Berghain de Berlin où s'est réfugiée une génération au début des années 2000. Le lieu où l'on peut être qui l'on veut, où l'espace et le temps n'ont plus cours, où les horloges sont arrêtées ou déboussolées, comme les valeurs qu'elles supportent. Un lieu où l'on communique par les corps.

Le pavillon suisse est de ces lieux-là, un espace d'ouverture et de liberté. De réflexion aussi, un espace de rassemblement étant prévu pour y lire le journal gratuit mis à disposition, echo des questionnements queer, post-coloniaux, philosophiques, politiques. Entre autres invités de ce journal: Judith Butler, Nikita Dhawan, André Lepecki, Françoise Vergès.



Grassus/above: «Telepathic Improvisation», 2017
Installation avec vidéo HD, 20 min. CCS, Paris.
Court: Ellen De Bruijn Projects et Miroslav Alex;
Ph. Claire Doré

Page de gauche/page left: Pauline Boudry/Renate Lorenz, «Moving Backwards» (détail), 2019
Installation avec film, vidéo, scène, performances/
with film, curators, stage, doc. publication
and performances

Moving Backwards, c'est une manière de retenir le présent et de prêter plus d'attention à ce qui nous empêche. Pour le détourner, le défaire et le dépasser. C'est contrevenir au sens de l'histoire, à la marche du progrès, au temps linéaire et à l'évolution qu'il sous-entend. Une manière pour Boudry et Lorenz, comme le suggérait Walter Benjamin dans sa critique du concept de progrès, de «briser le continuum de l'histoire» et d'ouvrir les possibles. À rebours. ■

Sally Bonn

Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz are occupying the Swiss Pavilion at the invitation of curator Charlotte Laubard. Their offering is entitled *Moving Backwards*, a handsome figure of the reversal of time and movement. The duo of artists, who have worked in Berlin since 2007, draws precisely on history through documents from the past to question genre. They work to bring back to the

surface of the real the erased, repressed and unspoken moments of history that concern bodies and their perception, in order to consider the possibility of a queer future, detached from binarisms.

Moving Backwards is going backwards, moving back, returning backwards or regressing, but it is also acting, as distinct from doing nothing. And this movement is important. It is what makes it possible to thwart normative linearity, a certain logic of the world, and to explore what belongs in the margins, those of the common space and those of time. *Moving Backwards* is, in the same movement, regression and resistance. To the regressive and reactionary forces of the present, they oppose backward steps from which to draw other forms of action. It is a way of illustrating the tensions of our time, those that see the tensing working from within the movement of enlargement of sexual identities.

In Venice the two artists imagine a vast immersive film installation one enters as if going into a nightclub. A single film takes up all the space, in which five performers, Julie Cunningham, Werner Hirsch, Latifa Laabissi, Merbles Jumbo Radio and Nach, experiment with back-and-forth movements. Viewers are invited to enter a choreography that calls for the meeting of bodies, attitudes, multiple identities in a physical and sensory experience. "Survival can only

come from exchange, hybridization, openness to others," says the curator, against the attitudes of essentialization. For that, the immersion of self. The subversive power of the night and its effects of reversal are fully at play here. The model is the LGBT nightclub, the legendary Berlin Berghain, where a generation took refuge in the early 2000s. The place where you can be who you like, where space and time are no longer, where clocks are stopped or disoriented, along with the values they support. A place where you communicate through bodies.

The Swiss Pavilion is one of those places, an area of openness and freedom. Of reflection also, a gathering space being planned to read the free newspaper available, echo of queer, post-colonial, philosophical, political questionings ... Among other guests of this newspaper: Judith Butler, Nikita Dhawan, André Lepocki, Françoise Vergès.

Moving Backwards is a way of holding back the present and paying more attention to what's stopping us. To deflect it, undo it and overtake it. It contravenes the meaning of history, the march of progress, linear time and the evolution that it implies. A way for Boudry and Lorenz, as Walter Benjamin suggested in his critique of the concept of progress, to "break the continuum of history" and open up the possibilities. Backwards. ■

Translation: Chloé Baker



Moving Backwards

Posted on 2019 május 21, kedd by Danka Zsófia

Exhibitors / Művészek: Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz

Curator / Kurátor: Charlotte Laubard



Pauline Boudry, Charlotte Laubard, Renate Lorenz (left to right) at the Swiss Pavilion 2019. Photo: KEYSTONE / Gaëtan Bally



*Immersive dance moves, curtains covered with beautiful sequin, excitatory electronic music. The 58th Biennale di Venezia's Swiss pavilion made a big move this year with the featured video work *Moving Backwards* made by the artists Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz. We were talking with Charlotte Laubard, the curator of the exhibition. What was the main narrative of your exhibition?*



Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz, *Moving Backwards*, Swiss Pavilion at the 58th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia, 2019. Courtesy the artists. Photo: Pro Helvetia / KEYSTONE / Gaëtan Bally.

CL.: The artists wanted to evoke the context of the nightclub, this very special place where the feeling of community is created through dance, beyond our differences in gender, race or class. They sought to question the ways in which dancing bodies could communicate a state of mind, express a form of contestation. It is also a tribute to LGBT clubs that provide a safe haven for people who feel rejected because their identity does not fall into



any category shaped by our society. The display is designed in such a way that the viewer becomes aware of his or her presence and participation in the dramaturgy.



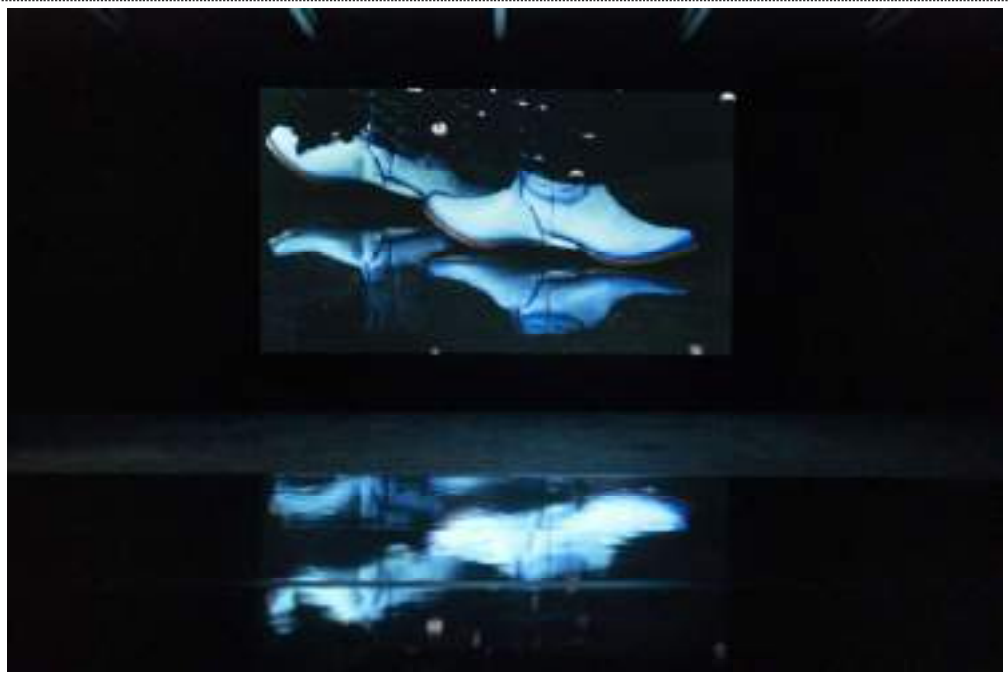
Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz, *Moving Backwards*, Swiss Pavilion at the 58th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia, 2019. Courtesy the artists. Photo: Annik Wetter.

Could you tell us a little about the curatorial concept?

CL.: Artists were free to imagine a project. Nevertheless, I had given them the outlines of what I hoped they would succeed in unleashing: using the pavilion concept as a kind of theatrical platform to carry out a project deeply rooted in current political issues, by activating the participation of spectators. These are items that form the basis of their artistic practice. All that was missing was a concept. And they proposed to reflect on this



expression of “moving backwards” which echoes the feeling of regression that we all experience with the rise of populism in the world, but which can also evoke forms of opposition, especially if we are interested in backward movements in the field of dance. The inverted movements of postmodern dance, hip hop or Japanese buto that are performed all express a form of opposition.



Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz, *Moving Backwards*, Swiss Pavilion at the 58th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia, 2019. Courtesy the artists. Photo: Pro Helvetia / KEYSTONE / Gaëtan Bally.

After watching the video work of Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz the visitors got a newspaper full of letters by several authors which added to the whole experience a deeper personal level. What kind of reactions did you get from the visitors?



Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz, *Moving Backwards*, Swiss Pavilion at the 58th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia, 2019. Courtesy the artists. Photo: Annik Wetter.

CL.: The whole first part of the project offers a strong sensory experience while leading us to reflect on what the body expresses and communicates. Then the words come back in the second part of the project. We left the dance hall, we are in the bar, the place where we talk and get to know each other. For the opening, two performers of the film were there to offer visitors the opportunity to read an excerpt from a letter. The reactions were very positive, as if this return of the word took on a new intensity and that we were more willing to listen to these different voices, those of authors from other cultural and geographical contexts, who share their questions and thoughts on the many meanings of backwards movements.



14/05/2019

Pavillon suisse à la Biennale d'art de Venise, en Vue Nouvelles



Pavillon suisse à la Biennale d'art de Venise, en Vue

Organisée par l'AMÉRICAIN Ralph Rugoff. En outre, de présenter près de 90 Nations Contributions des Artistes de leur Pays. Le Pavillon Suisse a le duo artistiq

12 May 2019 Sunday 05:02

29 reads.



Organisée par l'AMÉRICAIN Ralph Rugoff. En outre, de présenter près de 90 Nations Contributions des Artistes de leur Pays. Le Pavillon Suisse a le duo artistique de Pauline Boudry/Renate Lorenz dans l'Installation filmique «Moving Backwards» transforme.

Le Duo Boudry/Lorenz explore «dans le Contexte actuel de Backlash Pratiques de la Résistance», a annoncé le Pavillon Suisse compétente pour la culture Pro Helvetia. Pour ce faire, les états-Artistes Guerillatechniken, postmodernisme Chorégraphies et Danses urbaines avec des Éléments de la «Underground " Queer Culture"».

Dans la cinématographiques à l'Installation «Moving Backwards» expérimenter cinq Performerinnen et Performer avec marche Arrière. La Salle rappelle un club de nuit. Les Spectateurs et les utilisateurs étaient invités, dans cet Environnement, dans une Chorégraphie de Gestes, des Extraits de films et des Objets animés, de s'immerger et de s'exceptionnelle de Rencontres, de suspendre, écrit par Pro Helvetia.

la Lituanie, le Samedi a été le premier Prix pour la meilleure Contribution à excellent. De l'Opéra-Performance «Sun & Sea (Marina)» sur une Plage artificielle Critique le mode de Vie de nombreux Voyages, de la Consommation et de Travail. Elle va sur la Fragilité du Monde, le changement Climatique et la disparition des espèces.

L'américain Réalisateur et Caméraman Arthur Jafa a remporté le Lion d'Or du meilleur Artiste pour sa Vidéo «The White Album», avec lequel il est hautement Thème du Racisme, reprenant entre autres, la Haine des Vidéos à partir d'Internet.

La Biennale avait déjà annoncé que l'américaine, Artiste, Auteur et Activiste, Jimmie Durham, le Lion d'Or pour l'ensemble de son Œuvre reçoit. Le Jury de la 58. Biennale de la Directrice de Berlin, le Martin-Gropius, Stephanie Rosenthal, dirigé.

cette année, La Biennale d'art a également un programme d'Accompagnement. Cela fait partie du «Salon Suisse», le Public - en parallèle à l'Exposition dans le Pavillon Suisse, d'une Performance, d'Entretien et de Manifestations organisé.

Après le Eröffnungssalon le 11. Mai dans la galerie de l'Accademia di Belle Arti di Venezia au Palazzo Trevisan degli Ulivi trois autres trois Jours «Salon Suisse» programmée. Les Contributeurs compte aussi Charlotte Laubard, le Pavillon Suisse organisée.

Dans Hauptpavillon dans les Giardini et l'Arsenale sont aussi des Œuvres de la Suisse Christoph Büchel et Christian Marclay.

Büchel mis en scène dans l'Arsenal de son Projet «Barca Nostra», l'Épave d'un Flüchtlingsschiffs, il y a quatre Ans dans la «Rue de la Sicile», et tombé de la Marine italienne été récupérés. Dans l'accident sont venus estimé à 800 à 1000 Personnes ont perdu la Vie. Après la Biennale, le Navire vers la Sicile retourné et là, dans un «Jardin du Souvenir» est établi.

Marclay présente dans l'Arsenal de son installation vidéo «40 Était Movies», les 40 disponibles dans le Commerce Kriegsfilmén composé. L'Artiste superpose les Films, ce qui rend le Contenu narratif des séquences vidéo originales voilé. Au Pavillon dans les Giardini de Marclay outre, quatre Affiches avec le titre de collection «Scream» est délivré.

(SDA)



ARGENT & PLACEMENTS • MARCHÉ DE L'ART

Ouverture de la Biennale de Venise, un accélérateur de cote pour les artistes

Grand rendez-vous du marché de l'art contemporain, la Biennale de Venise commence samedi 11 mai. Cette année encore, elle met en lumière des artistes en provenance de pays rarement représentés.

Par Roxana Azimi • Publié aujourd'hui à 07h00



L'artiste Laure Prouvost lors du prestigieux Turner Prize qu'elle a remporté avec son installation « Wantee », le 2 décembre 2013. Elle représente le pavillon français à la 58e Biennale de Venise. PETER MUHLY/AFP

La Biennale de Venise qui se tient du 11 mai au 24 novembre, est au monde de l'art contemporain ce que les Jeux olympiques sont au sport et le Festival de Cannes au cinéma : une compétition de haut niveau de talents venus des quatre coins du monde. Au total, 90 nations rivalisent cette année dans l'espoir de décrocher un Lion d'or ou, à défaut, une « *visibilité exceptionnelle auprès des décideurs les plus influents – critiques, musées, collectionneurs* », selon la galeriste parisienne Nathalie Obadia, qui représente l'artiste Laure Prouvost, locataire cette année du pavillon français.

Lire aussi | [Les bijoux retrouvent de l'éclat dans les ventes aux enchères](#)

L'impact sur la carrière et par ricochet sur le marché n'est pas le même selon que les créateurs invités soient déjà reconnus ou émergents, et qu'ils viennent de pays prescripteurs ou de contrées moins en vue. Sans oublier l'effet immédiat produit par l'œuvre sur un public en quête de sensations fortes mais prompt au zapping.

La Biennale de Venise ne va probablement pas changer la vie du septuagénaire Martin Puryear, qui représente les Etats-Unis, dont les plus grandes sculptures atteignent le million de dollars. En revanche, elle pourrait booster la carrière de Laure Prouvost, née en 1978. La jeune femme, qui réalise des vidéos déjantées, des tapisseries et des céramiques tout en écrivant des injonctions douces ou agressives en lettres blanches sur fond noir, n'est pas une inconnue.



L'effet « vu à Venise »

Elle a déjà reçu en 2013 le prestigieux Turner Prize à Derry (Irlande du Nord) et exposé dans des musées et centres d'art importants comme le Château de Rochechouart (musée d'art contemporain de la Haute-Vienne), le Hangar Bicocca à Milan, le Red Brick Art Museum à Pékin, et le MuHKA d'Anvers, en Belgique. « Elle a régulièrement vendu aux collectionneurs français et internationaux, donc on ne peut pas dire qu'il y a eu un soudain intérêt depuis sa nomination, précise Nathalie Obadia. Disons plutôt que désormais des ventes d'œuvres à des prix plus importants, entre 50 000 et 100 000 euros, sont plus fréquentes. De nouveaux collectionneurs qui étaient hésitants se sont décidés. »

Lire aussi | [Le Bauhaus, 100 ans et pas une ride](#)

Bien que Cathy Wilkes (Grande-Bretagne) jouisse déjà d'une forte reconnaissance institutionnelle, un nouvel emballement s'est aussi fait sentir. « Je suis contactée par des collectionneurs que je ne connais ni d'Eve ni d'Adam. C'est incroyable cet effet "vu à Venise", alors que somme toute une œuvre n'est guère différente avant ou après », sourit son galeriste bruxellois Xavier Hufkens. Ce dernier n'entend pas spéculer sur la Biennale en changeant du tout au tout les prix de ses sculptures et installations, qui oscillent actuellement entre 50 000 et 200 000 livres sterling (58 000 et 232 000 euros).

« La Biennale de Venise ne crée pas de toutes pièces de nouveaux intérêts, mais cela permet plutôt de confirmer des intérêts existants », Isabelle Alfonsi, codirectrice de la galerie Marcelle Alix

Pour Isabelle Alfonsi, codirectrice de la galerie Marcelle Alix qui représente Pauline Boudry et Renate Lorenz, locataires du pavillon suisse, « la Biennale de Venise ne crée pas de toutes pièces de nouveaux intérêts, mais cela permet plutôt de confirmer des intérêts existants ». Pas question d'ailleurs d'augmenter de manière déraisonnée le prix de ce tandem, intéressé par la relecture des marges, et dont les prix s'échelonnent de 10 000 euros pour des *wig pieces* (pièces murales réalisées en cheveux synthétiques) à 30 000 euros pour des installations vidéo.

Lire aussi | [L'appétit grandissant des Chinois pour l'art occidental](#)

« Quand les éditions de vidéos s'épuisent vite, on peut décider d'augmenter les prix demandés pour les dernières éditions disponibles, mais nous procédons à l'augmentation des prix des artistes régulièrement, en suivant un rythme modéré qui accompagne leur visibilité et leurs besoins, précise Isabelle Alfonsi. La participation à la Biennale peut être l'occasion de le faire, parce qu'on se rend compte avec cette actualité que les prix sont restés bas pendant longtemps, mais ce n'est jamais dans des proportions folles. »

Premier pavillon Madagascar

La Biennale profite surtout aux artistes issus de pays sur lesquels le projecteur est moins souvent braqué. Prenons le cas de Joël Andrianomearisoa, qui représente le premier pavillon de Madagascar à Venise. L'artiste déploie depuis plusieurs années une œuvre au noir poétique, jouant sur des désirs et émotions fragiles. « Sa nomination a été un vrai déclencheur pour les collectionneurs, notamment avec l'acquisition d'un coup de sept œuvres par la Fondation Zinsou », confie Eric Dereumaux, directeur de la galerie RX à Paris. Les prix devraient aussi évoluer, sans forcément s'emballer. « Il faut compter aujourd'hui entre 5 000 et 25 000 euros en moyenne, ce qui laisse imaginer une grande marge de manœuvre », poursuit Eric Dereumaux.

Lire aussi | [Annulation de la participation algérienne à la Biennale de Venise](#)

Ce potentiel guette aussi Angelica Mesiti, dont les prix débutent autour de 16 000 dollars (14 290 euros). L'artiste australienne a une actualité riche. Non seulement elle représente son pays à Venise, mais elle expose simultanément des installations vidéo immersives au Palais de Tokyo, à Paris. « Participer à un événement artistique d'une telle ampleur ne permet pas seulement d'être sous le feu des projecteurs, mais de faire partie d'une conversation. Si la renommée d'Angelica n'est plus à faire en

Le Monde

11.05.2019

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Ouverture de la Biennale de Venise, un accélérateur de cote pour les artistes

Australie, en Europe, sa réputation reste encore à consolider », reconnaît Léa Chauvel-Lévy, codirectrice de la Galerie Allen, qui la représente à Paris. Et d'admettre que, depuis sa nomination, « les articles sur elle pleuvent et les demandes de prix augmentent ».

Attention toutefois : si la Biennale a à court terme un effet accélérateur comparable au Goncourt pour le livre ou à l'Oscar pour le cinéma, elle ne suffit pas à conforter la carrière d'un artiste. Pour fêter le centenaire de cet événement en 1995, l'artiste français Christian Boltanski avait publié un livre répertoriant les milliers de créateurs qui y avaient participé. A peine 10 % d'entre eux étaient restés dans l'histoire.

Lire aussi | [Sur le marché de l'art, les bédéistes sortent de leur bulle](#)

Et comme le rappelle avec sagesse Isabelle Alfonsi, « il y a d'autres accomplissements dans les carrières d'artistes que les expositions internationales, d'autres lieux où travailler, parfois avec plus de temps et de sérénité ». Le thème sur lequel travaillent d'ailleurs Renate Lorenz et Pauline Boudry est celui du *moving backwards*, l'intuition qu'il faudrait peut-être réhabiliter l'idée de marcher vers l'arrière, au sens propre, mais aussi au figuré...



Whitewaller Venice 2019: The Ultimate Guide to the 58th Biennale Arte Pavillions by Country

By Whitewaller

On May 11, the 58th Biennale Arte kicks off in Venice, remaining open to visitors through November 24. Curated by Ralph Rugoff, this year's edition (entitled "May You Live in Interesting Times") presents 91 international exhibitors and 79 artists from all over the world, displayed across the Giardini and Arsenale.



Portrait Gallery of Olafur Eliasson
May You Live in Interesting Times
2019
Installation with the artist, original, for publication and performance
Courtesy of the artist

WhiteWall
09.05.2019
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SWITZERLAND

Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz

Curated by: Charlotte Laband

In "Moving Backwards," duo Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz transform the Swiss Pavilion into a vast, immersive space. The artists characterize the current political situation as "backlash" and suggest "backwards" resistance strategies that, instead of opposition, seek unconventional alternatives to effect change. After exploring a night club-like environment comprised of bodies, film loops, and animated objects, visitors will be offered free journals containing quotations from philosophers, artists, activists, and postcolonial and queer theorists, as a reminder that we can all exercise our individual autonomy.



«C'est l'exposition suisse la plus vue au monde»

Art contemporain En invitant le duo formé par la Vaudoise Pauline Boudry et l'Allemande Renate Lorenz à investir le pavillon suisse dès le 11 mai à la Biennale de Venise, la curatrice genevoise Charlotte Laubard brise les clichés.



La Genevoise Charlotte Laubard a été choisie comme curatrice du pavillon suisse à la Biennale de Venise 2019. Elle y a invité Pauline Boudry et Renate Lorenz.
Image: GAETAN BALLY/KEYSTONE

Un rideau scintillant de mystère pour unique teaser imagé; un titre, «Moving Backwards»; le nom d'un duo d'artistes, la Vaudoise Pauline Boudry et l'Allemande Renate Lorenz... La Suisse avance encore cachée à quelque deux mois du vernissage de son pavillon à la Biennale d'art contemporain de Venise. Mais une fois le rideau levé, comme à chaque exposition des deux artistes à l'aura internationale, le propos s'ouvre à la différence et les images ne peuvent laisser indifférent. Ces récits d'héroïnes littéraires et militantes qui croisent leurs identités et s'approprient la vie l'une de l'autre, ces interrogations sur le silence qui se laisse apprivoiser ou qui indispose, vont au-delà du terrain sociopolitique dans lequel ils s'inscrivent. Et les images submergent et bousculent.

À Venise, Pauline Boudry et Renate Lorenz promettent une continuation de ce travail en investissant le pavillon suisse sous le regard expert de la curatrice, la Genevoise responsable du Département des arts visuels de la HEAD, Charlotte Laubard. Interview.

Tribune de Genève

14.03.2019

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Qu'est-ce qui interfère dans le choix d'un artiste pour le pavillon suisse? Le fait que ce soit une exposition où les pays se mettent en avant, l'image que l'on veut donner d'un pays, le contexte artistique du moment? J'ai l'habitude de travailler de manière contextuelle en tenant compte de l'histoire du lieu et de son environnement aussi bien géographique qu'urbanistique. Je l'ai fait lors de l'organisation de la Nuit blanche à Paris qui m'avait été confiée en 2017 et à laquelle Pauline Boudry et Renate Lorenz avaient déjà pris part! Pour Venise, lorsque Pro Helvetia m'a proposé le commissariat, frappée depuis toujours par l'artificialité du contexte, j'ai immédiatement voulu travailler sur son aspect théâtral. Il y a cette unité de temps, d'espace et d'action alors que des milliers d'œuvres, d'artistes et de personnes arrivent dans cette ville, peut-être la plus théâtrale du monde!

Quel est le rôle – sinon la place – d'un pavillon national dans le contexte d'une exposition internationale d'art contemporain?

Je vois les pavillons comme des espèces de plateformes, des tribunes qui permettent d'énoncer des choses. Et comme j'avais envie de réfléchir à la dimension théâtrale de l'événement, j'ai immédiatement pensé à Pauline Boudry et Renate Lorenz, leur travail tournant autour de la performance. À travers la performance, c'est notre identité personnelle et sociale que l'on énonce. Même si ces deux artistes opèrent dans le champ de l'art contemporain, elles agrègent dans leur travail plusieurs modes de représentation – photographie, vidéo, musique, théâtre, performance, chorégraphie – ce qui le rend original. Un autre critère pour Venise, baromètre de l'air du temps, où il est donc essentiel d'être dans une forme d'actualité. Or ces derniers temps, celle-ci tourne autour de l'identité. Elle est devenue le nœud autour duquel s'agglutinent des tendances au repli sur soi et au rejet de la différence. Au moment où de vieilles marottes ségrégationnistes et extrémistes d'époques qui ne se sont pas vraiment bien terminées reviennent sur le devant de la scène, l'art – dont celui de Pauline et Renate – a son rôle à jouer.

Tribune de Genève

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Un rôle de contre-pouvoir?

Oui... l'art travaille sur nos représentations, qu'elles soient visuelles ou mentales. Il a toujours eu un rôle à tenir en nous faisant expérimenter les choses qui déplacent notre point de vue en nous ouvrant des champs de perception.

Sauf que l'art contemporain, souvent perçu comme abscons, semble s'être détourné de cette mission d'aide à la compréhension et à l'appréhension du monde?

Faisons la part des choses. Si l'on peut reprocher à certains d'évoluer en circuit fermé, ce n'est pas le cas de tous les artistes. La scène est vaste, comportant même des tendances académiques. Mais ce n'est pas ce que j'avais envie de montrer dans le contexte de la Biennale et d'une représentation nationale à Venise. On pourrait voir mon projet comme celui d'une Suisse éclairée, un peu à l'image de ce que je peux vivre à Genève, en tant que citoyenne d'une ville ouverte sur le monde qui a pour singularité historique de s'être donné comme mission de se préoccuper des autres nations et de cultiver le respect entre les peuples. Le pavillon suisse 2019 sera donc quelque part assez genevois!

Et très ouvert: avec deux artistes, l'une Vaudoise, l'autre Allemande, qui vivent à Berlin. Au-delà, y a-t-il une liberté d'action totale pour le curateur du pavillon suisse?

Avant d'accepter ce défi, j'ai effectivement demandé quelle était la marge de manœuvre et l'échelle de tolérance pour la critique lorsque la représentation d'un pays est en jeu. On m'a répondu: «Tant qu'il n'y a pas d'attaque ad personam...» Et la preuve de cette ouverture totale, c'est bien l'invitation faite à une artiste suisse qui collabore depuis 2007 avec une artiste allemande. On peut peut-être considérer ces pavillons nationaux comme un héritage d'un autre temps, on peut aussi décider de s'intéresser à la façon dont ils choisissent de se présenter dans un contexte international.



Par exemple avec un accent très féminin pour cette édition à venir. Le fait du hasard ou du contexte #metoo?

Bien sûr que le contexte actuel a joué! Et plus encore si l'on considère les mauvaises statistiques de la Biennale de Venise, il était évident qu'il fallait montrer des femmes. Il faut savoir – et l'info vient de tomber – qu'il y aura 50% de représentation féminine dans l'exposition principale de cette Biennale 2019. Du côté de la Suisse, présente depuis 1920 à Venise, la première exposition en solo d'une femme dans son pavillon date de 2003! C'était la vidéaste et réalisatrice lausannoise Emmanuelle Antille. Mais on peut se consoler, il y a pire que nous: l'Autriche présentera sa toute première femme artiste cette année. L'œuvre de Pauline Boudry et Renate Lorenz est féministe, portant sur les questions d'identité sexuelle et sur les rapports de domination qui les encadrent. Il s'enrichit aussi de leurs connaissances et de leur immersion dans les milieux queer. De ce fait, leur travail de déconstruction de l'identité sert à ouvrir de nouveaux champs pour comprendre la différence et envisager d'autres manières d'être et d'agir. Si sa dimension est politique, il tire sa légitimité de sa portée esthétique.

La démonstration d'une Suisse de l'art qui détonne et se distancie de certains de ses politiques, fonceuse, audacieuse, ouverte...

La Suisse a toujours été tiraillée entre des valeurs conservatrices et sa volonté d'ouverture au monde.

Quand même, une Suisse qui va parler «queer» à la Biennale de Venise, on explose tous les clichés sur le repli!

On est loin de «Priscilla, folle du désert». Et puis Urs Lüthi avait déjà ouvert la voie en 2001 avec ses autoportraits androgynes. Dans cette situation d'antagonisme et de rejet que vivent la plupart des démocraties actuellement, il est important de rappeler le rôle d'ouverture sur l'autre qu'a l'art, particulièrement dans le cadre de l'exposition suisse la plus vue au monde. Chaque édition de la Biennale comptabilise 650'000 visiteurs et 400'000 d'entre eux passent par le pavillon suisse.



Un duo, une carrière internationale

Pauline Boudry, Renate Lorenz

Si leur rencontre date de la fin des années 90, la collaboration entre Pauline Boudry (1972) et Renate Lorenz (1963) débute en 2007. Les deux artistes – dont la Lausannoise qui était mercredi soir à la HEAD, à Genève, pour évoquer leurs films – imaginent leurs installations en incluant la donne du public-performeur.

À la fois dans le rôle du directeur et du chorégraphe dans leurs films, elles jouent aussi de la frontière entre ce qui se passe devant ou hors caméra, brisant ainsi sans cesse ce qui divise ou peut diviser. Dans «I Want», les deux artistes ont mis en scène la rencontre surréaliste de la romancière punk Kathy Acker avec le lanceur d'alerte Bradley Manning devenu Chelsea après un changement de sexe. Porté par le mouvement, leur travail nourrit des références de la culture Queer, les entraîne dans les espaces d'art du monde entier. De la Kunsthalle de Zurich au Centre culturel suisse de Paris, de Genève, d'Eindhoven, de Londres à Tokyo ou Los Angeles et New York.



Pauline Boudry/Renate Lorenz Will Represent Switzerland at the 2019 Venice Biennale

BY Alex Greenberger (<http://www.artnews.com/author/agreenberger/>) POSTED 06/11/18 9:29 AM

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The Berlin-based duo Pauline Boudry/Renate Lorenz will represent Switzerland at the 2019 Venice Biennale, which runs from May to November next year.



Pauline Boudry/Renate Lorenz.
BERNADETTE PAASSEN

Boudry/Lorenz's installations typically combine queer histories with an interest in aspects of filmmaking that often go unseen, among them crews, cameras, and sound technology.

For their installation *Toxic* (2012), which was given prime placement last year at the New Museum's exhibition "[Trigger: Gender as a Tool and a Weapon](http://www.artnews.com/2018/03/12/skin-exhibitions-around-new-york-explore-changing-notions-human-body/)" (<http://www.artnews.com/2018/03/12/skin-exhibitions-around-new-york-explore-changing-notions-human-body/>), the artists had a punk talk directly to the camera about how medicine alters trans bodies, then had a drag queen reenact a Jean Genet monologue about hijacking a film set. Other recent works have pondered the role that silence plays in both art and politics and the connection between image-making and surveillance.

Charlotte Laubard, the cofounder of the Société Suisse des Nouveaux Commanditaires, has been tapped to curate the Boudry/Lorenz Swiss Pavilion. In a statement, Laubard said the artists "question the norms that govern our representations and our life in society. What lends their work such force is that it moves beyond mere criticism or deconstruction.



Their installations, films and performances are conceived as dispositifs capable of inventing other ways of being in the world, ones no longer split by categories of identity and binarisms.”

Past artists to represent Switzerland at the Venice Biennale include Carol Bove and Hubbard/Birchler (2017), Pamela Rosenkranz (2015), Valentin Carron (2013), and Thomas Hirschhorn (2011).

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Queer, freak et drag : l'art du présent a enfin son livre

Avec “Art Queer. Une théorie freak” (éd. B42), l'artiste et chercheuse Renate Lorenz a écrit le livre qu'attendaient les âmes indisciplinées, désirantes et post-genres. Une traversée de la performance par ses marges flamboyantes et une étape marquante vers la réécriture des récits autorisés de l'art.

La forteresse n'est pas seulement occupée par d'illégitimes despotes, ses murs eux-mêmes sont mal bâtis. Ce géant aux pieds d'argile, c'est l'histoire de l'art. Trop longtemps habitée par une lignée de despotes nommée Mâle Hétérosexuel Blanc, les assauts extérieurs commencent à porter ses fruits. Progressivement, le récit s'ouvre à ses marges et se découvre constellé d'omissions. Seulement, réécrire en raccommmodant les trous, en rajoutant comme autant de notes de bas de page les apports de telle région géographique ou de telle minorité sexuelle ou raciale, ne suffit pas : le problème est systémique. Pour y remédier, il importe non seulement de faire de ces voies de traverse autant de récits autorisés mais également de changer la méthode d'écriture de l'histoire tout court – seule option pour ne pas reconduire ailleurs le sectarisme excluant.

Hériter pour mieux déconstruire

Depuis les années 1970, les pays anglo-saxons s'y attèlent. En 1971 déjà, l'historienne de l'art Linda Nochlin avançait comme l'une des premières que la critique devait se faire méthode. Pionnière d'une lecture féministe, son brûlot "*Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists ?*" (Pourquoi n'y a-t-il pas eu de grandes artistes femmes ?) se concluait sur la note suivante : "*en tirant parti de leur position d'exclues de la grandeur et d'outsiders à l'idéologie dominante, les femmes sont en mesure de révéler les faiblesses institutionnelles et intellectuelles en général*".



Ainsi, l'apport de Linda Nochlin ne se limite pas à la question des artistes femmes. En mobilisant une approche sociale de l'histoire de l'art, en déboulonnant le mythe de l'individu inspiré pour replacer l'œuvre dans une écologie conditionnée par les institutions de formation et de monstration, la critique américaine fournissait une méthode potentiellement applicable à n'importe quel sujet.

Des héritier.e.s de Linda Nochlin, il y en a. Des héritier.e.s dont les ouvrages sont rédigés ou traduits en français, déjà nettement moins. Ceux qui le sont deviennent en revanche immédiatement des classiques, tant l'entreprise de réécriture correspond à une urgence ressentie par tous. Au printemps dernier, Elisabeth Lebovici ouvrait une brèche dans le champ de la critique francophone avec *Ce que le sida m'a fait*. Compilant des monographies, des entretiens et des essais des années 1980-90, l'ancienne journaliste à Libération désormais passée au format blog, livrait le récit à la première personne des rapports entre art et activisme. Outre un témoignage historique documenté et surtout incarné de la scène d'alors s'y dessinait également un véritable discours de la méthode. Pourquoi ? Parce qu'en délaissant le dogme de l'objectivité froide comme un cadavre au profit de l'imbrication entre le personnel et le politique émergeaient des histoires palpitantes de vie – et donc potentiellement réactualisable au sein de chacun.

Un an après, une nouvelle pierre à l'édifice vient d'être apportée avec la traduction chez B42 d'*Art Queer. Une théorie freak* de Renate Lorenz, initialement paru en 2012. Alors que le champ académique s'ouvre de plus en plus à la prise en compte des affects – en témoigne notamment le "*structuralisme des passions*" entrepris par Frédéric Lordon dans le champ de la sociologie – le domaine du sensible par excellence y restait étranger. Pour dépasser ce refoulement du sensible sur lequel s'est construit l'esthétique et la théorie de l'art afin de gagner ses lettres de noblesse dites scientifiques, il fallait sans doute que la contre-offensive vienne du côté des exclus. Chez l'allemande Renate Lorenz, la pensée est inextricablement liée à la pratique et l'écriture brouillée le brouhaha de la conversation à plusieurs voix. Chercheuse à l'Académie des Beaux-Arts de Vienne, elle est également artiste au sein du duo Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz.

Queer, freak, drag : arsenal de désidentification

Son sujet ne sera alors pas directement un groupe (les femmes), ni une période (les années 1980-90). A première vue pourtant, on pourrait s'y tromper. Avec ce



"queer" inaugural qui éclate en toutes lettres depuis la couverture, difficile de ne chasser les associations avec ce qui à force est devenu un genre en soi. Dans l'avant-propos, Isabelle Alfonsi, moitié de la galerie Marcelle Alix qui représente Renate Lorenz, explicite d'emblée : *"la présente publication définit finalement l'art queer – que certain.e.s souhaitent transformer en mouvement artistique ou en catégorie identitaire soluble dans le marché – comme un vade-medum qui permet la formation de communautés freak et rappelle l'isolat illusoire de l'artiste unique, du génie"*. Plutôt que de désigner un groupe identitaire ou une mouvance formelle, le terme fait signe vers un coefficient de différence – vers un écart essentiel que l'on rencontrera au fil du livre sous le nom de désidentification. Par conséquent, le queer apparaît avant tout comme une stratégie oblique permettant de court-circuiter les normes en vigueur - en commençant certes par les normes hétéronormatives, mais sans cependant s'y restreindre. Pour parvenir à cette opération que l'auteur nomme *"contagion"*, deux autres concepts clés sont également mobilisés.



l'auteur, est une "*fiction utile*" renvoyant à "*des corps possibles*" auxquels ne préexiste aucun original.

Pour un anachronisme affectif

Appliqué au champ de la théorie et de la pratique artistique, le drag se voit requalifié sous la plume de Renate Lorenz en drag "radical", "transtemporel" et "abstrait". Pour déborder l'image de l'homme portant des habits de femme et en élargir le champ à une épistémologie de combat, le drag se met à désigner une forme d'appréhension du monde, des images et des êtres qui le peuplent comme en mouvement et en reconfiguration perpétuelle. Dire que ce ne sont plus seulement les corps qui se travestissent mais également l'histoire, les œuvres d'art et les objets ouvre alors à une lecture de l'histoire de l'art – et de l'histoire tout court – qui n'est ni radicalement linéaire, ni sèchement objective. Car l'un des principaux points avancés par *Queer Art* est bien l'idée de cette disruption de la chronologie linéaire. Abstraire le drag, c'est se rendre compte que la conception du temps lui-même, et non seulement des identités, est idéologique. Penser l'histoire selon la flèche du progrès, c'est la soumettre à l'idée reproductive et donc hétéronormative du modèle familial et des générations ; qui à son tour valide le récit politique national garantissant à chacun de ses sujets un avenir sûr au moyen d'assurances et de mesures biopolitiques.

Alternative à la conception historique et biographique du temps, le "*drag transtemporel*" ou encore l' "*archéologie queer*" insiste sur le droit à l'anachronisme. C'est-à-dire la possibilité pour chacun de s'identifier avec les incarnations passées, actualisées au sein de la construction subjective ; élisant pour costume non pas les attributs de telle ou telle construction identitaire ou genrée mais ceux de telle ou telle période ou personnage historique. L'histoire : un dressing dans lequel piocher librement, révélant sous les habits ou le rideau de scène les processus idéologique de construction des corps et des êtres. Cette traversée subjective de l'histoire de l'art qui fait écho à celle que mène depuis 2007 le duo d'artistes Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz. A l'honneur avec deux expositions solo à Paris cet hiver, à la galerie Marcelle Alix et au Centre Culturel Suisse, leurs performance filmées revisitent des matériaux, des pratique ou des figures - le plus souvent oubliés ou délibérément mis à l'écart - du passé. A la traversée de temporalités différentes s'adjoint la création de liens entre des époques



Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz, "N.O. Body", 2008. Courtesy Ellen de Bruijne Projects, Amsterdam and Marcelle Alix, Paris

Le "freak", dont la pratique d'exposer et de désigner des individus que considérés comme déviants apparaît au même moment que la ségrégation raciale aux Etats-Unis, fait référence à *"ces histoires violentes d'exclusion, d'exposition, de scrutation et de différenciation"*. En brandissant cette figure comme arme choisie, il s'agit de l'opposer au rouleau compresseur de la normalisation et de revendiquer la différence contre la tentative de *"considérer les histoires d'exclusion et de violence comme appartenant au passé en les recouvrant avec des images d'auto-émancipation joyeuse ou avec des discours d'intégration, de tolérance et de gay pride"*. Le "drag" ensuite qui, en tant que *"parodie de genre"*, révèle l'imitation au cœur des dynamiques identitaires autant que leur possible subversion. Outre le travestissement initial, le drag rend visible des assemblages, le nouage de signes, vestimentaires ou gestuels, qui constitue les catégories de genre. Le drag, écrit alors



et contextes que rien ne prédestinait à se rencontrer, sinon la relecture par telle ou telle subjectivité.



Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz, "No Future / No Past", 2011. Courtesy Ellen de Bruijne Projects, Amsterdam and Marcelle Alix, Paris

Autour de la figure de Salomé se rencontrent dans leur film *Salomania* (2009) les performeurs Wu Tsang et Yvonne Rainer, c'est-à-dire un jeune performeur et vidéaste emblème de la génération post-genre et post-médium et l'une des pionnières de la danse moderne américaine qui participa à l'aventure du collectif du Judson Dance Theater. Plus récemment, *Improvisation Télépathique* (2017) au Centre Culturel Suisse, une partition de 1974 de la compositrice minimaliste Pauline Oliveros était interprétée par des humains et des non-humains, des mouvements, des discours, des gestes, de la musique et des effets de lumière. Le même procédé vaut pour *Art Queer*, dont toute la force est de concilier une élaboration théorique méticuleuse à une méthodologie procédant par tableaux successifs. Une fois le cadre posé en introduction, les chapitres juxtaposent les exemples empruntés à l'histoire de l'art récente. Outre les pièces du duo, on y croise onze autres artistes dont Zoe Leonard, actuellement à l'honneur au Whitney Museum, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Henrik Olesen ou encore Jack Smith.



Par la collaboration avec des amis, articuler le désir contemporain

Cette lecture oblique et serpentine de l'histoire, Renate Lorenz la qualifie de "*collaboration avec des amis*". Les amis, ce sont les documents d'archives et les personnages fictionnels ou réels du passés, à qui est désormais attribuée une capacité d'agir sur le présent. Peuplé d'âmes sœurs, le passé devient pour le performeur de la théorie queer un vaste dressing où puiser les costumes et artifices d'un drag indiscipliné et désirant. Transcendant les limites du corps individuel autant que le cours irréversible du temps.



Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz

MARCELLE ALIX

In the recent exhibition “Silent,” Berlin-based duo Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz used a self-described practice of “queer archaeology” to out archetypes of modern art. Attaching themes of self-censorship (closeting) and silent protest to monochrome painting, geometric sculpture, and—most specifically—John Cage’s resounding silences, the artists debunked canonical heteronormative interpretations. Whereas Boudry and Lorenz have previously relied heavily on archival documents to expose systemic homophobia (which has resulted in some very dense, didactic works), the pieces presented here were refreshingly object-oriented.

Black walls created a theatrical, anti-white-cube setting for four curtain-like rectangles of synthetic hair installed in the gallery’s main space. Boudry and Lorenz’s “Wig Pieces,” 2017, are what Donald Judd described in 1965 as “specific objects,” neither painting nor sculpture. The hairy material, however, with its references to drag, femininity, and corporeality, confounds Minimalism’s macho bravado and austerity. *Wig Piece (Entangled Phenomena III)* reads as a silken Frank Stella or Ad Reinhardt black painting, the juxtaposed brunette and raven locks of *Wig Piece (Entangled Phenomena II)* echo Mark Rothko’s subtle chromatic shifts, and the thin blonde shock that vertically bisects *Wig Piece (Mimicry)* is a hirsute Barnett Newman zip.

Displayed on the floor amid the “Wig Pieces,” a low circular white platform, recalling Robert Morris’s pedestal-free and generally spare geometric sculptures, is a prop from Boudry and Lorenz’s 2016 film *Silent* (on view in the gallery’s basement). Its inclusion in the show

REVIEWS

Pauline Boudry and
Renato Lorenz, *Silent*,
2016. HD video, color,
sound, 7 minutes.



begged a comparison with Felix Gonzalez-Torres's *Untitled (Go-Go Dancing Platform)*, 1991, which transformed a quintessential Minimalist form—a low painted box—into a stage for a male dancer in silver hot pants. Subtler in their queering, Boudry and Lorenz present an endlessly spinning empty platform as a memorial to unheard voices and unaddressed issues.

In the seven-minute *Silent*, a spokesperson finally does take the stage. Sporting a silver dress and platinum tresses, Aérea Negrot, a Berlin-based singer, stands on an unseen rotating podium (the one we saw upstairs) in Oranienplatz, a tree-lined square in Berlin's Kreuzberg district that, notably, was home to a pro-refugee encampment from 2012 to 2014. In this politically charged setting, in front of a bouquet of microphones, Negrot appears poised to give an official statement. She looks directly at the camera, drags on a cigarette, clears her throat, sips water, and remains silent for five minutes. Only once she moves away from the microphones does her internal monologue pour out—in the form of a melancholic pop song. Addressing an unspecified “president,” Negrot croons provocative lines, such as “I need makeup, underwear and hormones!” and “Is a lie more feminine than allies?” Cage famously stated, “I have nothing to say/and I am saying it.” Inspired by this self-imposed silence, Boudry and Lorenz’s works speak volumes about prejudice and oppression.

—Mara Hoberman



Une exposition dont vous êtes le-la héroïne

Par Claire Moulène

Dans *Stranger Things*, la série nostalgique des années 80, conçue par les Frères Duffer, une mère, incarnée à l'écran par Winona Ryder, entre en contact avec son fils disparu par l'intermédiaire d'un flux électrique. Transformant son pavillon de banlieue en sapin de Noël, elle fait clignoter à plein régime guirlandes lumineuses, lustres et lampes de chevet pour communiquer avec le « monde à l'envers », l'*Upside down* dans lequel est pris au piège son garçon de onze ans. Onze ans, c'est aussi l'âge et le surnom (*Eleven*) de l'héroïne au crâne rasé douée de pouvoirs télékinésiques de ce thriller teenage inspirée par *E.T.*, *Rencontre du Troisième Type* ou les *Goonies*.

Si l'on vous parle aujourd'hui de cette série geek et parodiquement vintage, c'est qu'au-delà d'un certain cousinage esthétique pop punk, il est aussi question dans la dernière exposition de Pauline Boudry et Renate Lorenz, au Centre Culturel Suisse à Paris, de déplacer des objets par la puissance de l'esprit.

D'abord, l'exposition toute entière semble régie par une logique extérieure. Prête à vous accueillir, vous, à l'heure dite – mieux, elle n'attendait que vous ! – autant qu'elle paraît réagir à des ordres venus d'ailleurs. Selon le moment auquel vous arriverez, vous tomberez ainsi nez à nez avec la retransmission à grande échelle d'une performance plus vraie que nature ; ou vous vous retrouverez quelques secondes dans le noir complet avant qu'une rangée de *spotlights* et un *dancefloor* lumineux installé au centre de la salle d'exposition ne commencent à s'émanciper et à produire leur propre chorégraphie.

D'emblée, le visiteur est prévenu par une pancarte à l'écriture inclusive située à l'entrée de cette exposition dont vous êtes le-s héros-ine-s : « cher-ère-s visiteur-euse-s, dès votre entrée dans l'exposition vous faites partie d'une partition (...) veuillez « envoyer » vos actions à l'un-e ou plusieurs des performeur-euse-s humain-e-s et non-humain-e-s autour de vous ». Ainsi averti, le doute ne vous lâche plus. Ce faisceau lumineux qui scanne la salle et pointe soudainement votre voisine de gauche, est-ce vous qui l'avez espéré ? Ce cube blanc qui apparaît à l'écran et traverse comme par magie la scène, est-ce vous qui l'avez projeté ? Cette jeune femme en combinaison rouge qui surle à plat ventre, y-êtes vous pour quelque chose ? Le manifeste disposé à l'entrée prévenait pourtant avec prudence – et un certain humour – de toute erreur d'aiguillage : « quoi qu'il en soit les acteur-trice-s humain-e-s et non humain-e-s pourraient ne pas obéir, ne pas faire ce qu'on leur demande ou ils-elles pourraient le faire mais pas de la façon attendue ».



Cette partition aléatoire, on la doit, à l'origine, à Pauline Oliveros, pionnière de la musique minimaliste et électronique qui inventa la pratique du *Deep Listening* et dont le duo suisse rejoue ici, avec quelques adaptations, la *Télépathic Improvisation* (Improvisation Télépathique), une pièce de 1974. Deux raisons justifient cet emprunt. Le désir, d'une part, pour ces deux artistes connues pour leurs recherches sur une histoire parallèle et minoritaire de réhabiliter une artiste femme (décédée en 2016) moins connue que ses pairs masculins, Philip Glass ou Steve Reich, avec qui elle cofonda pourtant le San Francisco Tape Music Center, phare de la musique électro-américaine dans les années 60. Un intérêt, d'autre part, pour la façon qu'a Pauline Oliveros de « briser les limites entre les interprètes et le public en demandant aux auditeurs et auditrices de lancer des messages télépathiques aux musicien-ne-s ». « Elle a écrit dans la partition que le public peut se trouver à des milliers de kilomètres ou à des années lumière » précisent, amusées Pauline Boudry et Renate Lorenz.

Dans l'un de leurs films précédents, *To Valérie Solanas and Marilyn Monroe in Recognition of their Desperation*, elles avaient déjà rendu hommage à Oliveros et à sa pièce éponyme qui consistait à demander à des musiciens de maintenir cinq tonalités sur un temps long afin d'atteindre une forme d'équité entre les instruments et leurs interprètes, ici c'est donc un *reenactment* que propose le tandem suisse en convoquant pour la performance filmée retransmise toutes les vingt minutes, quatre performeur-euse-s *queer* ou transgenre, une série d'objets de scène, d'hologrammes SM (à l'image de cette paire de menottes qu'on a l'impression de voir flotter dans les airs), de canons à fumée et de spots lumineux qui semblent interagir avec les spectateurs.

À l'écran, on retrouve Ginger Brooks Takahashi et Werner Hirsch, deux complices de longue date. Mais aussi la performeuse Marwa Arsanios ou l'artiste MPA qui conclut la performance avec la lecture d'un texte d'Ulrike Meinhof écrit en 1968 (deux ans avant que cette dernière ne rejoigne la Fraction Armée Rouge) dans lequel elle différencie protestation et résistance : « La protestation, c'est quand je dis que ceci ou cela ne me convient pas. La résistance, c'est quand je fais en sorte que ce qui ne me convient pas ne se produise plus ». Un texte toujours d'actualité, précisent Boudry et Lorenz qui reviennent d'une résidence aux États-Unis.

L'invitation faite à ces artistes à l'identité forte ne doit rien au hasard, elle est « une manière de défier notre pouvoir en mettant au premier plan le pouvoir individuel de chacun-e de ces performeur-se-s à l'œuvre » confie le duo. Car ce qui intéresse Pauline Boudry et Renate Lorenz c'est bien encore et toujours cette opération de déhiérarchisation, de décloisonnement de l'identité, du genre et même des espèces. Et ce jusqu'à la déconstruction, c'est le cas ici, de la catégorisation entre entités humaines et non humaines, objets animés ou inanimés.

Les autres, tous les autres.

Disons-le, cette *Improvisation Télépathique* proposée au Centre Culturel Suisse a d'abord de quoi surprendre pour qui connaît un peu le travail mené par Boudry et Lorenz, depuis 2007, autour de personnages hors normes, tenus dans l'angle mort du récit officiel. Que vient alors faire cette histoire de télépathie, et d'empathie avec des objets, dans l'archéologie *queer* que le duo poursuit avec beaucoup de rigueur dans ses performances filmées ?

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« Ce qui nous semble important c'est non seulement qu'un objet va peut-être bouger, mais aussi qu'il va peut-être nous faire bouger. Il est intéressant de concevoir le pouvoir non pas uniquement comme une faculté humaine mais comme quelque chose que les humains ont en commun avec les objets. Le respect vis à vis de l'altérité englobe le respect vis à vis du non-humain et suppose que l'on soit curieux de ce qui pourrait arriver dans les relations si les humains ne les maîtrisent pas, ne les catégorisent pas, ne les pré-conçoivent pas » justifient Boudry et Lorenz.

Ce faisant, le duo lorgne du côté d'un courant qui a fait son apparition il y a quelques années dans le champ de l'art et des *cultural studies* : le technoanimisme. Un oxymore qui allie deux notions à priori antinomiques ou du moins anachroniques : la technologie d'un côté, l'animisme de l'autre, une notion prémoderne qui « par-delà la nature et la culture » (pour reprendre les termes du livre éponyme de l'anthropologue Philippe Descola) croit à la puissance vitale des entités humaines et non-humaines, végétaux et minéraux compris. Ce rapprochement est évidemment lié au développement de l'intelligence artificielle, l'homme n'étant plus le seul sujet pensant ou doué d'affects puisque les objets qui l'entourent participent eux aussi d'un environnement intelligent.

Dans le catalogue de l'exposition *Co-Workers, le réseau comme artiste* organisée à l'automne 2015 au Musée d'art moderne de la ville de Paris avec le concours du collectif new-yorkais DIS Magazine sur des questions similaires, la commissaire de l'exposition faisait part de cette prédiction de l'économiste Jeremy Rifkin : « La réunion de l'Internet des communications avec l'Internet de l'énergie et l'Internet de la logistique en une infrastructure intelligente du XXI^e siècle – l'«Internet des objets» [Internet of things, ou IoT, en anglais] – est en train de déclencher une troisième révolution industrielle [...]. L'Internet des objets connectera tout et tout le monde au sein d'un réseau global intégré. Les hommes, les machines, les ressources naturelles, les chaînes de production, les réseaux de logistique, les modes de consommation, les flux de recyclage et, virtuellement, chaque autre aspect de la vie économique et sociale seront reliés à la plateforme IoT par des capteurs qui enverront en continu des mégadonnées à chaque nœud du réseau. »

Techno-animisme et haunting art

Dans le champ de l'art, l'artiste anglais Mark Leckey (lauréat du Turner Prize en 2008) a fait du techno-animisme l'un de ses terrains d'investigation favori. « On entend souvent que la technologie s'apparente à quelque chose de froid et distant, totalement déshumanisé. C'est le plus grand des mensonges ». À plusieurs reprises dans son travail, Leckey a tenté d'entrer en contact avec les objets, de les faire parler ou de ressentir une sorte d'empathie à leur égard. C'était le cas d'un imposant frigo Samsung noir, protagoniste de l'installation sonore *GreenScreenRefrigeratorAction* (2010) dont les enceintes retransmettent le pathétique monologue intérieur. Dans l'entretien qu'il donna à la revue *Mousse* en 2013 avec trois autres artistes, Mark Leckey expliquait que l'idée de travailler sur le techno-animisme lui avait été inspirée par un essai du critique et essayiste californien, Erik Davis. Dans *Techgnosis*, paru en 2015, ce cybergourou venu de la critique rock établissait un rapprochement inattendu entre

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le monde numérique et le monde spirituel, estimant que le langage ésotérique informait largement les outils et objets des technologies actuelles.

« Plus notre environnement est calculé, plus il nous ramène à notre passé primitif et nous replonge dans une vision animiste du monde où les rochers, les lions et les hommes étaient pareillement dotés d'une âme. Les objets deviennent ainsi plus réactifs, les choses autrefois considérées comme muettes aujourd'hui nous interpellent et cette interaction universelle – ce réseau – crée un paysage enchanté. La magie est littéralement dans l'air », résumait dans *Mouesse* l'artiste anglais.

Ce faisant, on n'est pas loin de l'idée d'une « *haunted technology* », pour reprendre le néologisme derridien d'hantologie. Ni, plus en amont, du « parti pris des choses » tel que codifié par le poète Francis Ponge à qui Derrida consacra d'ailleurs une conférence (« signéponge » en 1975 à Cerisy ainsi qu'un livre d'entretien « Déplier Ponge »). Au frigo Samsung de Mark Leckey, répondent par exemple les magnifiques pages de Francis Ponge sur la désuète lessiveuse dans *Pièces* « emplies d'un amas de tissus ignobles » et dont « l'émotion intérieure, la bouillante indignation qu'elle en ressent, canalisée vers la partie supérieure de son être retombe en plus sur cet amas de tissus ignoble qui lui soulève le cœur ».

Plus largement, il s'agit chez une nouvelle génération d'artistes sensibilisés aux affres de l'anthropocène et la phase irréversible dans laquelle nous nous sommes précipités (écologiquement parlant) d'élargir le spectre du vivant aux objets connectés. Et de considérer que nous ne sommes plus les seuls êtres sensibles mais que les objets ou les machines participent ou participeront bientôt, elles aussi, à la construction d'un monde commun. Dans cette perspective transhumaniste, une forme de salut effrayante pour les uns, réjouissantes pour les autres, il faut entendre l'appel du philosophe et commissaire d'exposition Paul B. Preciado : « n'importe quelle machine que nous manipulons quotidiennement possède une capacité 10 000 fois supérieure à l'intelligence humaine individuelle : elle compile, gère et analyse les données. Nous avons séquencé notre propre ADN. Nous pouvons intervenir dans la structure génétique de l'être vivant (...) Nous avons laissé libre court aux machines, et pendant ce temps, nous voulons que les technologies de production, de subjectivité et de gouvernement demeurent inamovibles. La gravité du moment historique que nous vivons pourrait se comparer, sur le plan évolutif, à la période durant laquelle, étant encore seulement des animaux, nous inventions le langage comme technologie sociale.

Comme Paul B. Preciado, dont elles suivent sans doute avec intérêt la récente mutation sexuelle et identitaire – que ce dernier analyse périodiquement dans les colonnes de *Libération* –, Pauline Boudry et Renate Lorenz nous interpellent dans cette exposition sur une nécessaire redéfinition des lignes de partage et la dissolution des formes de pouvoir jusque-là exclusivement assignées à l'espèce humaine et, au sein de celle-ci, le plus souvent, au genre dominant. Et c'est finalement avec un humour et un sens de la dérision très efficaces, autorisés par ce son et lumière aux ressorts magiques, où les accessoires de scène s'encanaillent et jouent les vedettes autant que les performeur-ses, qu'elles font bouger les lignes – et pas seulement les objets.

Improvisation télépathique, jusqu'au 23 mars au Centre culturel suisse de Paris

<https://www.boudry-lorenz.de/>

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Claire Moulène

JOURNALISTE , CURATRICE AU PALAIS DE
TOKYO ET RÉDACTRICE EN CHEF DE LA
REVUE "INITIALES" (ENSBA LYON)



Désidentification télépathique : Pauline Boudry & Renate Lorenz au Centre culturel suisse, Paris



La contrepartie lesbienne de la musique disco gay des années 1970, [ai-je lu quelque part](#), pourrait bien-être cette expérience sonore immersive, que Pauline Oliveros a définie comme "deep listening". Même si, musicalement, les deux expériences de la réverbération du son n'ont rien à voir l'une avec l'autre, il faut se rendre à l'évidence : ces deux usages de la musique électronique expérimentent avec la durée et l'endurance extrêmes. Toutes deux -la disco, la "deep listening"-engagent un certain type de socialisation, voire même de socialisation affective et collective, et demandent de "faire affaire" avec des personnes du même sexe.

Cette hypothèse, semble-t-il, me permet de mieux comprendre l'enjeu de la pièce de Pauline Oliveros intitulée *Improvisation Télépathique*, proposée au sein des *Improvisations Soniques* de

Le Beau Vice

24.02.2018

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1974. La pièce demande aux instrumentistes de s'accorder affectivement avec leur "audience"- un terme bien plus révélateur en anglais que le français "public". Voici de quoi il s'agit: "Pendant quelques minutes, chaque musicien-ne se tient successivement assis-e ou debout devant le public. Il est demandé au public d'observer le.a musicien-ne avec attention et d'essayer d'imaginer le son de son instrument. Le public doit fermer les yeux et essayer de visualiser le.a musicien-ne, et puis de lui envoyer un son en l'entendant mentalement. Le.a musicien-ne attend jusqu'à ce qu'il ou elle reçoive l'impression mentale d'un son, ensuite il ou elle produit le son. Les membres du public pour qui l'écoute du son fait mouche lèvent le doigt afin d'en informer le.a musicien-ne."



Vues du film *Telepathic Improvisation, Improvisation télépathique*, 2017





Marwa Arsanios, Werner Hirsch, MPA, Ginger Brooks Takahashi

Ce n'est pas pour rien, sans doute, que Pauline Boudry & Renate Lorenz, réactivant à leur façon l'improvisation de Pauline Oliveros, ont projeté dans l'espace d'exposition quelques indications scéniques qui ne sont pas sans rapport avec "l'autre scène" queer ; elles ont fait construire au Centre Cult. Suisse un dance-floor en damier disco, sur lequel s'assoit ou se tient debout, durant quelques minutes, leur public. A un moment précis, des projecteurs commencent à bouger et à flasher l'espace de façon inquiétante, sinon inquiète. L'écran, et les vingt minutes de video, prennent ensuite le relais. Puis le damier se rallume, etc. De sorte que les "instruments" de l'exposition du CCS outrepassent les objets à l'écran, pour y inclure le mobilier, l'éclairage, le dispositif scénique de la salle d'exposition. Celle-ci immerge peu à peu la spectatrice ou le spectateur, qui a perdu son pouvoir de décision, c'est à dire son "avance" sur les objets et le dispositif l'entourant, ainsi que sur



l'écran.

Emission, réception, message, code...Le vocabulaire de la communication est ainsi mis à mal par l'installation, plongée dans sa boîte sombre et qui réactualise un sentiment télépathique flottant en le mettant à l'heure d'internet.

Il s'est opéré une translation. Entre la proposition de 1974 et celle de 2017-2018, le rapport entre le public et les instrumentistes s'est transformé. La notion de performance aussi, insistant désormais beaucoup plus sur son côté citationnel et répétitif. Il se pourrait ainsi que celle des quatre artistes apparaissant à l'écran soit mue par de vieux messages ayant réintégré l'atmosphère après avoir été (télé)transportés dans un temps et un espace étirés et faméliques ; d'où leur jeu pâle, absent, alors que les objets apparaissent presque plus vigoureux, des fumigènes et des lumières colorées à la paire de menottes géantes - paraît-il une citation de *Cruising*, le film de Friedkin, dont l'action se passe d'ailleurs aussi largement dans une discothèque gay- , en passant par des socles animés comme les sculptures de Robert Breer. Les performeuses sont loin de les contrôler, et la caméra sort même de sa réserve pour devenir, durant un petit moment, subjective et filmer du point de vue d'un socle mouvant et du son qu'il communique. Message d'Ulrike Meinhof, de 1968, réverbéré par MPA: "La protestation, c'est quand je dis que je n'aime pas ça. La résistance, c'est quand j'en finis avec ce que je n'aime pas."



MPA cite Ulrike

La citation et plus largement l'installation du Centre Culturel Suisse résonne étrangement avec le contexte de 2018 et son cinquantenaire qui s'y installe déjà, avec ses "experts" pétaradant sur leurs starting blocks, dans un raccourci temporel ("Mai" et géographique ("Paris) qui permet d'oublier "l'événement politique de masse", sa revendication à l'égalité et le tiers-mondisme, où on peut voir aussi une expérience de désidentification et d'ouverture à l'altérité. (c'est l'analyse de Kristin Ross, notamment). C'est plutôt à cette subjectivité politique que se réfère l'installation de Pauline Boudry & Renate Lorenz, sans jamais en régir l'interprétation



Pauline Boudry & Renate Lorenz, l'imaginaire sans barrière

Par Elisabeth Franck-Dumas — 11 février 2018 à 17:56

A Paris, le duo présente une installation et une performance filmée qui évoluent en fonction des pensées du public.



«Improvisation télépathique», au Centre culturel suisse. Photo Pauline Boudry-Renate Lorenz

Il y a ce bref moment de panique, à l'entrée, en bas de l'escalier qui mène à l'expo du duo d'artistes Pauline Boudry & Renate Lorenz au Centre culturel suisse à Paris (III^e). Car y est punaisée une affichette annonçant : *«Dès votre entrée dans l'exposition, vous ferez partie d'une partition. Basée sur un travail de Pauline Oliveros de 1974, cette partition vous demande de prendre part à une "improvisation télépathique".»* Il nous est demandé de collaborer, d'envoyer en pensée des souhaits d'actions que les *«performeur.euse.s humain.aine.s. et non humain.ne.s»* prendront en charge. Lectrice, lecteur, si ce n'est pas ton truc de faire partie de l'oeuvre, si comme nous tu as du mal à te passer *«d'un mur qui nous protège d'un contact avec les autres»*, peut-être connaîtras-tu alors cette sueur froide en gravissant les marches. Les artistes ont annoncé la couleur, dans l'expo il n'y a pas de mur de séparation - ni entre soi et les autres, ni entre soi et l'oeuvre. Quel n'est pas notre soulagement, alors, de nous rendre compte qu'il ne va pas falloir parler à autrui ! Et que le dispositif consiste en une performance filmée d'un côté, et de l'autre, l'installation *Stage Piece*, assemblage d'objets - plateforme lumineuse, barre de spots... - qui vont composer un ballet en s'allumant et s'éteignant, comme s'ils étaient mus par une forme de vie intelligente. Peut-être même par notre propre pensée ? Et ce soulagement qu'on connaît, ce sentiment de reconnaissance quasi fraternelle envers ce faisceau de lumière qui semble nous chercher, c'est peut-être précisément le coeur de l'expo. Le duo berlinois s'est consacré à la relecture de l'histoire de l'art à ses marges, se lançant

Libération

02.2018

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dans des «*collaborations en partie fictives et traversant les époques*». Cette collaboration-ci s'étend jusqu'aux règnes entre eux.

A l'écran, une paire de menottes SM ressemble à deux yeux qui nous fixent, et un corps droit sur son cube paraît raide comme un cadavre, ou un mannequin, peut-être en est-ce un texte d'Ulrike Meinhof, appel à la résistance où l'on entend par exemple ceci : «Protester, c'est dire que je n'aime pas ça. Résister, c'est mettre fin à ça.» Le fait qu'il soit dit avec un accent américain fait résonner, plus qu'un message télépathique, notre inconscient collectif.

Elisabeth Franck-Dumas



Actualité des transferts

Comment réinvestir le politique alors que les pratiques collectives se sont effondrées ? **SILENT** et **KIRA VS CARRIE** tentent une réponse en déconstruisant les récits et les identifications établies.

N'EST PAS KATHARINE

HAMNETT QUI VEUT. Propulsée au rang de vapoteur de la mode dans les années 1980, on lui doit l'un des designs les plus copiés de la décennie : le T-shirt à slogan. Dans la mode comme dans l'art, le slogan fait son grand retour. De dans le *Autisme* qui nous préoccupe, l'art contemporain, le retour du slogan est à prendre avec des pincettes.

Si l'on se félicite bien évidemment du retour d'une conscience militante que l'on croyait dissoute dans le repli sur la sphère de l'intime dans les années 1990, puis dans l'horizon métropolitain des années 2000, l'époque n'en a pas moins changé. Dans le contexte de l'effondrement des logiques de groupe et de classe, le slogan n'est plus de mise : brandir une pancarte pour tous loupe les enjeux identitaires actuels. Comment alors accorder

l'échelon sujet à la portée collective d'une cause plus grande que soi ?

Deux expositions organisées simultanément à Paris se chargent d'esquisser un élément de réponse : toutes deux traitent de la réappropriation par le corps et la performance de l'histoire jusqu'alors considérée comme stable. À la galerie Marcelle Alix, le duo Pauline Boudry et Renate Lorenz oppose le silence à la clameur. *Silent*, le titre de leur installation, est construit autour de l'apparition d'un performeur en drag.

À Berlin, sur une place déserte et en plein jour, l'apparition

Comment accorder l'échelon sujet à la portée collective d'une cause plus grande que soi ?

en robe à sequins argentés et maquillage de scène s'approche d'une forêt de miroirs s'attendant que leur activation. Pendant un laps de temps interminable, rien ne se produit hormis la respiration du performeur qui ne performe pas, et les légers bruissements de la vie quotidienne alentour.

Définissant leur recherche comme une "archéologie queer", les deux artistes s'appuient sur une lecture peu connue de l'apparition du silence dans l'œuvre de John Cage. Pour l'historien de l'art Jonathan D. Katz, le fameux 4'33" correspondrait au début de la relation de l'artiste avec Merce Cunningham. Celui-ci aurait alors voulu rompre avec l'expressivité à outrance des peintres expressionnistes abstraits, le plus souvent mâles, blancs – et hétérosexuels. Le silence répond alors à l'effacement des moments queer de l'histoire de l'art.

Du l'autre côté du fleuve, la galerie Air de Paris présente deux films de la série *Body Double* de Brian De Palma, emmenée en 1995 et où le même comédien incarne tous les personnages à la fois acteur et actrice, les silhouettes se diffractent, se mêlent et se superposent. Sur le même écran, deux films s'enchaînent : *Body Double 32* et *Body Double 33*, deux personnages féminins, Carrie du *Carrie au bal du diable* de Brian De Palma et Kim du *Xaviera de Robert Gessner*, l'une angélique, l'autre maléfique. Déliant les aménas et les liens d'identification, l'écran devient, par la soustraction ou par la superposition, un support de projection vierge. Le T-shirt blanc sans le slogan. Ingrid Luquet-Godé

Silent de Pauline Boudry et Renate Lorenz, jusqu'au 27 janvier, galerie Marcelle Alix, Paris XX^e. **Kira vs Carrie** de Brian De Palma, jusqu'au 6 janvier, galerie Air de Paris, Paris XII^e.



ARTFORUM

New York

Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz

PARTICIPANT INC

253 East Houston Street, Ground Floor

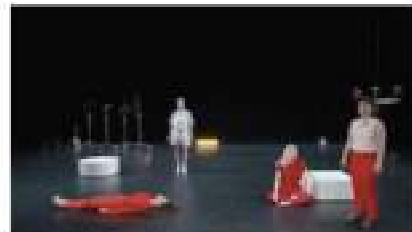
June 2–July 16

Anita Pallenberg is dead, long live Anita Pallenberg.

I couldn't help but think of the sublime rock goddess, a mere two days after her passing, upon entering Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz's exhibition (organized by Athena Katsif and Mason Leaver-Yap), a glamorous sepulcher that calls to mind a sex dungeon, an abandoned cabaret, and a dressing room—Alice Cooper's perhaps, during the height of his power. Near the entrance is a rotating stand of microphones, *he ear /* (all works 2017), glittering in the darkness, while a screen of imitation blond, black, and ombre hair, *Wig piece (whose body? – whose thoughts?)*, functions as a kind of billboard, guiding you to a sleeker, kinkier life. A giant pair of handcuffs suspended from the ceiling in the back of the gallery, *Untitled (prop)*, accentuates this feeling.

The shackles reappear in *Telepathic Improvisation* (also the title of a musical work created in 1974 by the late composer Pauline Oliveros), a twenty-minute video of a haunted floor show, and the exhibition's centerpiece. Here, four artists walk out into a black-box space: Marwa Arsanios, Werner Hirsch, MPA, and Ginger Brooks Takahashi. Except for Hirsch, all wear garments in Kraftwerk crimson. Together, they perform as if anesthetized. A smoke screen appears; a motorized trio of squat white plinths crawls across the floor; a strobe occasionally blinks. During the last quarter of the film, we receive a message from another dead sister, Red Army Faction cofounder Ulrike Meinhof, talking through MPA. The words are from a famous text Meinhof wrote after the 1968 shooting of Rudi Dutschke, the face of the German student movement. "Right-wing politicians will be able to carry on their hate campaign, they will continue to encourage the police to attack," says MPA / Meinhof. "They want politics as destiny, masses of disenfranchised people and refugees, a helpless passive opposition." At the end of the dialogue, the actor disappears. A spotlight then flashes, helplessly, pathetically. No more theatrical artifice—indeed, the fun is over.

— Alex Jovanovich



Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz, *Telepathic Improvisation*, 2017, HD video, color, sound, 20 minutes.



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2016

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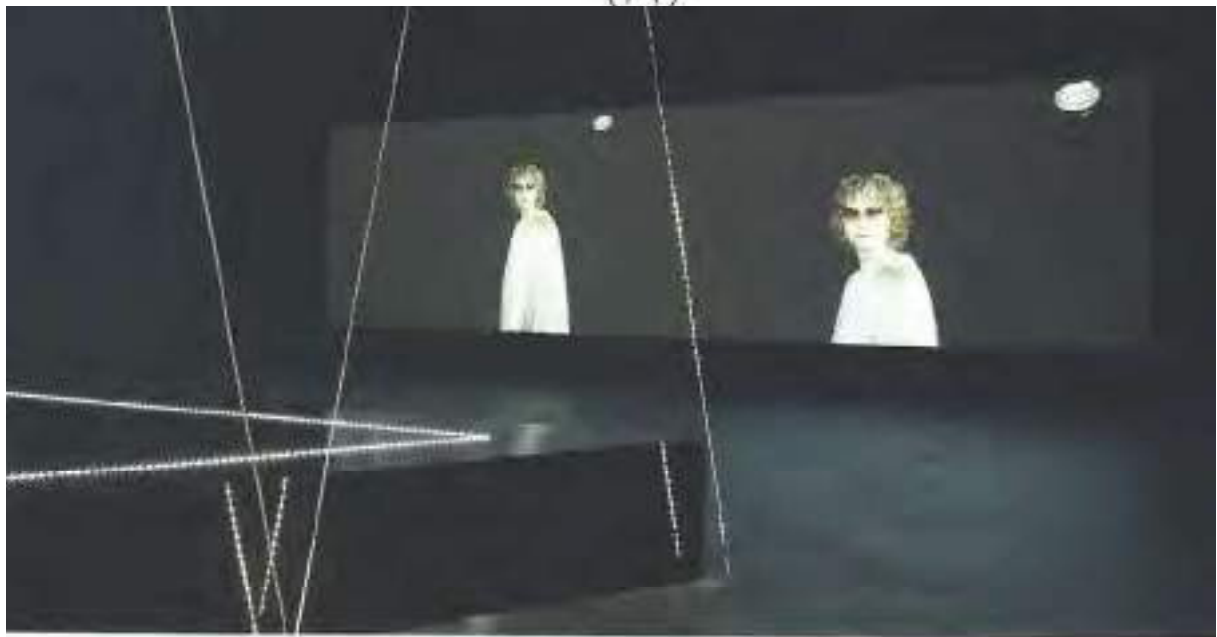


**Pauline Boudry &
Renate Lorenz
E.C. Feiss
João Maria Gusmão &
Pedro Paiva
Gonçalo Pena
Maya Schweizer
Andreas Prinzing
Matthias Müller
Volker Pantenburg
Amie Siegel
Adam Kleinman
Omar Kholeif**

Camera Austria

12.2016

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on a video found online, before announcing that she is Chelsea Manning, and deadpanning parts of Manning's correspondence with the hacker Adrian Lamo. The film's double projection displays nearly identical shots, the same performance filmed from two slightly different angles, mirroring Hayes's nearly seamless transitions between the two figures. Hayes performs in a black box, surrounded only by a phone and a vinyl chair cut with the words "I WANT". A maybe true story about Manning is that she created this chair in her ex-army office roughly a month before she was arrested for the leak. Herein lies the root of this fictive correspondence. Acker theorized "wanting" as the basis of her work on desire and subjectivity: "Teach me how to talk to you. WANT. Is my wanting you so bad, wanting your cock so bad, wanting the feel of your lips on my lips just me being selfish and egoistic? Is wanting horrible and has to be put down and repressed? Teach me a new language." "I WANT" departs from this sliver of an intersection, Chelsea's chair and Kathy's call for a new language, to expand the meaning of the phrase. "Wanting" is as romantic as it is about one's own body and gender, as it is about a desire for a different situation, social and political. Both women are queer as in dissatisfied.

The milieu of "I WANT", with its glossy surfaces fading into seamless black background, starkly contrasts with the grit and glimmer of "Opaque". Starring Ginger Brooks Takahashi and Werner Hirsch, who also performed in "To Valerie Solanas and Marilyn Monroe in Recognition of their Desperation" (2013), "Toxic", and "Normal Work" (2007) respectively, "Opaque" indexes the thought and materials that animate Bondry and Lorenz's work at large. The lacquered black stage again appears in the exhibition space, this time flanked by a glittering multi-coloured curtain. Opening in the bottom of a

wegen sei erwähnt, dass auch Hayes' Arbeiten für ihre Verbindung mit »temporal drag« bekannt sind: ein zentrales Organisationsprinzip queer-feministischer Künstlerinnen dieser Generation. Bondry und Lorenz unterscheiden sich davon vielleicht durch ihr wachsendes Arsenal von wiederkehrenden PerformerInnen, historischen AkteurInnen und Texten. Dieses vagabundierende Vokabular und Ensemble ästhetischer Strategien gewinnt eines zunehmend eigenständigen Drive.

Das Skript von »I WANT«, ein Kompendium unverbandener loser Texte, wechselt mühelos zwischen Manning und Acker. Hayes' Performance reizeszeniert zunächst Ackers Einleitung zu einer Lesung aus dem Jahr 1977, basierend auf einem im Internet gefundenen Video. Daraufhin erklärt sie, sie sei Chelsea Manning, und trägt Auszüge aus Mannings Chat mit dem Hacker Adrian Lamo vor. Die Doppelprojektion von »I WANT« besteht aus nahezu identischen Einstellungen der aus zwei leicht unterschiedlichen Winkeln gefilmten Performance und spiegelt damit Hayes' fast nahtlose Übergänge zwischen den beiden Figuren. Hayes performt in einer Blackbox, umgeben lediglich von einem Telefon und einem Kunstlederstuhl, in den die Worte »I WANT« eingetritzt sind. Dass Manning diesen Stuhl in ihrem Arztochbüro etwa einen Monat vor ihrer Verhaftung so beschriftet hat, ist eine vielleicht wahre Geschichte. Und das ist schließlich der Anlass für diese fiktive Übereinstimmung. Acker theoretisierte das »Wollen« als Grundlage ihrer Arbeit über Begehren und Subjektivität: »Teach me how to talk to you. WANT. Is my wanting you so bad, wanting your cock so bad, wanting the feel of your lips on my lips just me being selfish and egoistic? Is wanting horrible and has to be put down and repressed? Teach me a new language.«¹ Ausgehend von dieser beifälligen

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Experimentalautorin Kathy Acker. Beide werden eher beiläufig von der Künstlerin Sharon Hayes verkörpert. Der Kontextualisierung of aesthetic strategies begins to accumulate a self-fashioned drive. »I WANT« moves fluidly between Manning and Acker, its script of dislocated found text. Hayes begins by reperforming opening remarks from one of Acker's 1977 readings, based

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Überschneidung – Chelsea Stuhl und Karlys Ruf nach einer neuen Sprache – erweitern »I WANT« die Bedeutung dieses Satzes. »Wilden« ist romantisch, handelt aber auch vom eigenen Körper und Geschlecht und vom Wunsch nach einer anderen sozialen und politischen Situation. Beide Frauen sind queer im Sinne von unzufrieden.

Das Milieu von »I WANT« mit seinen glänzenden Oberflächen, die nahtlos in Schwarz übergehen, steht in scharfem Kontrast zum rauen Glitzer von »Opaque«. Diese Arbeit mit den Performerinnen Günger Brooks Takahashi und Werner Hirsch, die auch in »To Valerie Solanas and Marilyn Monroe in Recognition of their Desperation« (2013), »Taxis« beziehungsweise »Normal Work« (2007) mitwirkten, ist eine Art Verzeichnis des Denkens und der Materialien, die Boudrys und Lorenz' Werk insgesamt antreiben. Auch hier taucht im Ausstellungsraum wieder die schwarze Glanzlackbühne auf, diesmal flankiert von einem vielfarbigen Glitzervorhang. In einem leeren verfallenen Swimmingpool, einer majestätischen, zum zackestüpfen Punkt der Arbeit passenden Ruine, verdeckt ein im Zentrum hängender schwarzer Vorhang zwei Figuren. Ein Monolog setzt ein: zwar deutlich gesprochen, aber abstrakt, gerichtet an militante Filmemacher von einer »Organisation«, die gekommen seien, um einen Film zu drehen. Das spielt natürlich auf Boudry und Lorenz an, wirkt aber zugleich wie aus einer anderen Zeit und von einem anderen Ort. Der Monolog hat etwas von einer vorbereiteten Festsprache oder einem Manifest. Die Kamera zoomt auf den schwarzen Vorhang, bis er die ganze Leinwand füllt. Die schwach erkennbare sprechende Figur spricht vom »Überwinden der Barrieren«, die in der Gesellschaft durch Krieg und Rassismus entstanden sei, und weist dabei auf den Vorhang, der sie von der Kamera trennt. Als sie mit ihrer Rede fertig ist, durchbricht das Geräusch

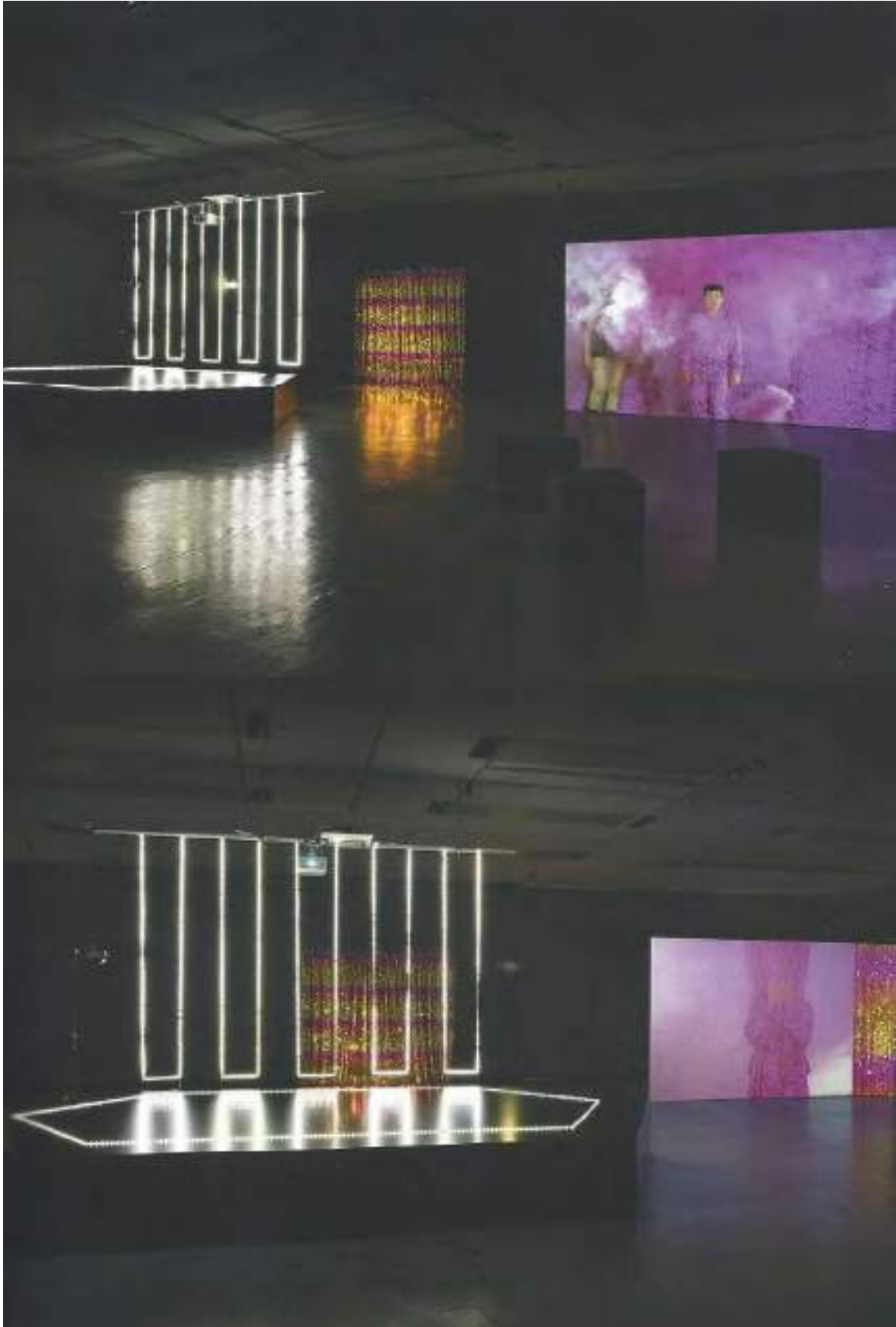
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dilapidated pool, a majestic ruin in line with the resplendent yet saccharine glare of the piece, a black curtain in the centre mostly conceals two figures. A monologue starts, while clearly spoken, it is abstract, referring to militant film-makers from "an organization" who have come to make a film. In reference of course to Boudry and Lorenz, there is also the sense that it is from another time and place. It feels prepared, like a party speech or manifesto. The camera zooms in until the black curtain fills the screen. The speaking figure, just able to be made out, speaks of "overcoming the barrier" created by war and racism in society, gesturing to the curtain separating her from the camera. When she has finished speaking, the clicking sound of a lighter interrupts the soft blackness of the screen. This exchange of sound and sight, or a study of their fracturing, is a characteristic device in the pair's work.

The curtain is walked back slowly with the casual flourish of a draped arm, exposing another scene in violent pink zebra print. Takahashi stands in front, dressed in a jumpsuit of the same material, fading into the background. Fuchsia smoke rises from the ground below, its density rising and thinning out against the neon concentrate of the zebra background. These textural colours commix with the sand on the ground at the feet of the two figures. Takahashi's combat boots behind the pink smoke suggest a scene of armed rebellion or popular protest, enacted for the stage of a gay cruise liner or small theatrical venue. "Opaque" is visually condensed, a story about political non-cooperation through the refusal of transparency, as told via surface, texture, and variant substance. In this regard, it departs from earlier work in its rumination on mass materials.

Jean Genet appears again, this time spoken through Günger Brooks Takahashi, incarnate in Werner Hirsch. A kinstress multi-gendered

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being in jewels and leather, Hirsch mimes the words Takahashi speaks, with the perfect off timing of a silent film. The rainbow glitter curtains makes its appearance as Hirsch's soapbox banner. Here we have "temporal drag" within and outside the confines of the film: from Genet, coursing through Takahashi, and exiting at Hirsch. The implications of feeding Genet's "The Declared Enemy" (1970), his text in support of Black Power and the Palestinian struggle, through this prism — the film, its materials, this performance — is left open-ended, pink smoke rising in its wake.

1. Kathy Acker, *Blood and Guts in High School* (New York: Grove Press, 1978), p. 36.

eines Feuerzeugs das weiche Schwarz der Leinwand. Dieses Vertauschen von Ton und Bild, beziehungsweise die Reflexion auf deren unverbandenen Dualismus, ist ein typisches Stilmittel in der Arbeit des Künstlerduos.

Der Vorhang wird von einem schmuckbehangenen Arm mit bläulicher Geste zur Seite geschoben und gibt einen weiteren in aggressiv-pinkem Zebemuster frei. Davor steht Takahashi in einem Overall aus demselben Material, sodass sie mit dem Hintergrund verschwimmt. Vom Boden steigt fuchsiarfarbener Rauch auf, der sich vor dem Neonkonzentrat des Zebenhintergrunds allmählich ausdehnt. Die texturierten Farben vermischen sich mit dem Sand zu Füßen der beiden Figuren. Takahashis Kampftiefel hinter dem rosa Rauch erinnern an einen bewaffneten Aufstand oder Massenprotest, inszeniert für die Bühne eines Schwulen-Kreuzfahrtschiffs oder kleinen Theaters. Visuell verdichtet erzählt »Opaque« anhand von Oberflächen, Texturen und verflüchtlichen Substanzen eine Geschichte über politische Nichtkooperation durch Verweigerung von Transparenz. So gesehen unterscheidet sich die Arbeit von früheren durch die Reflexion mittels stummer Materialien.

Jean Genet taucht wieder auf, diesmal gesprochen von Ginger Brooks Takahashi und verkörpert von Werner Hirsch. Als schillerndes multigeschlechtliches Wesen in Juwelen und Leder färbt Hirsch die Worte nach, die Takahashi spricht – mit der perfekten Asynchronität des Stummfilms. Der glitzernde Regenbogenvorhang bekommt seinen Auftritt als Hintergrund für Hirschs Rede. Wir haben es hier inner- wie außerhalb des Films mit »temporal drag« zu tun, von Genet durch Takahashi zu Hirsch. Das Durchschleusen der Genet-Texte, geschrieben zur Unterstützung von Black Power und dem palästinensischen Befreiungskampf, durch dieses Prisma – der Film, seine Materialien und die Performance – bleibt in seiner Bedeutung offen, rosa Rauch steigt hinterher auf.



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Mascarade musicale pour Solanas et Monroe

Des figures mythiques sont revisitées par le duo d'artistes Boudry et Lorenz à La Centrale

Mots clés

exposition, Marilyn Monroe, féminisme

Rechercher sur le même sujet



Photo : Paul Litherland

Un titre est parfois si riche en évocation qu'il est en lui seul porteur d'une expérience esthétique. C'est le cas de l'exposition en cours du duo Pauline Boudry et Renate Lorenz que la vitrine du centre d'artistes La Centrale arbore en lettres majuscules grossièrement vaporisées : « *To Valerie Solanas and Marilyn Monroe In Recognition of Their Desperation* ».

La bienveillante dédicace, joignant deux figures mythiques qui représentent à leur façon l'échec de la résistance féministe, est en fait celle de Pauline Oliveros, cette pionnière de la musique minimaliste et électronique qui en a fait le titre d'une de ses compositions en 1970, après avoir lu *SCUM Manifesto* de Solanas, connue aussi, et surtout, pour sa tentative de meurtre sur Andy Warhol en 1968.

La reprise du titre instaure un double hommage que Boudry et Lorenz incarnent dans leur oeuvre dans une performance filmée de ladite pièce. La Centrale présente l'installation vidéo de cette performance exécutée par six interprètes issues de la musique actuelle électro et expérimentale.

Les costumes colorés, les instruments et les poses étudiées sont des éléments clés de la mise en scène qui révèlent des corps où s'affirment des pratiques *drags* et *queers* dans la plus complète rupture avec le caractère traditionnel du contexte, une salle en lambris de bois et en marqueterie.

Ledevoir.com

05.2016

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Décalages

Outre ce décalage entre les personnages et leur environnement, l'oeuvre explore d'autres écarts qui sont autant d'occasions de remettre en perspective les normes identitaires et les lectures conventionnelles du passé que le duo, qui est basé à Berlin, se plaît d'ailleurs constamment à revisiter.

Dans le film, par sa performance, le groupe de musique réengage ce qui, dans la composition d'Oliveros, cherchait en quelque sorte à réparer le sort tragique de ces femmes en faisant valoir leur désir pour l'égalité dans un monde de domination patriarcale. La musique évolue à tâtons entre les musiciennes, dont un travesti, qui s'impose tour à tour avec une note dont les sons évoluent au fil d'une improvisation doucement modulée par l'écoute attentive et prolongée des autres, des principes chers à Oliveros. La structure de la pièce comme le déroulement de la prestation se passent ainsi sans hiérarchie, sans ton dominant ou tête d'affiche. Même la plus connue des performeuses, Peaches, se fond au groupe avec sa voix.

Le projet repose sur une première collaboration entre les performeuses, ce qui rajoute au mérite de cette oeuvre en quête d'entités en devenir plutôt que déjà fixées par des structures de pouvoirs. La construction du film est aussi de cet acabit. Dans un prélude à la performance, les protagonistes font leur entrée, vont de l'extérieur vers l'intérieur, et font du lieu une scène. Le tournage et ses procédés sont d'ailleurs révélés : dans le cadre, clap et ombre portée d'une caméra s'ajoutent à des flashes lumineux dont l'émission est sûrement codée. À la fin du film, un portrait de Solanas est projeté sur l'écran de la scène, une photo d'archives qui nous parle désormais autrement.

L'oeuvre désenclave les positions habituelles réservées à ces figures du passé, disparues ou encore vivantes, telle celle d'Oliveros, justement toujours restée dans l'ombre d'un Steve Reich ou d'un Philip Glass. La Centrale fait découvrir l'esthétique puissante et singulière de Boudry et Lorenz dont le travail a principalement été montré en Europe.

Ce petit aperçu, sur une production amorcée en 2007, fait voir des liens avec le travail de Laurie Anderson et d'Andy Warhol aussi, pour ses propres travestissements et pour ses accointances avec la musique et le cinéma expérimental. Il est aussi après tout, par ses oeuvres et sa vie, un point de jonction entre Marilyn Monroe et Valerie Solanas, contre qui il n'a pas témoigné à son procès pour meurtre.

21 mai 2016 | Marie-Ève Charron - Collaboratrice | Arts visuels



Marcelle Alix, Paris – Stand P1

Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz

BY EMMANUELLE LEQUEUX

Two silhouettes speak together hidden behind a black curtain in the surreal setting of an abandoned public swimming pool. Then the curtain is removed and the figures appear, surrounded by swirls of pink smoke in a glittery and glamorous decor. Are they men? Women? It's hard to tell. A leather jacket, a diamond necklace, a moustache and painted nails... A voice over reads a text by Jean Genet dealing with the notions of war and resistance...

But who or what is the enemy? Is it war, capitalism, patriarchy? The enemy is invisible and undefined and this is the essential message of Genet's text. With their ten-minute film entitled *Opaque* (2014), the two young Swiss artists continue their transgender interrogations with a form of performative cinema that has as much in common with cabaret as socially-engaged literature. On the stand, the film is projected behind a sequined curtain, a device frequently used by the duo to proclaim the "right to opacity" as evoked by the writer, poet and essayist, Édouard Glissant. ●



Pauline Boudry /
Renate Lorenz.
Opaque, 2014,
Installation with
film super 16 / HD,
10 min. Courtesy
Marcelle Alix, Paris.



Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz. *Opaque*, 2014, Installation with film super 16 / HD, 10 min.,
Courtesy Marcelle Alix, Paris.

Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz

1969 Renate Lorenz
is born in Bonn,
Germany

1972 Pauline Boudry
is born in Lausanne,
Switzerland

2007 The Swiss
Awards, Basel: they
started working as
a duo

2011 Venice Biennale
2015 Solo exhibition
at the Kunsthaus
Vienna



frieze^{d/e}

Language:

DE

EN

Scene Unseen

INTERVIEW

Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz in conversation with Laura Guy about opacity, manifestos and 'temporal drag'



Installation view, Kunsthalle Wien, 2015

Laura Guy The title of the central film in your exhibition *Portrait of an Eye* at the Kunsthalle Zürich, *I WANT* (2015), voices a demand. In your works, you've often included manifestos amongst other historical references, and these produce new acts of political speech in your films. Do you see the videos themselves operating in some way like manifestos?

Pauline Boudry And Renate Lorenz We are interested in an open connection between objects, bodies and meanings, and in a complexity of references that a manifesto might not strive for. Still, in our work, we have often cited manifestos, political statements, or radical gestures in order to experiment with what it means to repeat these moments of liberation. When we made the film *Toxic* (2012) for instance, we referred to the discourse around toxicity and the 'toxic' history of the filmic apparatus. Among other things we re-enacted part of a 1985 interview with Jean Genet for the BBC. During the interview Genet asks the camera to turn around and film the interviewer and his crew. He compares the situation of being filmed with a

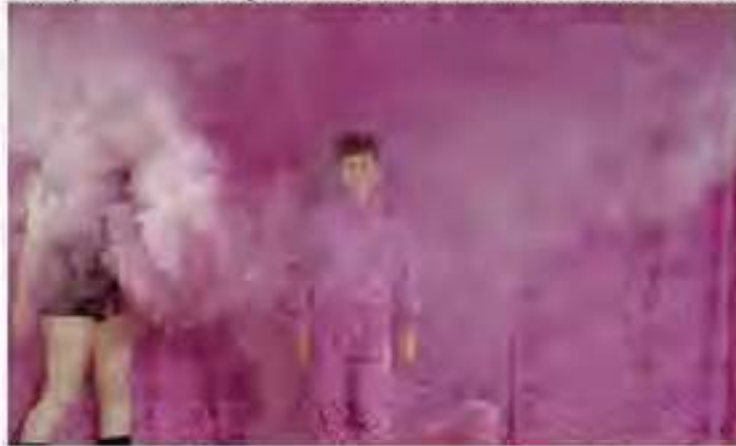
Frieze magazine

11.2015

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police interrogation and seeks to overturn this power relationship. He perfectly articulates how the camera marginalizes him by making him sit in front of the interviewer 'like the thief he was 30 years before, interviewed by a squad of police men', and simultaneously normalizes him by broadcasting him into televisions in domestic homes. When we re-enacted this scene with performer Werner Harsch the situation behind the camera was evidently staged as well. By repeating Genet's action, we weren't pretending to believe in the possibility of overturning the social order with this one revolutionary gesture. But insisting that the past become an ever-present tense, we stress that we don't want to renounce this gesture either.



Opaspa, 2014, film installation

LG In *Portrait of an Eye*, I WANT is shown alongside two other videos: *Opaspa* (2014) and *Jo Malena Solares and Marilyn Monroe in Recognition of their Desperation* (2013). Each piece employs comparable strategies of reversal between audience and performer – each is installed so that the audience is invited to enter the space of the performance, either by approaching the films as though from 'backstage' or by sitting upon a stage in order to watch the films. As viewers we are asked to question the role we might take within an exhibition, just as your approach to filmmaking seems to be a collaborative process that troubles ideas of participation and authorship.

PEARRL In our exhibition design, visitors are forced to negotiate their standpoint in the space: one might be confronted first with the back of a screen, entering the space as if from behind, like a performer taking the stage, ready to perform for the other visitors who are spectators in the space. The visitor might be seen as some kind of collaborator in the work, but she still has the possibility to turn away, be annoyed or hide 'backstage'. The same tension might be true for all the collaborations in our work; we do not cast actors in our filmed performances and choose instead to work with musicians, choreographers and artists whose pieces we reference. Our collaborators – from performers to film crew – are often our friends and bring their own backgrounds to the piece.



To Fátima Delgado and
Marilyn Monroe
as Reception
of their *Desperation*, 2013, projection still

LG Yet other than these collaborators who are peers and friends, the three videos in the exhibition refer to figures you do not personally know (Pauline Oliveros) or are incarcerated (Chelsea Manning) or deceased (Jean Genet, Kathy Acker). Does 'collaboration' not become a slippery term when such individuals cannot reply or take part?

PU&KL If we connect figures from the past, such as Genet or punk poet Kathy Acker – after whose book, *Portrait of an Eye* (1992), we titled our exhibition – or support the whistle-blower Chelsea Manning's politics of making public the 'secrets' of war atrocities and torture, they may or may not be happy with this 'collaboration'. We distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate collaborations. Yet we do so to enable a short-circuit – even between people who might not know each other, such as Manning and Acker, in our most recent film installation *I WANT* (2015). There, we make use of Acker's poetic strategies of appropriating and recombining text fragments and of switching identities in order to provoke a rethinking of Manning's public disclosures, not only of so-called 'secrets' but also of the way in which war is based on the performance of straight masculinity. Manning was a US soldier on duty when she exfiltrated what was possibly the largest quantity of secret military material in US history and sent it to WikiLeaks. Simultaneously she disclosed her transgender identity to her superiors. In our own performance, we look to collaborators from the past to foreground different temporalities at once, invoking not only the tradition of drag performance but also attempting to create a performance that disrupts temporal norms – norms that guide our biographies but also our work lives and sexual lives – which is why we often use Elizabeth Freeman's term 'temporal drag' to describe the performances in our pieces.



I WANT, 2015, film installation, Kunstfeld Zürich

LG In *I WANT*, artist Sharon Hayes plays both Chelsea Manning and Kathy Acker. Why the choice to work with Hayes in particular?

PB&RL We have long been in dialogue with Hayes about our mutual practices and strategies exploring temporality, for example through anachronism or citation. Hayes often appears as a performer in her own work and we admire her direct, reduced and precise performances. *I WANT* departs from video documentation of a young Acker reading from a number of her books including *The Adult Life of Toucouze Laurier* at the Western Front in Vancouver in 1977.¹ It is restaged with similar clothes and stage design but then drifts away from Acker's original text. While we were working on the script we were reading Acker's *I dreamt I was a typographical machine* (1980) and found a part about the Black Liberation Army (SLA). Acker was fascinated by the SLA and the story of Patty Hearst, the heiress whom they kidnapped in 1974. While the group held her in seclusion, she became increasingly supportive of their cause. We decided to include this as a hint to Sharon's own work *Symbiotic Liberation Army (SLA) Scenes #13, 16, 20 & 29* (2003), which includes her re-speaking the tapes of Patty Hearst. In the script, we wanted to have Sharon Hayes pretending to be Kathy Acker, pretending to be Chelsea Manning, pretending to be an agent of the SLA, pretending to be Jacqueline Deassis, and pretending to be Sharon Hayes, without ever settling on any of these figures.





F Punt, 2015, film installation, Kunsthalve Zürich

LG Your videos translate non-visual forms into visual ones, for example in *To Valerie Solanas and Marilyn Monroe in Recognition of their Desperation*, which is based on Pauline Oliveros's musical score of the same name from 1970. What is at stake in such a transformation?

PR&RL As we were preparing our film, we not only listened to different recordings of the score but also watched a documentation of the piece recorded at Tate Modern.² We noticed how watching kept us from listening and that as soon as we stopped watching, the piece became so much more interesting. The visualization of the piece became the work's challenge, and we wondered if the film could be about the contradictions and hierarchies between listening and watching. Can the camera visualise the act of listening? This question is particularly relevant to the music of Oliveros and her 'deep listening'. In this score the musicians are instructed to listen to each other carefully in order to create music. There is a part where they mimic each other's tones and modulations; if one plays more loudly than the others then the group has to react. Although the score seems to be extremely minimal – each musician chooses five tones to play or sing – it is actually conceived as a direct feminist critique. Inspired by radical feminist writer Valerie Solanas's *SCUM Manifesto* (1967), Oliveros attempted to produce a formal structure that might overthrow hierarchies. In order to visualize this act of listening, we conceived of the camera as an additional instrument or seventh performer that constantly moves through the space, creating connections with musicians.

LG In your videos many forms of mediation are in tension with ideas of direct address and self-determination; for example in all of the pieces the accumulation of citations makes it impossible to identify a source. This seems to resonate with the ideas of Édouard Glissant, whom the title *Opaque* references.

PR&RL Glissant was strongly opposed to principles of rendering the Other transparent, for example through the colonial impulse to gather knowledge of the Other in order to understand them. He criticized this as a feature of Western thought and instead claimed the right to opacity for former colonies. As he describes it, opacity works in order to avoid reduction. For us opacity is not just invisibility, but rather a certain kind of visibility that precludes understanding. Visually we make a slight reference to Kenneth Anger's early short film *Pace Movement* (1949). We start with showing/hiding the performers behind a black opaque curtain, which opens to show only another curtain, which opens and shows dense smoke and so on. The materials that are included in the film, instead of allowing for easy visual access, might rather transmit, as queer theorist José Muñoz puts it, a trace, a structure of feeling, a blockage, or even a negation.



LG Conversely, opacity seems to elicit little but surfaces. Your videos are full of beautiful surfaces: sequin curtains, coloured screens, plumes of smoke or feathers. The installation at Kunsthalle Zurich included a hair curtain and a large black lacquered triangle object that lit up in between the presentations of *I WANT*. It's very seductive. But I wonder if this also poses a danger that the subcultural histories that you reference might become fetishized and consequently made palatable for art world consumption.

PE&RL We find the opposition of a consuming art world and a non-consuming subculture untenable because of the ways in which all of our subjectivities and social practices are deeply informed by capitalist principles. Placing certain materials in an art context allows us not only to refer to the many queer art



practices that have already been performed in the art world, but also to examine the often cruel and evolutionary history of visualization, of the gaze, the frame and the camera. It is important that you mention the mystical side of the exhibition, such as the hair on the hair-curtain or wig-curtain. Does the hair refer to a wig? Does it refer to the history of drag performance? Does it refer to Manning's first picture of herself as a woman, wearing a blond wig? Or is it just hair, a glamorous decoration? You also mention the triangle object-stage: this addresses the visitor at first as a seat, but after the video ends, the lights around the triangle are switched on and it becomes a stage, empty besides the visitors. The stage becomes a prolongation of the film, which ends with the images of moving lights in an abandoned club. With this, the address changes. The visitor becomes a participant in the narrative and the stage is set for the future.

*Pauline Boudry and Renée Lorez have worked together since 2007. Their most recent film *I Want* premiered in 2015 at the Kunsthalle Zürich. Their exhibition *Information to Identity* is on view until 31. December 2015 at Nottingham Contemporary, UK.*

Laura Gay is a writer based in Glasgow.

¹ Footage of the reading can be viewed online through the Western Front Archive: <http://tinyurl.com/oe5327k>

² *To Valerie Solanas and Marilyn Monroe in Recognition of their Desperation* was performed at Tate Modern on 3 May 2012 as part of *Her Noise: Feminisms and the Sonic*, curated by Electra Productions with CR/SAP. It can be viewed online at <http://tinyurl.com/pnce4gz>

—by Laura Gay



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Art: Interview

November 11, 2015

Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz by Risa Puleo

"We insist on repeating moments of liberation, as a kind of sustainable practice."

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Exhibition view of Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz's *Loving, Repeating*, 2015, at Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna. All images courtesy of the artists.

Mining images, music, texts, events, and actions from the past, Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz look for moments of queer history that are often inscrutable, invisible, or illegible. Working with a regular crew of friends and collaborators to re-perform these moments—often in one take on 16mm film—the pair re-present history, reimagining possibilities for the present and reinscribing agency beyond projected ideas of normalcy and other forms of categorization. Central to Boudry / Lorenz's practice are questions of visibility, representation, and recognition that address the stakes and potential liberating effect of each form of image-making.

Most recently, Boudry / Lorenz showed their films in an exhibition titled *Loving, Repeating* at the Kunsthalle Wien as part of the Vienna Biennial, curated by Maria Lind. The exhibition brought together three films: *Toxic* (2012), *To Valerie Solanas and Marilyn Monroe in Recognition of Their Desperation* (2013), and *Opaque* (2014), installed on an empty stage that lights up in between films, centering the viewing audience as potential performers in the scene. Two theramins react to the electrical energy produced by viewers. Like their films, Boudry / Lorenz's exhibition plays with the boundaries of what a performance is, who performs and what is performed.



Risa Puleo The title of your exhibition at the Kunsthalle Wien—*Loving, Repeating*—is an apt description of what happens in the three exhibited films, and also a philosophy for life and collaborating. It also touches on Gregg Bordowitz's definition of performance as "an act of taking control of history by becoming its subject through repetition." Where does this title come from?

Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz It's from Gertrude Stein. We often come back to Stein to think about what it means, for example, to conceive of films as loops—as films that repeat. What does it mean to think about the temporality of the film, not necessarily as a beginning and an end, but as something that starts again, over and over? We like to imagine that our performers—delivering a political speech, a piece of music, or a drag performance—don't do it only once, and not in linear time. It seems that these loops could address, in an uncanny way, artistic and activist political maintenance. Sometimes it seems as if the figures in the films come back, day and night, to tirelessly perform the labor of political change. And this reminds us that, actually, Gertrude Stein wasn't thinking so much about repetition but about insistence: "Is there repetition or is there insistence. I am inclined to believe there is no such thing as repetition. (...) We have insistence, insistence that in its emphasis can never be repeating because insistence is alive." So you could say that we insist on repeating moments of liberation as a kind of sustainable practice.



Film stills from *Normal Work*, 2007. Installation with 16mm film.

Engaged with desire, we think of it as a connecting force, or as a transgression of boundaries. Performers establish connections to the ephemeral leftovers of the past, which we conceive of as unrepresented, utopian moments in history: it can be the beginning of a political documentary, a picture, a score, a dance, or a poetry reading. In the filmed performance, the performers connect with these historical materials through a series of actions and practices, carefully carried out, which are recorded and repeated in the exhibition space's projection. We often record the performance in one take, like a live event, and we might add cuts, close-ups, and music in the final edit. We often don't have an exact idea of how the performance should look. Some of it happens spontaneously in the space and is developed together with the performers. The shooting is always open for unexpected moments.



Video stills from *To Valerie Solanas and Marilyn Monroe in Recognition of their Desperation*, 2013. Installation with 16mm film.

RP Film also allows you to stage relationships with texts and thinkers across time and place. At the Kunsthalle Wien you bring together Jean Genet and Pauline Oliveros with the performers Peaches, Rachel Aggs, Catriona Shaw, Verity Susman, William Wheeler, Werner Hirsch, and Ginger Brooks Takahashi. How do you match-make people across time?



PB / RL We've never cast anybody or worked with anyone we didn't know beforehand. We work with friends, with people we know, because we appreciate their work. When we start working on something new, we often have either a combination of performers or a combination of materials we want to work with, and we improvise and build from there. Matching across time allows us to apply poetic or political strategies from one "performer" to the other. We're not only aiming for a drag performance, but a performance that also disrupts norms of time, norms which rule our biographies, work, and sexual lives. This is why we often use Elisabeth Freeman's term *temporal drag*. We like to think that our films bring different temporalities together: the temporality of the performer with his/her contemporary background, looking at these figures and materials from the past that were not able to fulfil their potential to initiate social and political change—for instance to enable different lifestyles and bodily practices—and think through their availability for a possible future use.



Video stills from *Toxic*, 2012. Installation with Super 16mm film.

RP *Toxic* conjures Jean Genet, when the film's drag queen re-performs a 1984 interview in which Genet turned the camera onto the directors and crew of the film and identifies them as a kind of enemy for controlling perception and framing him against a norm. This re-presented historical moment raises questions about the ethics and limits of film and the medium's ability to "see" through the camera.



PB / RL What we especially liked about toxicity was its ambivalence: a toxin might be healing, or comforting, and it can kill you as well. We looked at a lot of early photography, criminal photography, and anthropological photography, reflecting on the violence of the history of the mugshot, which installs social hierarchies between the photographer and the photographed, the colonized subject, the criminal, the deviant, the homosexual, or the sex worker. We came across Genet's intervention during the 1985 BBC interview, which we thought was very revealing towards the toxicity of the apparatus that traps him. By repeating Genet's action, we weren't pretending to believe in the possibility of overturning the entire social order with this one revolutionary gesture. But in the insistence on the past becoming an ever-present tense, we stress that we don't want to renounce this possibility either.



Video stills from *Opaque*, 2014. Installation with Super 16mm.

RP The idea of "Loving, Repeating" plays out directly in a work like *Opaque*. The text read in the film—Jean Genet's satire of a personal ad in search of "The Declared Enemy" instead of a "special friend"—questions the idea of



an enemy as an obvious opponent, but also separate and distinct from someone you love, or even yourself. In this context, the commitment of engagement “to overcome barriers” with an undeclared enemy must be a loving act.

PB / RL To realize that the enemy can “look like you and dress like you,” that s/he might as well be your friend, lover, or even yourself, undermines these kinds of clear oppositions between friend and enemy, self and other. We like the text because Genet’s description of his “already beaten enemy” is poetic and somehow sexy. For the film, we asked our performer to lip-sync this text, instead of an old song like in a classical drag show. At the beginning of the text it’s unclear who’s speaking. You have something like a double speech, of Werner Hirsch live lip-syncing Ginger Brooks Takahashi, which allowed us to rethink the relationships between the body and voice—or multiple bodies and multiple voices—and speech act and performance.

RP *Opaque* brings up core themes of your work—visibility, invisibility, recognition—through war tactics like camouflage, hiding in plain sight, covert action, and underground movements alongside ideas of passing, drag, and “stealth,” as terms related to visibility of gender in a queer context. Can you speak to these aspects of opacity and transparency?

PB / RL Leftist and queer politics are often engaged with rendering certain bodies visible, but the question might be more complicated; queer camouflage might represent some mode of resistance against transparency. Moreover, we understand opacity not just as a certain grade of invisibility, but as a certain kind of *visibility* that doesn’t allow understanding. We played with this idea of a visible invisibility for the film, and came up with an opaque curtain that almost hides the scene and the performers, which then opens and shows another curtain, which opens again to show dense smoke, etc. Instead of allowing easy visibility, the curtain and the smoke transmits only a trace, a structure of feeling, a blockage, or even a negation.





Video stills from *I want*, 2015. Installation with double HD projection.

In our most recent film, *I want*—which is now installed at Kunsthalle Zürich and at Nottingham Contemporary, for instance—we use the tools of punk poet Kathy Acker, such as appropriation, plagiarism, and the switching of identities. We mix Acker's methods with our performers' practice, connecting the dual approaches to sketch a new perspective on the politics of whistle-blower Chelsea Manning and her public disclosures—not only of so-called military secrets, but also of the way in which war is based on the performance of straight masculinity.

Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz have been working together in Berlin since 2007. Recent solo exhibitions have included "Portrait of an Eye," Kunsthalle Zürich, 2015; "Loving, Repeating," Kunsthalle Wien, 2015; "Patriarchal Poetry," Badischer Kunstverein, 2013; "Aftershow," CAPC, Bordeaux, 2013; "Toxic Play in Two Acts," South London Gallery, 2012; and "Contagieux! Rapports contre la normalité," Centre d'Art Contemporain, Geneva, 2011.

Risa Puleo is a writer and curator based in Brooklyn. Her writing has recently appeared in BOMB, Art in America, ART PAPERS, Art 21, and Modern Painters.



In Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz's film *Toxic* (2002), a punk figure in glitter and a drag queen move around a studioli-like space with violet curtains, and heaps of glitter and poisonous potted plants on the floor. Projected behind the two characters are images of people wearing peculiar masks known through various protest movements, and borrowing poses from mugshots and anthropological photography. A number of toxic substances are mentioned by the characters – among them heroin, ecstasy, mushrooms, radioactivity and AndroGel® – which remind the viewer that while toxins can poison you, they can also cure you and improve your quality of life. This type of double-sidedness is reemphasised by the drag queen, quoting Jean Genet in a 1980s interview; to be asked questions in front of a film camera can be as violent as a police interrogation. In short, an interview is not necessarily 'un-poisonous', however harmless it might appear.

The first time I saw the film I had a strong feeling that it said something about the future. It is a highly staged scenario in which the past is recreated for a future use and new desires take shape. Amid the glitter, curtains, camouflage patterns and impressive wigs, a form of playful opacity makes itself felt among characters who are deliberately difficult to categorise. Even the scale is tricky to determine: one plant looks like a tree, another one like it was meant for a windowsill, while some of the projected photographs serve to oversize the people in front of them. Like several other of Boudry/Lorenz's recent film installations, this one steps in and out of suppressed or illegible moments, staging the actions of individuals and groups living in defiance of normality, the law and economics. The performances are produced for the camera, as if in an intimate safehouse – sometimes looking like a doll's house – making use of a dense net of references to experimental film, the history of photography and underground (drag) performance.

Intimate relations, as well as times ahead, are at the heart of Beatriz Preciado's *Testo Junkie* (2008) too. The book starts when a friend dies. Preciado (who has now transitioned and is known as Paul B. Preciado) then cross-dresses into the deceased's costume and begins her series of rendezvous with TestoGel, synthetic testosterone, as if to bring the friend back to life. The purpose of taking the hormone is not to become a man but to test chemically induced sensations, a ritual moving far beyond established categories of sex, gender and objects. The encounters with TestoGel involve the cutting of hair, shaving, making moustaches from the just-cut hair, donning dildos, looking into mirrors and recording the whole procedure for online sharing. At the heart of this performance,

ORGASMIC POTENTIAL

OR

The future glimpsed in an art video

in which

drag queens, glitter
punks and SYNTHETIC
TESTOSTERONE
contaminate the
molecular basis of sexual
difference, leading to
the EVOLUTIONARY
METAMORPHOSIS
of contemporary society

by

Maria Lind



Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz, *Toxic*, 2002,
film installation, cinema with 12 photographs,
theatre space, curtain and Super 8mm film, 12 min.
Courtesy the artists

beautifully described in great detail, lies a desire for transformation. Even a metamorphosis of life in contemporary society.

This is where both Boudry/Lorenz and Preciado tell us something about a fundamental shift in biopolitics and the nature and economy of desire, about what more of the future will be like. But also what making theory can be, far beyond academicised routine. Preciado then takes the reader on a 'somatopolitical' journey through the world economy, where she claims that a new type of government of the living has emerged in the period after the Second World War, through the forceful interaction between advanced capitalism, global media and biotechnology. She labels this new type of government 'the pharmacopornographic regime'. The emergence of terms such as 'transsexualism' (1954) and 'gender' (which Preciado suggests appeared in its current usage in 1957), changes in economic and governmental regulations of pornography and prostitution in the Western world and the development of synthetic molecules for commercial use paved the way for this 'sex-gender industrial complex'. The Pill and Playboy are early and widely disseminated components of this material-discursive apparatus of bodily production that includes feedback loops. Viagra and Prozac are more recent examples.

All of which is to say that, today, psychotropic techniques and biomolecular and multimedia protocols affect subjectivity in hitherto unseen ways. Not only is this influencing millions of individuals in their most intimate lives, but also sexuality and its semi-technical derivations are the main resource of post-Fordist capitalism. It is a new model of production: the control, creation and intensification of narco-sexual effects. If work is the central concept in classical economy, then 'potentia gaudendi' as formulated by Preciado, or orgasmic force, is the equivalent in the pharmacopornographic regime. Potentia gaudendi is the strength of a body's excitation, its own extension in space and time. It is an event, relation, practice and evolutionary process; it is essentially impermanent and malleable. Potentia gaudendi depends on 'techno-bodies', half fetters and half zombies, individual bodies as extensions of global communication technologies, oscillating between excitation and frustration. It is the planetary management of 'naked technolife' through virtual audio-visual connections.

Toxic is part of the exhibition Loving, Repeating by Boudry/Lorenz at Kunsthaus Wien, guest-curated by Maria Lind as part of the Vienna Biennale, on show through 4 October



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Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz

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Pauline Boudry and **Renate Lorenz**, *To Valerie Solanas and Marilyn Monroe in Recognition of Their Desperation*, 2013, 16 mm film, HD video, 18 minutes. [Ginger Brooks Takahashi](#).

Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz, a Berlin-based duo, reinvent historical narratives in film, photography, and performance through queer discourses. Aftershow, a new book published this month by Sternberg Press, will be available at the New York Art Book Fair from September 26 to 28, 2014, and focuses on three "filmed performances": No Future / No Past, 2011; Toxic, 2012; and To Valerie Solanas and Marilyn Monroe in Recognition of Their Desperation, 2013.

WE LIKE TO DESCRIBE OUR FILMS AS "FILMED PERFORMANCES" because they don't actually document performance. Instead, performance and film are folded into each other. Usually, we take some material from the past—a photograph, a fragment of a film, a dance, or a song—as a point of departure for these works. Recently, we worked with a 1970 score by [Pauline Oliveros](#) titled *To Valerie Solanas and Marilyn Monroe in Recognition of Their Desperation*. This turned out to be particularly interesting for us because scores already imply a specific temporality. You can produce your own version of one, but of course, there have already been



different renditions and adaptations made of it long before you've begun, and there will probably be an infinite number made afterward. This introduced a new perspective on our interest in archives—for instance, how we might playfully deploy a photographic document from the past as a “score” for a future performance? By looking at forgotten or disavowed queer moments, affects, acts, or leftovers, we not only want to (re)consider them as political interventions, but also try to re-create the past in order to articulate a contemporary desire. Retroactively, they have the potential to build an archive of denormalizing practices. Our work primarily focuses on the temporal politics of embodiment, and we find literary scholar Elizabeth Freeman's term “temporal drag” very useful in this respect. It introduces a different understanding of drag, one that is not limited to the subcultural performance of undermining, or “mining,” the dual-gender system. It situates drag as a set of temporal practices that works against normative biographies and other hegemonic historical narratives. Drag also rejects the act of revealing what lies beneath one's clothing (or behind a curtain on a stage). It generates productive connections of the natural and the artificial, the animate and the inanimate, from props and vinyl records to wigs—and everything else that tends to produce connections to others, and other things, rather than merely representing them. In our films, we especially like messy embodiments of anachronistic elements in which different temporal or historical moments take place. For this reason, our performers don't try to “be” or “act” like figures from the past, but instead connect to objects, clothing, gestures, and poses.

We began developing our new artists' book, *Aftershow*, following the completion of two recent solo exhibitions: “Patriarchal Poetry” in 2013 at the Badischer Kunstverein and “No future / No past” in 2011, which was part of the “Chewing the Scenery” project at the Fifty-Fourth Venice Biennale. We chose the title because aftershows are situated on the limits of performance. They are usually informal, yet celebratory, parties that often happen behind or beneath the stage. And in order to address the power relations that are connected to the staging of bodies and the apparatus of vision, we often use the perspective of the backstage: In our installations and exhibitions, visitors might enter a space and find themselves behind a projection screen or a display case that they have to walk around to view. This “backstage perspective” is also a constant preoccupation in our films: What happens beyond the frame? What is the boundary between staged and unstaged moments? In the book, we've written a series of letters to friends and collaborators, including Virginie Bobin, Gregg Bordowitz, Anja Casser and Nadja Quante, Mathias Danbolt, Sharon Hayes, Fatima Hellberg, Werner Hirsch, José Munoz, Henrik Olesen, Bernadette Paassen, Yvonne Rainer, Irene Revel, Eran Schaerf, Jack Smith, Ginger Brooks Takahashi, and Andrea Thal. The letters consider not only questions of research but also political and formal problems; however, many of these exchanges are somewhat fictional. Some letters, for example, are addressed to “friends from the past”—such as the one to Jack Smith whose work has inspired us for a long time (and who may or may not be happy with this made-up “friendship”). We chose the format of written correspondence because we wanted to intercut different personal and experimental writing styles, and carry out in-depth discussions on aesthetic and theoretical concepts central to our work—the archive, restaging, opacity, and desire. Over the years, we have developed long-term working relationships with friends, and others from our social circles who have artistic practices that we admire. With these letters we've sought to render our collaborations and ongoing conversations visible.

— As told to Alena J. Williams

<http://artforum.com/words/>



by [MARA HOBERMAN](#)
May 7, 2014

Pauline Boudry/Renate Lorenz's "Journal Notes from Backstage"

MARCELLE ALIX, Paris

March 23–May 17, 2014

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In a clip from a 1985 BBC-TV interview, viewable on the BBC's website, French writer and activist Jean Genet describes a dream he had in which the film crew revolted against the television-interview paradigm wherein a subject (in this case Genet himself) talks in front of a camera while half a dozen people off-camera—various technicians plus the director, interviewer, and interpreter—remain unseen and unheard. "Why don't they come and push me out?" he goads before concluding his impromptu critique of normative behavior with the self-critical statement: "I am not annoyed with you for being part of the norm, I am annoyed with myself for accepting to come here."⁽¹⁾

Given that Berlin-based artists Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz share Genet's passion for exposing and exploring societal norms and margins, it is not surprising to find this interview featured prominently in the artist-duo's current exhibition, "Journal Notes from Backstage." Based on their extensive research of various subcultures historically deemed "deviant" by hetero-normative cultures, Boudry and Lorenz have developed a diverse oeuvre of performances, films, photographs, installations, and publications, which feature figures like bearded women, transvestites, sadomasochists, and homosexuals. "Journal Notes from Backstage" showcases two recent works: *Toxic* (2012), a filmed performance screened in



1 Pauline Boudry/Renate Lorenz, *Toxic* (detail), 2012.



2 Pauline Boudry/Renate Lorenz, *Toxic* (detail), 2012.



3 Pauline Boudry/Renate Lorenz, *Toxic* (detail), 2012.



conjunction with various ephemera the artists collected during their research, and *To Valerie Solanas and Marilyn Monroe in Recognition of their Desperation* (2013), an 18-minute, 16mm film of musicians performing a 1970 arrangement of the same name by American composer Pauline Oliveros (b. 1932).

Entering the exhibition requires pushing past a turquoise, sequined curtain suggestive of a clandestine ingress to a peep show or underground performance. Beyond it, the installation *Toxic* encompasses the entire room; it consists of a projected HD transfer of a 16mm film accompanied by an assortment of related documents, photographs, and objects. In the film, Werner Hirsch (a recurring player from previous Boudry/Lorenz films) portrays Genet during his rebellious BBC-TV interview. Hirsch—the male persona of choreographer/performer Antonia Baehr—does a campy, but recognizable impression of Genet. Smoking a cigarette while flaunting hairy cleavage accentuated by a leopard push-up bra, Hirsh (who appears here dressed in drag although he is portraying a man) reenacts Genet's tirade with just the right combination of agitation and distress. "Of course I want to break the order of things!" the heavily made-up, wig-wearing Hirsch barks, "If I am afraid to join the norm, then so be it."

Elsewhere in the 13-minute film, which runs on a continuous loop, artist Ginger Brooks Takahashi (another Boudry/Lorenz regular) and Hirsh are featured in a slide show of frontal and profile mug shot-style portraits. Standing in front of a white backdrop, both appear in fanciful costumes that allude to various toxicities—environmental, medical, and cultural. Takahashi alternately sports a makeshift gasmask fashioned from a green plastic bottle and a hairy mask that makes her look like a Star Wars Wookiee. Hirsh, meanwhile, wears a too-tight, skin-colored girdle in one portrait and an eye-mask made from a prescription drug package in another. This series of images relates to a cache of nineteenth-century photographs the artists discovered in the archives of the city of Paris's police headquarters, facsimiles of which are displayed like supporting evidence on two shelves mounted against the wall. These small, full-length, black-and-white portraits depict civilians arrested for being so-called *pédérastes* (an antiquated French term for gay men).



4 Pauline Boudry/Renate Lorenz, *Toxic* (detail), 2012.



5 Pauline Boudry/Renate Lorenz, *Toxic* (detail), 2012.



6 Pauline Boudry/Renate Lorenz, *Toxic* (detail), 2012.



Since the police department did not have its own photography studio in the 1870s, the arrestees were brought to a commercial studio where they were formally posed in a bourgeois setting—placed either in front of luxurious drapes, a velvet arm chair, or elaborate wall moldings. Several photographs of the same person, who is referred to as “Gounat” in the brief accompanying reports, capture the 22-year-old’s two different personae: a woman with a long braid in a flowing white dress and a dandy with a velvet jacket, walking cane, and spit curl.

Also on display as part of *Toxic* are photographs from the image volume of German sexologist and activist Magnus Hirschfeld’s 1930 *Geschlechtskunde, auf Grund dreissigjähriger Forschung und Erfahrung bearbeitet* [Sexology, Compiled from Thirty Years of Research and Experience], a multi-part publication on sexual minorities.(2) Boudry and Lorenz have cropped Hirschfeld’s illustrations of *irrtümliche geschlechtsbestimmung* (“mistaken gender assignment”) so that only the bottom sliver of each image and its descriptive caption are visible. For example, in *Irrtümliche Geschlechtsbestimmung (als Frau lebender Mann)* [Mistaken Gender Assignment (Man Living as a Woman)] (2013), the viewer is simply left to imagine the appearance (and the experience) of a “man living as a woman.”

Down two flights of stairs and past a fragment of blue sequined curtain, *To Valerie Solanas and Marilyn Monroe in Recognition of their Desperation*, transferred to digital HD, plays on a continuous loop in a dark room outfitted with two cinema-style seats and plush carpeting. Shots of a six-person band performing low, monotonous notes bring image and sound to a conceptual piece (of the same title) by Oliveros. Inspired by Solanas’s radical feminist *SCUM Manifesto* (1967), Oliveros’s original composition specifies that each musician choose five tones and hold them for an extended period time. Treating the non-hierarchical and anti-patriarchal themes that interested Solanas and Oliveros, Boudry and Lorenz’s filmed performance evokes an alternative utopian environment wherein improvisation, self-invention, and egalitarianism are the norm.



8 Pauline Boudry/Renate Lorenz, *Toxic* (detail), 2012.



9 Pauline Boudry/Renate Lorenz, *To Valerie Solanas and Marilyn Monroe in Recognition of their Desperation*, 2013.



10 Pauline Boudry/Renate Lorenz, *To Valerie Solanas and Marilyn Monroe in Recognition of their Desperation*, 2013.

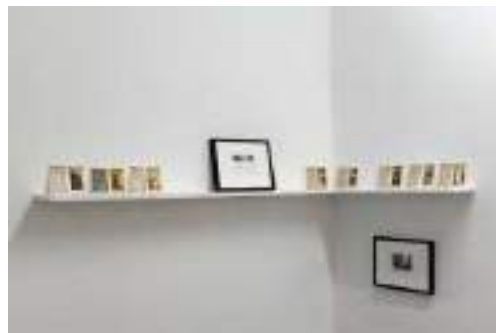


(1) Jean Genet interview with Nigel Williams for BBC2 (November 12,

1985), <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0165yqc>.

(2) Magnus Hirschfeld, *Geschlechtskunde, auf Grund dreissigjähriger Forschung und Erfahrung bearbeitet*. Band IV: Bilderteil. Stuttgart: Julius Püttmann, 1926–1930.

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7 Pauline Boudry/Renate Lorenz, *Toxic* (detail), 2012.

- 1 Pauline Boudry/Renate Lorenz, *Toxic*, 2012. Still from HD video, 13:00 minutes, in installation with documentation, dimensions variable. All images courtesy of Marcelle Alix, Paris.
- 2 Pauline Boudry/Renate Lorenz, *Toxic* (detail), 2012. HD video, 13:00 minutes, in installation with documentation, dimensions variable.
- 3 Pauline Boudry/Renate Lorenz, *Toxic* (detail), 2012. HD video, 13:00 minutes, in installation with documentation, dimensions variable.
- 4 Pauline Boudry/Renate Lorenz, *Toxic* (detail), 2012. HD video, 13:00 minutes, in installation with documentation, dimensions variable.
- 5 Pauline Boudry/Renate Lorenz, *Toxic* (detail), 2012. HD video, 13:00 minutes, in installation with documentation, dimensions variable.
- 6 Pauline Boudry/Renate Lorenz, *Toxic* (detail), 2012. HD video, 13:00 minutes, in installation with documentation, dimensions variable.
- 7 Pauline Boudry/Renate Lorenz, *Toxic* (detail), 2012. HD video, 13:00 minutes, in installation with documentation, dimensions variable.
- 8 Pauline Boudry/Renate Lorenz, *Toxic* (detail), 2012. HD video, 13:00 minutes, in installation with documentation, dimensions variable.
- 9 Pauline Boudry/Renate Lorenz, *To Valerie Solanas and Marilyn Monroe in Recognition of their Desperation*, 2013. Super 16 film transferred to HD file, 18:00 minutes.
- 10 Pauline Boudry/Renate Lorenz, *To Valerie Solanas and Marilyn Monroe in Recognition of their Desperation*, 2013. Super 16 film transferred to HD file, 18:00 minutes

<http://art-agenda.com/reviews/pauline-boudryrenate-lorenz%E2%80%99s-%E2%80%9Cjournal-notes-from-backstage%E2%80%9D/>

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Issue 162

You don't need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows

Hollybush Gardens, [London, UK](#)



Pierre Huyghe, *A Way to Untilled*, 2012–13, HD video projection

A flock of brilliant green parakeets who made Wormwood Scrubs prison in North London their unlikely home are the opening metaphor for immigration, belonging and identity in 'You don't need a weather man to know which way the wind blows', at Hollybush Gardens, the third show in the gallery's spacious new Clerkenwell premises. The exhibition, named after a line in Bob Dylan's *Subterranean Homesick Blues* (1965), and inspired by his call-to-arms to America's youth to fight for their own counter-cultures and revolutions, was an assembly of art works which drew on animal life to disturb ideas of contemporary culture and politics. In Helen Cammock's *The Singing Will Never be Done* (2011), a two-screen video installation playing in the gallery's cavernous first room, the community of parakeets – which may or may not have originally escaped from the set of *The African Queen* in 1951, the voiceover explains – are interspersed with snippets from Conservative MP Enoch Powell's infamous 1968 'Rivers of Blood' speech, recalling a political climate of embittered xenophobia, which returns now as depressingly familiar political rhetoric. Cammock's film weaves a compelling narrative of race and belonging through the prism of family life, with day-to-day experience appearing quite desolate when presented next to the gloriously free world of the squatter birds.

But Cammock's quiet, contemplative film was agitated by the sounds of Pierre Huyghe's *A Way to Untilled* (2012–13), which played in a nearby alcove. The teeming wildness of Huyghe's garden installation from Documenta 13 infected the hollow soundscape of the gallery. Lynchian in its magnified attention to the swarming undergrowth of an overgrown garden, the film makes clear our absolute insignificance within this ecosystem: a stone statue becomes the host for a giant beehive; the detritus of some earlier human presence lies discarded, vacant of meaning or use. 'Reflexive time' – Huyghe's term for a temporality that departs from normative notions of productivity and labour – is here all the more compelling in the context



of an environment that works away relentlessly and productively at its own pace (the inspiration for our own notion of the ‘busy bee’) whilst apparently oblivious to human life.

Elsewhere, Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz’s film, *Charming for the Revolution* (2009), further extended the use of animal life as a metaphorical and philosophical challenge to human concepts of labour, temporality and gender. Werner Hirsch, the androgynous star of many of the artists’ works, reads a revolutionary manifesto from a series of index cards. Dressed in clichéd examples of masculine working class style, Hirsch calls for the end of repressive and hostile hetero-normative social codes, and demands ‘wages for housework!’ Next, a dandy enters the scene, walking a turtle on a leash. An enactment of Walter Benjamin’s objection, perhaps best articulated through his *Arcades Project* (1927–40), to the ever-quickenning pace of industrial time, the dandy slowed to a crawl by his turtle seems to symbolize, for Boudry & Lorenz, a possible disturbance of gender roles which are, they suggest, inevitably tied to experiences of temporality and labour.

In the back room of the gallery, away from the teeming buzz of the videos, the atmosphere was quieter, and Aaron Angell’s ceramic works sat as small, glazed emblems of the meeting points between industrial life, and craft and small-scale production. Pumps, water wheels and chimneys in clay and thick gloss sport bulbous globs of colour; snakes and toadstools hide within these constructions. Beside them hung a small, pastel-coloured painting of a beached whale by Bruno Pacheco, while nearby, Andrea Büttner covered a table with the bronze casts of zebra droppings that she took from Frankfurt Zoo.

Taken as a whole, the exhibition resonates with Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s concept of ‘becoming-animal’, which describes a nomadic and transitive state of being that favours non-identity, metamorphosis and flux and that was, for the philosophers, a condition of freedom. The art works here explore how animals or insects might fray the boundaries of our conceptualizations of the world in various strange, humorous or radical ways. Perhaps, too, the animals’ attentiveness to the world – their senses more minutely attuned to the rhythms of the earth, and their relationship to it one of reciprocal codependence, rather than exploitation – does indeed make our attempts to understand it, like the weatherman’s always uncertain predictions, seem comically superfluous.

Basia Lewandowska Cummings

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by Basia Lewandowska Cummings



Le Beau Vice

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L'écoute profonde du cinéma de Pauline Boudry/Renate Lorenz (Galerie Marcelle Alix)

Cinq lignes sur Wikipedia. Voilà ce qu'on obtient peu ou prou lorsqu'on enquête en français sur la musicienne Pauline Oliveros, qui est pourtant venue à Paris, encore et encore, munie de son fameux accordéon amplifié- et notamment par sa connaissance et son expérience technologiques. Elle est née en 1932 et elle est célébrée comme l'une des forces vives de la musique américaine depuis plus de 60 ans, notamment via la notion du *Deep Listening* : une pratique du son comme "*fibre de l'être et de tout être doté de sensation sans exception*", fondée sur l'improvisation, l'électronique, la pédagogie, la méditation. L'écoute profonde selon Oliveros engagerait toute personne en tant que musicien-ne (ceux ou celles qui en connaissent un rayon et ceux ou celles qui n'y connaissent rien) à pratiquer l'art de l'écoute, afin de réagir à l'environnement, que ce soit dans des situations individuelles ou collectives (un mode d'expérience non sans connexion avec les groupes de conscience féministes mais en porte-à-faux avec les formes de musique "féminine" existantes alors*) "Ecoutez un son jusqu'à ce que vous ne puissiez plus le reconnaître"- voilà une des pièces parmi les *sonic meditations*. Vous en voulez une autre ? "Marchez si silencieusement que les semelles de vos pieds deviennent des oreilles". C'était en 1971; lesbienne *out*, Oliveros est attentive aux politiques corporelles et sexuelles du son, ainsi a-t-elle récemment fait une pièce pour les microphones humains d'Occupy Wall Street, intitulée Occupy Air, qui est constituée d'une "tactique d'appel et de réverbération", non amplifiée.



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Pour qui veut l'entendre, alors l'une des pièces filmiques les plus récentes- et les plus enthousiasmantes- de Pauline Boudry/Renate Lorenz tombe à pic; deux d'entre elles sont actuellement installées galerie Marcelle Alix, au creux d'une exposition à moitié enveloppée par des tentures à sequins turquoises-- entre autres partitions d'espace dans un lieu déjà assez étroit (et à 3 étages et demi), pour que ces divisions souples et colorées, ces vitrines de photographies, cette lettre nomade fixée sous verre ou cette plante en pot engagent une proximité vénéneuse avec qui s'y déplace. On y est à l'égard du spectacle comme au tricot, un point à l'envers, un point à l'endroit, une façon de décrire un partage pas très assuré quant à sa position ni son genre.



To Valerie Solanas and Marilyn Monroe in Recognition of Their Desperation est une pièce de Pauline Oliveros (1970) (1970performance) pour orchestre, chœur, orgue, électronique et lumières à destination de « n'importe quel groupe ou groupes d'instrumentistes (de 6 à un grand orchestre) ». Pour Oliveros, la lecture du manifeste SCUM de Solanas aurait été un choc déterminant pour se demander "comment une plus égale distribution des droits dans la société pouvait se manifester ou offrir un parallèle en musique." La composition est politique. Elle résonne silencieusement avec les revendications de nos jours.

Oliveros explique : "Structurellement, la pièce est fondée sur les vues de Solanas sur l'égalité et avant tout, celle-ci est non hiérarchique. (...) Il y a des règles d'appartenance à cette communauté musicale de la pièce, de sorte que toutes les musiciennes peuvent s'exprimer individuellement, dans les limites du matériau qu'elles ont et qu'elles ont choisi pour elles-mêmes, en termes de ton comme de façons dont elles utilisent ces tons dans les trois parties de la pièce. Si l'un devient dominant, alors le reste du groupe doit absorber cette domination et la renvoyer à l'intérieur de la texture de la pièce. Pour moi, c'était m'exprimer au niveau de la structure profonde de ce que le SCUM Manifesto voulait dire."



Six musiciennes: Rachel Aggs, Peaches, Ginger Brooks Takahashi, Catriona Shaw, Verity Susman, William Wheeler.

La réitération de cette pièce en forme de double *dédicace*, deux personnages qu'Oliveros associe à la frange radicale des mouvements féministes dans sa poursuite d'une esthétique, elle aussi radicale (dans l'interface entre texture musicale et (dé)-structuration sociale) passe, pour Boudry/Lorenz par la production d'un film. Un film à écouter autant qu'à regarder, selon le principe de déhiérarchisation plus haut découvert. Et, on dirait même plus, ce film en tant que traduction ne doit pas seulement enregistrer ce principe, mais l'activer. On est d'emblée précipité vers l'effilochage des bords du spectacle - enfermer celui-ci dans les limites d'un clip est devenu évidemment impossible au regard de la circulation du pouvoir impliquée par principe. Et donc, la performance déborde littéralement au delà de la scène qu'elle s'est fixée, un studio d'enregistrement spacieux de Berlin tout de bois revêtu, pour s'accrocher à l'escalier, aux couloirs, aux fenêtres, à leurs interaction avec des corps singuliers ou au banc de touche des musiciennes assemblées.

Il en est de même pour ce qui est de filmer- d'actualiser- le langage de la partition musicale, c'est-à-dire du partage entre ce qui fait ensemble et ce qui fait solo (ou



pour reprendre les termes de Rousseau, de l'harmonie et de la mélodie). Dans le travail d'Oliveros, le remplacement du modèle classique de la partition s'opère par la pratique, l'ajustement, la "négociation" permanente qu'évoque le *Deep Listening* : on écoute et on réagit à ce qu'on fait ensemble et individuellement, des signaux visuels indiquant chaque changement (1). Le travail de la caméra, ici, semble lier intimement sa partie - son "jeu" - à la reverbération structurée et improvisée de la performance, collective et pourtant singularisée par chacune, sans qu'il y ait quelqu'un(e) qui soit investie d'un pouvoir supérieur y compris celles et ceux qui aujourd'hui, font face à l'écran. Et tout comme la musique, le film pose une action affirmative, exemptée du poids- devenu trop réactionnaire- de la négativité. L'oreille n'a pas de paupières, on ne le répètera jamais assez et Pauline Oliveros ajoute à son tour (*The earthworm also sings*) que l'oreille est toujours ouverte "même si on a oublié d'écouter."



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Pauline Boudry/Renate Lorenz, "Journal Notes from Backstage." Jusqu'au 17 mai.
Galerie Marcelle Alix, 4 rue Jouye-Rouve, 75020. www.marcellealix.com

(1) Oliveros "Chaque musicienne choisit cinq tons et un des tons doit être en relation de dissonance différente par rapport aux autres. Il y a trois sections dans le travail qui correspondent à l'éclairage au plafond : une section jaune, rouge, bleue...La durée de chaque section dépend de ce qui se passe ou de ce que les musiciennes décident de faire. Ca peut être une très longue méditation, avec chaque partie qui dure plus de 30 minutes. Dans la première section, les musiciennes ne peuvent utiliser qu'un ton, et quelque part au milieu un flash stroboscopique éclate, alors la deuxième partie commence. Ensuite les musiciennes sont libres d'imiter les tons que les autres jouent, un certain échange arrive. (...) Dans la dernière section, elles retournent à leur premier choix. Finalement, il y a un nouveau flash, et après elles reviennent aux premiers tons qu'elles ont choisi et elles les retravaillent à la fin de la pièce. Bien sûr, c'est un résumé très lâche..."

(*) sur ce sujet cf. Martha Mockus *Sounding Out: Pauline Oliveros and Lesbian Musicality*
et les travaux passés, présents et à venir de Louise Gray

<http://le-beau-vice.blogspot.fr/2014/04/lecouite-profonde-du-cinema-de-pauline.html>



BEHIND THE SEQUINED CURTAIN

On Pauline Boudry/Renate Lorenz at Badischer Kunstverein, Karlsruhe

Some read queer history as a history of the infamous; one of its genealogies running back from the great genealogist Michel Foucault via Rainer Werner Fassbinder and Jean Genet all the way to François Villon. According to artists and longtime collaborators Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz, another line would have to include the likes of Valerie Solanas and Marilyn Monroe.

In her review, Ellen Feiss investigates how the duo and its affiliates realign and reconstruct the existences of subjects whose lives were for the longest time, and are frequently enough still being, constructed under the investigating glances of the police, the medical profession, and vaudeville audiences.

An organic theoretical grounding for Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz's exhibition "Patriarchal Poetry" is perhaps an equally decadent (read: pleasure-seeking) essay by Michel Foucault titled "Lives of Infamous Men". The essay departs from a discussion of the prose of French internment documents from the seventeenth century, which detailed the crimes and served the punishments of a cast of queer and variously abject characters of the time – sodomites of course, but also more colorfully "scandalous monks or peculiar and inconsequential nuns."¹ In addition to acting as the objects of his theoretical inquiry, the texts pulled on Foucault "physically", and I would posit, erotically. Disregarding any need for systematic rationale, he simply states he was "guided by nothing more substantial than my pleasure."² The political position carved out in this essay is one that is as equally invested in material consequence, in the foundational role of these texts in the creation and extinguishing of these subjects, as it is in the pleasure of queer identification across time – a pleasure that is taken in recognition of, not despite, the history of violence that structures it.

The relation from Boudry/Lorenz to Foucault's infamous men is both simply drawn, in the artists' incorporation of the archive, as well as located within a shared mode of historical identification, one which cherishes details of dress, posture, and gaze, yet equally examines the political potential of this recognition in the present. The installation "Toxic" is spread over the first and last rooms of the exhibition, and encompasses archival photographs, common house plants which have "toxic" properties, and finally, a film of the same name. The opening room is spare: A handful of documents and a plant are framed by the Kunstverein's Neoclassical molding and elegant high ceilings. The building's architecture is additionally a protagonist within the exhibition – providing a mid-nineteenth-century frame simultaneously evoking the invention of sexuality as an identity category as well as the "dramatic" in the sense of a classical stage. Entering through a purple sequined curtain slung with a chain, the trope of queer stage material is echoed in grayscale by the central installation: A group of archival photographs from police raids on gay homes and establishments in 1990s London, which are pinned to a municipal gray board. Five photographs show both the decorated unfortunates as well as the policy of police image-making – a blurred photograph documents the outside of a suspected bar; there is the bed scene with satin and feather trimmings of some vacated homosexual person. Providing reading light for these images is a stage spotlight – an object that encompasses the history of the gay stage (cabaret, vaudeville), police lineups, and the sets for interviews. Such stage ephemera also points to the tension between performance as agency, or conscious expression, and Judith Butler's conception of the "performative"



Pauline Boudry, Fencie Lorenz, "Toxic", 2012. Badischer Kunstverein, Karlsruhe, 2013/2014, installation view

Pauline Boudry, Renate Lorenz, "Salomania", 2009, film still



as an unconscious construction of the gendered subject in relation to body norms, a tension that is engaged throughout Boudry and Lorenz's work. One is consistently left with the question: Where does performance end and control (regulative as well as disciplinary) begin?

The next room of the exhibition is dominated by a large screen, which occupies most of the width and height of the space's center. One walks onto the backside of the projection of the new film "To Valerie Solanas and Marilyn Monroe in recognition of their desperation", first encountering it as an inverse image, before walking the length of the room, to the viewing area at the other end. This back-ended configura-

tion produces an "offstage", which heightens viewers' awareness of their roles as actors in the installation. It's a similar deconstructive move to those within the films themselves, each of which includes a device that disrupts the possibility of seamless viewing – whether by showing the camera (in "Toxic", 2012) or hinting at the fiction of a seemingly documentary moment ("Salomania", 2009). "To Valerie Solanas" is the performance of a score by the composer Pauline Oliveros, who wrote it in response to Solanas's S.C.U.M. Manifesto in 1970. Formally, Oliveros's score is an interpretation of the Manifesto's vision of pure egalitarianism, experimenting with the expulsion of any form of hierarchy within the score's

Pauline Boudry, Renate Lorenz, "Solomania",
Bodischer Kunstverein, Karlsruhe, 2013/2014, Installation view



composite parts as well as in its staging – there is no conductor and cues come from automated changes in lighting. Boudry and Lorenz's staging of the score replicates several formal elements of their oeuvre, including an aesthetic sensibility (early-2000s riot girl meets New German Cinema) and recurring characters: Gender ambiguity, which is often female-bodied; sexual-cultural signifiers (leather harnesses, porno facial hair, lesbian dress such as worker's jumpsuits) and a range of gender expression that Gregg Bordowitz has aptly described as "modes of existence rather than particular persons."⁸ Acting as a vehicle to reconsider the feminist militancy of the 1970s as politically but also culturally productive – a

militancy that becomes aligned with the conceptual tradition within Oliveros's project – the film serves as both a reinstantiation, a literal bringing into being, of feminist art of this period, and an expression of a reformulated contemporary relation to this era. Often associated with racial and gender essentialism as well as terrorism, the militant feminisms of the 1970s are not suggested by the film as unproblematic, with the infamous image of Solanas entering her trial for the attempted assassination of Warhol projected behind the performers at the end of the score. Rather, this period is suggested as equally host to a feminist culture with specific modes of critical production and existence. For example, the potent critiques of patriarchal capitalism formulated by Solanas and theorists like Monique Wittig. While there is a departure from the explicitness of earlier films, densely congealed through intricately layered piles of reference, the deceptive simplicity of "To Valerie Solanas" expands to encompass larger questions, perhaps one of which concerns the ongoing limitations that continue to structure contemporary feminisms – exclusionary logics around difference (of race, gender and class) – which are effaced by the villainization of this era within progressivist feminist narratives today.

Tightly choreographed, the exhibition leads into another room of plants and primary source material with the next film "Solomania" (2009), visible just beyond in a darkened corridor, flanked by feathered fans. It stars Yvonne Rainer, Wu Tang (an artist, performer and former student of Rainer's at UCLA) and their curious relationship; somewhere between mentorship, easy friendship, and a cross-generational queer kinship. Rainer appears in relation to her 1973 film "Lives of Performers", in which she interpreted Alla



Nazimova's 1923 portrayal of Salome within the limits of her minimalist dance institution "No Manifesto" (1964). When teaching her version of Salome to Tsang, a seemingly unscripted, undoubtedly joyful correspondence, Rainer announces that her manifesto was never meant to be read as a "bible", showcasing instead the way in which her use of it, and its re-performance in "Salomania", is meant to be generative, and must be flexible to remain radical. It can also be thought of as a score. Here, Boudry and Lorenz's work folds back onto itself as the S.C.U.M. manifesto, once reviled and at times questionably fashionable⁴, becomes reinterpreted by Rainer's declaration.

The last room, the film installation of "Toxic", again opens onto the back of a screen. There is a sense of the viewer as an intruder, walking into proceedings already underway. Dating from the 1870s, the archival photographs presented in a glass-topped case at the opposite end of the gallery correspond closely to the architectural qualities of the room, its detailing matching the flourished interiors of the portraits on display. Predating the invention of the mug shot, the photographs are of deviants and criminals in commercial portraiture studios, costumed and ensconced in the lavish decoration of the day to be photographed before the law. They are documents of a posturing that wouldn't exist without the conditions of control, and illustrate well Foucault's maxim that power "incites, provokes, produces. It makes people act and speak".⁵ Here, it makes them perform dramatically. In relation, the film "Toxic" features a scene in which the performer Werner Hirsch reenacts Jean Genet's infamous 1985 interview with the BBC, wherein he calls upon the technicians to revolt against the

hierarchy of filmmaking and compares the interview to a police investigation. If we understand that power buttresses every performance, how do we understand Genet's call to arms? Genet of course went to prison many times, and was saved from a life sentence by his artistic social connections – Pablo Picasso, Jean-Paul Sartre, and other French cultural elites. Lying in "Toxic" is an expression of the call to "perform" within capitalism and its cultural and financial hierarchies, although it stops short of an analysis that stretches beyond manifestation. Perhaps an underdeveloped corner of queer studies,⁶ Boudry and Lorenz illuminate, among everything else, the contributions artistic research can make to theory.

ELLEN FEISS

Pauline Boudry/Renate Lorenz, "Patriarchal Poetry", Badischer Kunstverein, Karlsruhe, September 27, 2013–March 30, 2014.

Notes

- 1 Michel Foucault/James D. Faubion, "Lives of Infamous Men", in: *Power*, New York 2000, p. 159.
- 2 *Ibid.*
- 3 Gregg Bordowitz, "Repetition and Change. The Film Installations of Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz", in: *Artforum*, 51, Autumn/Winter 2012, p. 16.
- 4 Verso's reprint of the S.C.U.M. manifesto in 2004 was perhaps part of a surge of interest in radical feminism, an interest which could be said to enjoy a seesaw of popularity and stigmatization.
- 5 "Lives of Infamous Men", *op. cit.*, p. 172.
- 6 This emerging analysis of the production of gender and sexuality within global capitalism can significantly be found in the work of Beatriz Preciado.



1
H.O. Body, 2009,
film installation
2011
St. Valerie Solanas and
Marilyn Monroe in *Recognition
of Their Desperation*, 2013,
production stills



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IMITATION *of* LIFE

Animating archives in the 'queer archaeology'
of Berlin-based duo **Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz**
by Christy Lange



In a series of photographic portraits and self-portraits from the mid-19th century, London housemaid Hannah Calbraith showed off her masculine qualities, sometimes dressed in drag, or in sadomasochistic poses with her lover. Around the same time, Annie Jones, a "bearded lady" with hair that grew down to her knee, toured as a "freak" with Barnum's Circus, but was also the subject of medical studies and photographs by the German researcher Magnus Hirschfeld. In 1923, Alla Nazimova, a Russian émigré and star of early Hollywood, produced and took the lead role in the silent film *Salomé*, which was renowned to have an entirely gay cast and crew; it nearly ruined Nazimova's career because of its suggestive dance scenes.

All of these figures are historical inspirations for the protagonists in the films and installations of Pauline Boudry and Lucie Lorenz, a Berlin-based duo who have been working together since 1998. Using a discursive, research-based approach that they've termed "queer archaeology," the artists derive their films from archival documents that would otherwise remain lost, buried or unseen. Their aim is to literally and figuratively animate these artefacts by orchestrating re-performances or re-enactments of them with their frequent collaborators, most of whom are contemporary artists or musicians in their own right. In doing so, they are not just inhabiting previous gestures and poses in the history of queer performance, they are also preserving them. In this sense, their work presents an alternative model through which to disseminate the history of performative activism.

However, Boudry / Lorenz don't set out to paint a rosy picture of radical gestures and the success of queer activism through resistance. They also remind us the extent to which restriction and mistreatment have been (and still are) embedded in these expressions of sexual freedom

and liberation; their works often portray radically or stagnate, rehearsed or grossly anachronistic. In their film *No Future / No Past* (2011), for instance, the musician Ginger Brooks Takahashi, performing as Darby Crash from The Germs, stumbles and stomps on her guitar, but without conviction. In *N.O. Body* (2009), the apparently hysterical laughter of drag performer Werner Hirsch acting as bearded lady Annie Jones, quickly becomes forced and painful. In many of their works, radical gestures become stiff or stilted, consciously performed or reeled by rote for the camera to an absent audience.

Boudry / Lorenz's most recent film, *25 Erotic Solos and Marilyn Monroe in Recognition of Their Desperation* (2013), was produced for their exhibition "Futuristic Poetry" at the Badischer Kunstverein in Karlsruhe. It features six performers playing the titular musical composition, written by Pauline Oliveros in 1970 and inspired by Solanas's feminist *SCUM Manifesto* from 1967. Oliveros's piece is not a traditional musical score but rather a set of typed instructions that asks each performer to play long tones orchestrated through different coloured light cues. Among her specifications is that no single performer in the group becomes dominant: "If a player is too loud, it is the responsibility of the ensemble to raise the general dynamic level."

The artists filmed this re-performance of the score in a single take in the iconic Funkhaus Berlin. The film stars members of their cadre of frequent collaborators: Takahashi and Rachel Aggs play guitar, Peaches sings, Catriona Shaw plays the accordion, Verity Shuster is on the synthesizer, while William Wheeler plays the Theremin. As in the majority of the duo's films, most of the performers appear androgynous or in drag, including Wheeler, who wears a green hat and bearded veil. Takahashi is dressed in a purple body suit with bondage straps, which she uses to secure a small

PA and guitar, so she can literally drag them up a staircase to the main performance hall, where the ensemble performs the score. The sustained tones the group produces alternate between moaning, chirping, droning and ghostly howls. The individual performers remain sequestered; the musicians rarely smile or make eye contact. As is characteristic of Boudry / Lorenz's re-enactments, the piece is a consciously staged imitation of an avant-garde moment, not a nostalgic homage to one. It's a long way from the images of the Velvet Underground jamming in Andy Warhol's *Factory*, but nevertheless pointedly alludes to that mythos.

Boudry / Lorenz's 2009 film *Salomé*, probably their most effective and affecting work to date, also traces a lineage from past to present. This 12-minute historical narrative spans a complex, layered history of performance and imitation. The starting point is the *Dance of the Seven Veils* from Nazimova's *Salomé*. This provocative scene sparked a craze in the 1920s called "Salomania," in which women imitated the dance as an expression of sexual freedom. From there, the reference spiral backward in time: Nazimova's film was an interpretation of Oscar Wilde's 1893 eponymous play which was itself inspired by the biblical story. But the timeline in Boudry / Lorenz's film also spools forward, to dancers from subsequent generations: namely, Yvonne Rainer (who choreographed a piece based on Nazimova's dance, entitled *Salomé's Solo*, in 1972) and the Los Angeles-based artist, performer and activist Wu Tang. By arranging a collaboration between the two dancers, Boudry / Lorenz create a new entry into the history of dance, a medium that is most effectively passed on through a sort of instruction and personal, intergenerational connections. *Salomé* contains a teaching scene in a dance studio in a storefront on an L.A. street, in which Rainer teaches Tang how to interpret the four points of Wilde's *Salomé*, including



Boudry / Lorenz's work
presents an alternative
model through which to
disseminate the history
of performative activism.

1
Toxic,
2012, film installation
2
Salomea,
2009, DVD and
book



image in which the dancer wriggles out of the clutched folds of her dress. It's a lesson, an interview, a passing down of knowledge.

In the finale of *Salomea*, we see Tsang in a long and white dress and Raiker in a ruffled dress, enacting the dance on a small stage in a dark room. Tsang enacts the movements of the steps of the *Seven Fists* in front of a film projection of *Salomea* from the original movie. Tsang's body creates shadows against the screen, sometimes mimicking *Salomea*'s actions, sometimes deviating from them. As opposed to the aggressive, relaxed nature of the earlier dance scenes, here Boudry / Lorenz signal that we are entering the realm of staged performance, drawing attention to its construction for the viewer, casting that glow back on what we've previously seen. Is this performance constructed for the live audience or for us? Or for a future audience we can't yet envision? The scene creates a direct, physical contrast between Tsang's performance as openly and elegantly appearing *Salomea* while the historical source film – which is screened for provoking 'perversity and obscenity' – features actresses playing tsunamis and actors in campy costumes. Boudry / Lorenz don't about: 'Look how far we've come!' When they ask: 'Where are we now, and what still comes next in this lineage?'

Boudry / Lorenz's 2012 film *Toxic* again takes a historical, this time dressed in a leopard-print outfit with false hair posted above his head, enacting the transcript of a 1985 interview with Jean Genet on a British television programme. The subjects and referents of the interview constantly shift from the historical to the present and, at one point, Boudry / Lorenz speak on behalf of the 'technicians' of the film, saying they should 'revolt'. When the camera has behind the scenes to the film crew looking at the screen, the artists among them, we don't

know if it's a performance of concern, or concern itself, but they are clearly indicating that they fully understand their role in this act of representation. Writing about this moment of the film in *Afford*, artist and activist Gregg Bordowitz points out: 'It's no longer a revolutionary gesture to reverse roles and turn the camera on the film-makers. That gesture is now a room cliché. There is no doubt that Boudry / Lorenz are aware of this. They're not trying to overturn the social order with one powerful gesture. For Boudry / Lorenz, change comes through constant reiteration.' Bordowitz identifies a key point in the artists' work: every aspect of their approach indicates a knowingness that they are part of a long line of framers of how gender identity has been and is visualized – for better or worse. The film-makers are aware that they're implicated in this role of recorders of radical gender performance – and the fact that they are orchestrating it – and in doing so they pre-empt any possible criticisms of their approach.

Undoubtedly, the duo's thorough research has unearthed important and revealing documents. One drawback of this scholarly approach and the way they frame their work is that the only conclusions we can draw from what they assemble for us are the conclusions they've already (quite astutely) drawn themselves. Through their multiple, highly articulate interviews and their own writings about each work, they create their own discourses, which makes it very hard to read their output outside of these interpretations – or to criticize it – especially when dealing with a topic as unapologetically important as queer performance and identity.

It's possibly more productive to think of their work as contributing to an ongoing archive or future museum of queer history. Their films often overshadow the photographic components that accompany them, but it is these reproductions

of uncovered archival photographs which illustrate the depth of their research. For instance, the postcard images that accompany the film *Toxic* are scanned versions of real portraits of 19th-century 'sexual deviants' who had been arrested: cross-dressers, cruisers, pedophiles, gay men and women. Instead of the customary mug shot, the criminals were documented by the police in commercial portrait studios, in which they pose with defiance and pride for the camera. These archival images perhaps best illustrate the way that the artists' work is not about glorifying or mythologizing this existence of 'resistance' from the past, but of making it terrifyingly real, by bringing home the gravity of the treatment that people of ambiguous gender or alternative sexuality received. Similarly, the *Badischer Kunstverein* show featured a complementary exhibition of 'Her Noble Archive', which, among a vast collection of rare feminist video and music, contained the original score of Olivera's *Salomea*, which might have been the most instructive or fascinating document in the show. Together with the film, it highlighted the contrast between radical inspiration and the state of it today. If nothing else, Boudry / Lorenz's work leads us back to a primary source (which inevitably embodies hundreds of years' worth of premodern primary sources and inspirations), and gives us a way to reproductively enter these archival documents, to see them anew and then to return with fresh eyes to the present tense. ♦

In 2013, Pauline Boudry and Rocco Lorenz had solo exhibitions at the *Badischer Kunstverein*, Karlsruhe, Germany, and *CAAC Nordhaus*, Frankfurt.

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Antke Engel and Renate Lorenz

Toxic Assemblages, Queer Socialities: A Dialogue of Mutual Poisoning

An imposing drag queen in a leopard-print top flaunts her *décolleté* after the show. She totters through the glitter, tinsel, and pills scattered on the floor and walks over to a massive tropical plant, from which she fishes out a lighter, lights a cigarette, and breaks out in a terrible cough, exhaling glitter from deep in her throat. In the background, a slideshow displays oversized portrait figures wearing fanciful masks made of various trashy but glamorous materials, partly referencing protest cultures and queer subcultures since the 1970s.

A curious communication between doubled images takes place, since the drag queen on stage as well as a punk figure now appearing there are the same figures portrayed in the projected slides. The punk appears in a cut denim vest, cheeky samurai-style hair tuft, and colorful makeup emphasizing the dark glitter eye shadow. Positioned in front of the photographs, curious doublings and overlappings are created as the punk recites a list of all the toxic substances that come to mind. Her tone of voice remains undecided, somewhere between condemnation and ovation, and the list seems to induce her to start cleaning the floor. Yet this transforms into a dance with a broom and a vacuum cleaner, where the whirling silver tinsel, the body in movement, the masks gazing from behind the figures onstage, and the tropical plants together form a queer assemblage—one that carries with it histories of intoxication. Destructive pleasures and pleasurable destructiveness are bound up with desiring relations.

In a further shift, the address to the audience returns from the punk to the drag queen, who, posing on a comfy chair, enters into a self-reflective monologue that turns into a complaint, then an accusatory dialogue



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that reveals the formerly intimate after-show scenario to have been a film production. A fight with the media apparatus over its inherent power relations, and the doubts and desires for recognition and control on the side of the protagonist, expose conditions of queer sociality and its limits.

And then it starts all over again with a cigarette smoked out of exhaustion on a toxic glimmering stage.



Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz, *Toxic*, 2012. Film installation at Paris Triennial "Intense Proximity," Laboratoires d'Aubervilliers. Photo: Ouidide Soussi-Chadmi.

Toxic (voice 1)

The film *Toxic* (2012) shows two protagonists in an undetermined time: a glamorous punk figure (Ginger Brooks Takahashi) and an imposing drag queen (Werner Hirsch), both of unclear gender and origin.¹ They linger in an environment of glossy remains and a forest of toxic plants. The background images of transformed ethnographic and police photographs are projected on a screen in a rhythm set by the clicks of a camera. The punk's speech and performance reference early feminist artworks such as Yvonne Rainer's dance piece *Inner Appearances* and Mierle Laderman Ukele's grooming of art institutions.² The drag queen reenacts an interview with Jean Genet from the 1980s and blames the filmmakers for exposing her to the police-like scenario of being filmed. The camera turns and depicts the *space-off*, the space outside the frame, thus revealing the apparatus of film production and the personalization of its regime.

When Pauline Boudry and I started our research about the discourse on and employment of "toxicity," we initially focused on the so-called mug shot. The mug shot—invented in the late nineteenth century—is a way to photograph a human with two cropped and paired sights, one frontal, the other from profile. It was used by various state and scientific institutions, such as the police or anthropology, to identify "characters," which meant, to install social hierarchies and to legitimize privileges. The photographers and viewers acquired normalcy and privilege through marking the photographed as criminals, sex workers, homosexuals, black people, and people from the colonies. This history fundamentally troubles the usage of the visual and photography in contemporary art.³ How can we produce, in the frame of this violent history of visualization,



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representations of bodies that rupture and queer this legacy of violence? We started from the assumption that it could be useful to see not only substances—chemicals or parts of plants, for instance—as toxic but the film apparatus as well, its history since the nineteenth century and its social effects, but also the way we continue to work in it. Furthermore, the film apparatus uses chemicals for transmitting light, which is reflected by objects and captured in images that cannot be separated from their means of production.⁴ Moreover, these images have been used to poison. However, neither the effects nor the critical dosage is predictable.



Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz, *Toxic*, 2012. Film still. photo: Ousliade Soussi-Chiadini.

Our shooting took place in Paris, where the film was supposed to premiere as part of the Paris Triennale, which was entitled "Intense Proximity" and dealt with French anthropological and colonial history. Accordingly, the Paris World's Fairs of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were ghosts that accompanied our search. Pauline and I discussed W.E.B. du Bois's series of 363 photographs called *Types of American Negroes, Georgia, U.S.A.*, which were his contribution to the *American Negro Exhibit* at the 1900 World's Fair in Paris and won him a gold medal. While largely making use of the mug shot, Du Bois's photographs still might be seen as toxic to the legacy of racist taxonomy and eugenics, which were so overwhelmingly present at the World's Fair. Du Bois's photographs utilize familiar elements: shots from the front and from profile, no full names, no explanatory captions which might point in the direction of critique, social antagonism, or antiracism. But the doses, effects, and affectivities are different: instead of producing "white" viewers and inviting them to learn to identify the individuals represented, to scrutinize the bodily markers, the gaze here seems to be more complicated. The light is softer, the eyes of the photographed are allowed to wander and look off camera, they sometimes grin, they look as if in complicity, or it seems they almost can't hold back from laughing.

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Top: W.E.B. du Bois: *Types of American Negroes*, Georgia, U.S.A., in: Shawn Michelle Smith, *Photography on the Color Line*, W.E.B. Du Bois, Race, and Visual Culture, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2004, photograph by Ousmane Sissou-Chiadi. Bottom: Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz, *Toxic*, 2012. Vitrine with fifteen photographs of "pédérastes" from the 1870s, Paris Police Archive.

Time and again, quite diverse body markers refuse to function as signs of racial difference; some of the portraits display middle-class clothes and decorative elements such as Victorian chairs, books, and lace curtains. Shawn Michelle Smith describes how the careful weighing of elements makes use of toxic effects: "By 'signifying' on the form of the criminal as well as the scientific mug shot, Du Bois's photographs suggest that for some (white) viewers, the middle-class portrait of an African-American was equivalent to the mug shot of a criminal ... It is precisely this transformation of the black image in the eyes of white beholders (a transformation of the black image into a criminal mug shot) that Du Bois's Georgia Negro portraits unmark."⁴ It is striking that Du Bois successfully showed this presentation amidst the World's Fair of 1900, which is known for its specifically racist "human zoos."

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We were also looking for images of homosexuals and transvestites, a search that turned out to be more difficult. With the support of our friend and colleague Virginie Bobin we finally found portraits of homosexuals and transvestites at the Paris police archive. These so-called *pederastes* were caught and photographed by the police in the 1870s. Their photographs were taken at a time when the state institutions had not yet developed their own visualizing methods and apparatus. They obviously took the apprehended homosexuals to commercial photography studios and had them photographed in a bourgeois setting, with the same poses of pride and peacocky self-presentation that had been developed as means of recognition by the establishment. This inspired the thesis that we experimented with during the shooting of *Toxic*: Even if the cinematic apparatus tries to allow for unmediated objectivity and knowledge about "stranger danger,"⁶ it might—as dirty and uncanny by-products—also produce ec/static bodies and queer connections. As a first step we produced a series of photographs—assemblages of historic mug shots and a range of elements from protest movements and queer subculture. These assemblages became the backdrops of our film. These assemblages became the backdrops of our film.



Pauline Brody / Renée Loreutz, *Toxic*, 2012, film still. Photo: Ouidade Sissi-Chakni.

Toxicity (voices 1 & 2)

The discourse on toxicity alludes to many different fields of politics, especially those touching on the body, such as HIV/AIDS and the history of AIDS movements, illness in general, and the engagement of patient movements (e.g., the SPK, or "Socialist Patient Collective"), drugs, and the question how they intervene into the pace of capitalism, bodies in transition and the freeing of hormones from medicalized practices. Furthermore, toxicity and media have an intimate relationship. Yet they are by no means monogamous, but rather develop multiple and dynamic connections that could be called "toxic assemblages." Mug shots intoxicate bodies that are captured by the criminalizing or pathologizing gaze. Subjectivities, insinuated as toxins of the social body, inhabit fantasies and travel in media images, thus becoming self-fulfilling prophecies. The usage, production, and circulation of media technologies spread poison globally, although in highly differentiated and differentiating ways.

Yet assemblages are neither stable nor foreseeable. Therefore, the question is where and how toxicity may also develop pleasurable, enabling, surprising, and curative effects. How might media and technologies that poison and hurt also cure and empower? Are there strategies of intoxication that can be turned against



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themselves? And could the intoxicated social body become the home of queer socialities? Queer socialities are built upon the simultaneity of pleasure and pain. They do not forget their constitution in histories of abjection, alienation, and appropriation. They understand violence, conflict, and unequal power relations as feeding the desires and struggles for freedom and belonging. Thus, in the following we will fantasize, think, and quarrel about the toxic as a means of queering subjectivity and sociality. We envision a sociality formed not by healthy, sane, and self-same bodies claiming wholeness, autonomy, and control, but by toxic (intoxicated/intoxicating) bodies affected by and affecting toxic assemblages and forming queer socialities.



Padine Douky / Renato Lorenz, *Toxic*, 2012, film still. Photo: Ouidade Sousa-Chadani.

Desiring Assemblages / Queer Assemblages / Toxic Assemblages (voice 2)

According to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, a body is not an isolated entity, but involved in assemblages as well as being an assemblage itself, consisting of dynamic relations among objects, images, and concepts.¹ The *body without organs* seems a particularly promising figure, since it consists of parts which are no longer organized in order to be functional for a whole. Those dis-organized parts escape categorization, hierarchization, and subjectivization, yet they still form a unity that affects and gets affected, a unity whose activity may change directions, and may grow or be reduced in intensity and speed. Deleuze/Guattari are not interested in drawing clear-cut borders between human, animal, technological, animated, or lifeless bodies, nor between imaginary bodies, body images, and flesh. Rather, they ask about processes of *becoming*. Dynamic relations form and transform particular assemblages; they may *territorialize*, that is, stabilize in a normative or idealized format, yet they may also *deterritorialize*, and they are celebrated when providing occasions for *lines of flight*.

From a queer perspective, I am attracted to the fact that in Deleuze/Guattari's thinking, it is desire that conjoins assemblages and keeps them moving.² Desire shows up as assemblage, while the assemblage is a *desiring-machine* (Deleuze/Guattari), or as Margit Shildrick puts it: Desire "comes into being through what Deleuze and Guattari call 'desiring machines,' assemblages that cannot be said to exist outside of their linkages and interconnection."² Accordingly, assemblages produce desire by connecting and moving. So what would it mean to combine reflections on toxicity with the dynamics of desire? Is there a specific affinity among desiring assemblages, queer assemblages, and toxic assemblages? Does the combination of toxicity's



capacity to affect bodies and desire's capacity to connect bodies have the potential to capture and transform complex relations of power and domination?

Queer-feminist approaches that focus not primarily on gender and sexuality, but instead look at gender and sexuality's heterogeneous connections with other dimensions of embodied subjectivity, point out that desire is simultaneously a conservative as well as a transformative force. It differentiates and creates hierarchies, yet it also disrupts normalized expectations and inspires unexpected connections.¹⁰ Furthermore, desire is seen as unfolding a constitutive force not only in subjectivities and intimate social relations, but in societies. Queer-feminist approaches link a Deleuze-Guattarian notion of desire's productivity being *prior* to power with an understanding influenced by Michel Foucault, which considers desire as a socio-historical *product* of power (or, more specifically, of power/knowledge systems).¹¹ The two moments of desire as stabilizing and challenging relations of power are neither played against one another nor subordinated to a harmonizing synthesis.

With regard to the question of how the movements of desire are actualized, how desire produces connections, and how it is possible for these connections to become queer, Elspeth Probyn comes to the conclusion that desire moves in images, or that images "move as lines of desire."¹² Images bring a specific socio-historical imaginary into play. They materialize in bodies or show up as visual material. The movements of images make it possible to liberate desire from being bound to a subject or an object and thus also elude the hierarchical subject/object arrangement. Images traversing the "surface of the social" undermine the notion that the assemblage takes place *between* reified objects, signs, or bodies.¹³ Alternating ambiguously between notion and imagination, imprint and designed surface, images are both singular and concrete. Through attention to images, Probyn undermines readings that understand Deleuze/Guattari's concept of desire as ahistorical, transcendent, or ontologizing. At the same time, she also emphasizes that representation cannot be constrained to the field of the regulated production of meaning or controlling power, but rather makes use of the linkage between imagination and desire to impel anticipative and transforming movements: "The image, thus freed from its post within a structure of law, lack, and signification, can begin to move all over the place. It then causes different ripples and affects, effects of desire and desirous affects."¹⁴



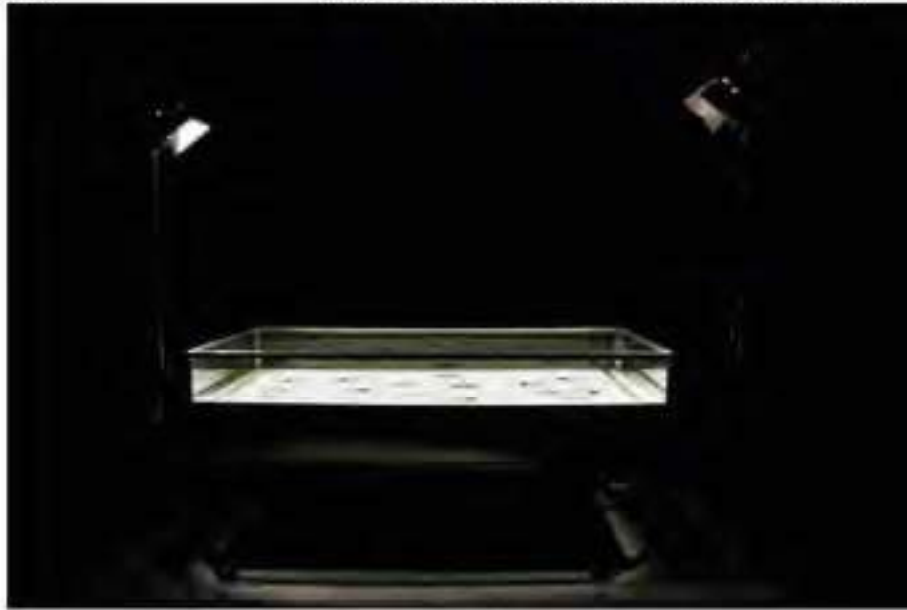
Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz, *Toxic*, 2012, film still. Photo: Ouidade Soussi-Chadmi.

The imagery of *Toxic* and the accompanying considerations by Renate Lorenz and Pauline Boudry remind us that images are also loaded with violence. Thus, the connections and movements of desire may actualize



themselves in a simultaneously intoxicated and intoxicating image. Toxicity also demands that we find our way back from the image to the body, since the toxic reveals the vulnerability of the body and its capacity for being affected. This image-poison-body assemblage needs to be addressed if we desire social transformation, and if art and politics aim at undermining hierarchies, exclusions, and normalizations. To “construct the possible,” as Probyn puts it, requires “images of bodies and desires, history and histories that are central to reformulating the social.”¹⁵ Yet, “the possible is only real with the addition of an act of mind that throws its image back into the past once it has been enacted.”¹⁶ Such desiring movements between past and present that invite the future as an immediate possibility characterize *Toxic*, as they do most of the previous films by Boudry/Lorenz. In inviting embodiments, which in “transtemporal drag” transgress clear-cut borders between past, future, and present, between image and body, between identification and desire, they provide a space for queer sociality.¹⁷

Queer sociality, as envisioned by Elizabeth Povinelli, is able to integrate histories of exploitation, domination, and violence into friendship practices fueled by joy, happiness, and respect.¹⁸ Acknowledging and acting upon conditions of irreducible difference, asymmetry, and power becomes possible due to an understanding of desire as carrying with it a simultaneity of pleasure and pain. Yet, while for Jacques Lacan *jouissance* is an antisocial experience, Povinelli insists that *jouissance* may be shared, and indeed may turn into queer sociality. Her conviction that embodied subjectivities and relationships—which carry sexist, racist, heteronormative, ableist, and colonial legacies—might be transformed, but not without conflict and injuries, develops from her friendship with an old indigenous woman named Ruby Yarrowin. Their friendship developed very slowly from a linguistic research process, which, in moments of joy again and again confronted both of them with the ongoing pain induced by the white hegemony of Australian settler colonialism. The asymmetric research setting, the striving for language and understanding, Yarrowin’s kinship relations in contrast to Povinelli’s lesbian self-understanding, created unbridgeable gaps. Facing these differences while acknowledging the limits of communication nevertheless created an intimacy of *jouissance*, joyful and painful at the same time. Looking at wider social practice that developed from the bonding built upon *jouissance* and, in fact, extending beyond Yarrowin’s death as a kinship community that incorporated Povinelli, she proposes the term “queer sociality.” If we now conjoin queer sociality and the toxic, we want to focus on the body as an assemblage, more precisely as a desiring assemblage, a model which challenges distinctions between bodies or between bodies and images in order to allow for a transformation of socialities.



Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz, *Toxic*, 2012. Film installation at Paris Triennial "Intense Proximity," Laboratoires d'Aubervilliers, vitrine with fifteen photographs, two theatre spots. Photo: Ouidade Soussi-Chadmi.

Queer Socialities (voice 1)

Everybody in the team was sick when we were shooting *Toxic* at Aubervilliers in February 2012. The illness, whose cause was unknown, produced a strange but overwhelming union of us all through infection. We wondered if it was a virus (influenza or a stomach flu) or if it was in fact a substance, a toxic one. Could it have been a cure, if taken in a small dose? Yet, in higher concentrations as we experienced it, it produced a quite tough body-substance-object-connection. However, it allowed for escapes (staying in bed, alone or in company; being comforted by cushions; refusing to work; dreaming instead of functioning). At the same time, for some of our bodies it was too much to take. Thinking back to this collaborative illness, I ask myself if the body thinks differently and produces differently under such conditions. Did our bodies act on forms of collectivity in the course of the production? Or, the other way around, was our serious illness caused by the filming of *Toxic*? Was there a certain predisposition to feeling sick, since we were obsessed with toxic processes? My assumption is that toxicity is something different than a feature or a substance that can be isolated; rather, it occurs as part of a certain relationality.¹⁹

Mel Y. Chen echoes this argument when she argues that discourses of toxicity often produce or uphold social hierarchies and racist assumptions.²⁰ One of her examples is toys produced in China for export and marked by Western media as toxic and dangerous to kids. Apart from the fact that this danger seems to target white, middle-class kids, the media coverage also ignores the toxic working conditions in China grounded in Western consumerism. For the matter of understanding the complex effects of toxicity, her text makes a couple of interesting twists and turns. Once the reader feels sure about comprehending her argument on the hierarchizing effect of discourses on toxicity, she unexpectedly shifts attention to her personal condition of "multiple chemical sensitivity." She explains that she cannot leave the house without a mask, and when she's outside she perpetually scans her surroundings:

Some passenger cars whiz by, instinctively my body retracts and my corporeal-sensory



vocabulary starts to kick back in. A few pedestrians cross my path and before they come near, I quickly assess whether they are likely (might be the “kind of people”) to wear perfumes or colognes, or sunscreen. I scan their heads for smoke puffs or pursed lips prerelease; I scan their hands for a long white object, even a stub. In an instant, quicker than I thought anything could reach my liver and have it refuse, the liver screams hate, hate whose intensity each time shocks me.²¹

The reader becomes aware that Chen’s critical attitude towards discourses of toxicity does not help her in keeping her personal relation to toxicity and its harmful effects at arms length. Recognizing her intense hatred of those who might expose her to a toxin, she draws another unexpected connection: she is reminded of the hatred she experienced in others when they confronted her, the adolescent bitch of Asian origin, with homophobic and racist comments. Obviously, the relationship between bodies and toxins cannot be explained by chemical reactions, but depends upon and affects the organization of the social. Chen, in addition, does not only see others as potential danger, but she is seen as dangerous herself; wearing a mask, she appears to others as a potential bearer of a virus, such as AIDS or SARS.

Following these considerations, I would like to rethink the connection between body and toxin. Instead of understanding it as an encounter of two entities (the body confronted with a substance that might be either healing or destructive), the body-toxin relationships come into view as an assemblage of elements. Fueled by power relations, the assemblage is flexible in its configuration, functions, and effects. Thus, not a toxic substance, not an intoxicated body, but *becoming-toxic*: an embodiment without differentiation between “taking poison” and “being poison,” a body configuration which cannot be understood by applying common categories. Ambivalences are not only allowed but facilitated: between poison and cure; between the drug, which is enjoyable and enables different body practices, and the substance, which intoxicates, paralyzes, or even kills.

In *Queer Art*, I suggested the term “drag” as name for this kind of assemblage.²² Drag introduces yet another feature: it allows for ambivalences between bodies and images, or fantasies of embodiments. Drag is a hybrid between body and image, neither a document nor a fiction. The application of the term drag and the acknowledgement of its hybridity allow me to see *Toxic* as not intending to represent or document “deviant” bodies. There might be similarities to bodies, but it seems more accurate to talk about *embodiments*. These are always “other” (not “other than normal” but “beyond”), in “another time” and “elsewhere.” They are saturated not only with public fantasies but also with haunting images from the past. Thus, drag facilitates the production of a particular reference to the practices of shows, of freak shows, of male and female impersonators, of cakewalks, of epileptic dances, of cross-dressing practices that drive and have driven gender, sexual, and anti-racist activism and which have tested out and reproduced strategies of estrangement and distancing from norms and normalcy.

As I suggest in *Queer Art*, drag as an artistic practice might break hegemonic interpellations, producing a temporal and spatial distance—a deferral and a gap—between an experience and its possible effects on the process of subjectivation. Thus, drag assemblages do not engage in “doing gender/sexuality/race,” but instead support an “undoing.” If, as Judith Butler writes, I am constituted through norms that are not of my own making, then drag helps to understand how this constitution occurs.²³ Furthermore, it reconstructs it on one’s own body. But at the same time, drag is a way to organize a set of effective, laborious, partially friendly, and partially aggressive methods of producing distance to these norms—for instance, to the two-gender system, to being-white, being-able, and to heteronormativity. In its (un)doing capacity, drag proposes images in which the future can be lived. Drag, then, is fabricated by sets of bodily characteristics and actions. While it may indeed depict norms, it is by no means subjected to them.



Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz, *Toxic*, 2012, film still, Photo: Ouidade Soussi-Chiadi.

Becoming-indigestible: The Intoxication of Projective Integration (voice 2)

While drag undermines the norm, experiences of inequality and hierarchization still need to be considered in relation to processes of normalization that integrate rather than exclude. Normalization may appear as, for example, addressing “difference as cultural capital” in neoliberal consumer culture, or through appropriating the former “other” as an indicator of a tolerance built upon a subtle hierarchy between who tolerates and those tolerated. Thus, one may also ask whether the ec/static bodies and queer connections that *Toxic* displays, and which have been honored here as the “dirty and uncanny by-products” of the media apparatus, are by now an integral part of a socially acknowledged “possible.” I coined the term “projective integration” in order to point out the inherent role of images and their projection onto social bodies for such processes of neoliberal modernization.²⁴ Images employed in these processes function as projections of today’s contradictory character of difference: on the one hand, difference perceived as cultural capital, providing promising features to the individual, and on the other hand, difference that carries with it the threat of stigma and devaluation. Projective integration strives to activate the individual by stimulating the desire to manage skillfully the precariousness of difference. The individual challenge consists in developing a sovereign mode of embodying precariousness. On a social level, projective integration is a form of biopolitical management that imposes on the individual the responsibility for failure, success, and thus social inequalities and hierarchies, while simultaneously securing the hegemony of a neoliberal achievement principle and market logic.

So, if one longs for recognition and the inclusion of differences and singularities, but does not believe in or agree to being subsumed within neoliberal pluralism, how can one resist? What are the options of queer cultural politics and artistic practices? In addition to the considerations on drag, I would like to introduce the notion of *becoming-indigestible*. This notion underlines the paradoxical moment of being incorporated, yet not built into the system. It refers to the idea of toxicity, since it implies remaining non-assimilable. I would like to consider whether it might prove useful as a critique and reworking of social processes of projective integration. The toxic—resisting being digested and split up into useful parts that can be integrated into the system—turns out to be a means of either changing or, maybe, destroying the system from within. Even if it finally gets discarded, the toxic can have effects on its host that are threatening, even life-threatening, or pleasurable. Following Chen, I would like to ask about queer productivity and queer societies, even in



"queer-inanimate social lives," that "toxicity propels, not repels ... inviting loss and its 'losers.'"²⁵

I understand becoming-indigestible not simply as a queer political strategy *against* processes of projective integration, but *in favor of* a "move beyond the painful 'antisocial' effects to consider the sociality that is present there ... the queer-inanimate social lives that exist beyond the fetish, beyond the animate, beyond the pure clash of human sex."²⁶ And note, it is *becoming*, not *being*, indigestible. Becoming, according to Deleuze/Guattari, is not a temporal process: it refers neither to a linear development from A to B nor to the continuity of development. As they write in *What is Philosophy?*, becoming is

not the transformation of one into the other ... but something passing from one to the other ... It is a zone of indetermination, of indiscernibility, as if things, beasts, and persons ... endlessly reach that point that immediately precedes their natural differentiation.²⁷

Thus, transtemporal drag comes back to mind, with its claim of indiscernibility between future, past, and present, as well as its perpetual suspension of the question regarding the artificial naturalness or natural artificiality of bodies and images: "becoming is neither an imitation nor an experienced sympathy, nor even an imaginary identification."²⁸ Becoming-indigestible, therefore, does not reveal anything about the subject or object of digestion, but implies "something passing" that, in fleeing established forms of subjectivity and sociality, forms queer, toxic-desiring assemblages. This might be what Chen experiences in the intimacy with her sofa, which in moments of hypersensitivity provides, as she describes, for an animated interobjectivity between the sofa's mammal skin and Chen's own, as well as for a different perception of her lover, whom she conflates with the sofa.²⁹

Returning to *Toxic*, I would like to ask whether becoming-indigestible might also prove useful for conceiving artistic strategies that aim to challenge intoxication by cultural images or social relations. As *Toxic* proposes, subjectivities developing from processes of intoxication may decide to function as toxic themselves rather than seeking detoxification. This is a double-edged attempt, since it steps into a tradition of declaring those who have been exposed to intoxication toxic themselves and treating them accordingly. *Toxic* plays out this reversal, or shall we call it perversion, ironically. The people wearing masks in the mug shots experience an amplification of their presumed monstrosity, while they are simultaneously protected by the masks and seem to wear them proudly or even as protest signs; or rather, it is not a wearing of masks, it is practicing drag. There is an ambivalence between sympathy and threat: "Sometimes a mask is still a mask, even if it is simultaneously a masquerade."³⁰ Played out as desiring assemblages between the images on the screen, the figures in drag, the posted plants, and the production crew resembling and sacrificing the apparatus, power and violence are embodied and incorporated, but not digested. The historical format of the mug shot remains visible. Thanks to a vivid cough, intoxicating substances spread all over the place. The glittering whirl gets stuck in the vacuum cleaner rather than being sucked in. Thus, one could say that *Toxic* becomes-indigestible—a site of queer sociality among those "who celebrate existence outside the charmed circle of sexual normativity"—because it does not dissolve or neutralize the toxicity of the media apparatus, but embodies its connection to *jouissance*, indiscernibly pleasurable and painful.³¹

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MOUSSE 38 ~ *Pauline Bondry / Renate Lorenz*

BERLIN



QUEER ARCHAEOLOGY

BY ANNE-SOPHIE DINANT



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Berlin-based artists Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz make installations using 16mm film, photography and props. Boudry and Lorenz apply the term "queer archaeology" to designate their practice which refers to some chosen moments of queer and feminist history. Covering recent works like *Toxic, No Future/No Past, Solomonica, Charming for the Revolution, Normal Work*, Boudry and Lorenz talk to Anne-Sophie Dinant about their projects, from the making of "filmed performances" in collaboration with performers to their installation process and why they consider film an ideal space for performance.

Anne-Sophie Dinant In your work you have a unique way of associating performance and film. Since your very early productions, you claim a strong influence of performer and filmmaker Jack Smith, announcing in your new film *Toxic* (2012). Could you say a few words about how you've developed a personal way of directing and filming performance, keeping Smith's aesthetic in mind?

Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz Yes, we like to describe our films as "filmed performances", though they are not exactly documenting a performance; performance and the medium film are somehow folded into each other. Instead of taking a number of short takes from different angles, we usually shoot long sequences with our performers in 16mm. For our film *No Future/No Past* (2011) we used three-minute reels. We always shot each reel without a break and used the rhythm of the length of the reels as the rhythm of the performance. The film material forces us to be economical, which means that we sometimes produce just one take. In the editing process we keep long sequences intact, but we also add cuts and repetitions to make our interventions in the performance visible. You often see the clapperboard in the film, which highlights our staging. We sometimes add and stop music abruptly, so the means and the process of production are present. In our installations we are interested in what happens between the filmed performance, the archive the performers refer to, the camera and us behind the camera, the audience which is addressed by the performers again and again, and the space where the audience finds itself when looking at the film. Every element becomes some kind of autonomous actor in the piece. You mention Jack Smith. One aspect we really like in his work is that he never finished his films. One could say he used his films to produce new performances, editing them as he was projecting them, bringing his vinyls and playing them for the soundtrack. These performances were very dependent on his presence. We work differently, by doing installations, but we are very interested in that intention. There are other aspects of course that are very inspiring, his way of filming the performers, the attention to all the aesthetic details of costumes and props, and of course the role of failure, which is always addressed in his own performances.

ad Your work reflects your interest in queer and feminist history. Looking at documentary images from the past, you conduct research on how queer marginality was treated by the establishment. You talk about "queer archaeology". This becomes the departure point of your films that make connections to the present, integrating, as actors, historical and contemporary queer political figures such as Yvonne Rainer, Wu Tsang or Ginger Brooks Takahashi.

ad/ed We somehow try to trace it, more precisely, to recreate moments of "becoming" in the past, moments that might have challenged marginal status. These are moments that are not part of "History" with a capital H. There is an urgent need to develop different pasts. So our installations are not just about dealing with the past or producing an alternative narrative. By looking at forgotten or disavowed feminist or queer moments, artists, acts or leftovers, we try to articulate a current desire that may create an archive of desexualizing practices.

In *Solomonica* (2009), for instance, you see Wu Tsang, a contemporary artist and performer. He brings his background and set of references to the film, and connects at the same time to different figures of the past. Alla Nazimova is the 1930s or Valda Serefield (Yvonne Rainer's dancer) in the 70s. By doing this, he does not try to be or "act" those figures, but connects to objects, pieces of clothes, embodiments, gestures and poses. We like to call this "temporal drag", which is a term borrowed from Elizabeth Freeman. "Temporal drag" involves the co-presence of several historically specific events, moments and collective pleasures. It also implies resistance to the temporal modes of progress or linearity, and to the idea that there is an increasing amount of knowledge and enlightenment when it comes to dealing with the variety of bodies.



Above and opposite ~ *Toxic*, 2012. Performers: Gugen Brooks Takahashi, Warner Birnes. Courtesy: Klum de Bruijne Projects, Amsterdam, and Marcella Alin, Paris

Following page ~ *Normal Work*, 2011. Courtesy: Klum de Bruijne Projects, Amsterdam, and Marcella Alin, Paris

Below ~ *No Future / No Past*, 2011. Courtesy: Klum de Bruijne Projects, Amsterdam, and Marcella Alin, Paris





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and: The actors are often friends coming from the alternative theater, performance and music scenes. Werner Hirsch is the leading main character starting in almost all your films. Can you tell us a bit about this ongoing collaboration?

pbld: To avoid any trap of acting, we actually never work with actors, but with dancers, performers, musician or artists. We are usually huge fans of the work of the people with whom we collaborate. As you say, it is very important to produce a collaborative space in our practice that engages us in a dialogue with friends, a long-term exchange. The collaboration with Werner Hirsch is a great example. We love his work as a choreographer, and it often inspires us for our films with him, which are really the result of a lot of concrete discussions and meetings. We have ongoing collaborations not only with performers like the artist Ginger Brooks Takahashi, but also for example with our director of photography, Bernarini Pazonen, or with artists like Andrea Thal, who directs an off-space in Zürich called Las Compiexes, where we have exhibited almost every new work over the last couple of years. We just started a collaboration with Eileen in London on research and production. One could say that "labour" in the art field and its conditions become part of the examination, and might function differently, at least in this small environment.

and: I wanted to ask if you could talk about your concept of installation display within the exhibition space, which also has an important focus on exhibiting original sources. Performance *Two* is shown alongside historical staged photography.

pbld: There are different reasons why we want to accompany the films with archives.

In *Almond Work* (2007), we worked with the portraits and self-portraits of a maid, Hannah Culwick, who lived in London in the second half of the 19th century. We were really interested in the photograph, as she not only poses in her dirty working clothes, but also imagines herself in different images of social positions: as a bourgeois gentleman, as a bourgeois lady, or as a nude slave. Hannah Culwick staged and obviously desired these coverings of social hierarchies of class, gender and "race". In this installation we ask if the pictures from the 19th century allow us to understand something about today's paradoxical requirement in the field of neo-liberal labour. If we didn't show the original photographs, the audience might think Hannah Culwick is a fictional character, invented by us. It is not our intention to produce this confusion, which is why the installation wouldn't work without Hannah Culwick's archive.

In *Two*, we refer to the history of the mug shot, the technique of photographing people both visually and in profile. It was invented at the end of the 17th century by the police to photograph criminals, anarchists, sex workers and homosexuals, as well as by anthropologists to classify people from the colonies. Here we are referring to a very violent history, and we didn't want to show the actual sources again. We created our own mug shots, which are a kind of a backdrop for our performers. The embodiments we created together with the performers Werner Hirsch and Ginger Brooks Takahashi are of unclear gender and origin. They wear masks and strange costumes and appear as assemblages, referring not only to early ethnographic imagery, but also to queer underground subculture and to street protests.

After the film was shot, we came across a very interesting series of images of "pédérastes" (the term used for homosexuals and trans-people) in the archives of the police in Paris. They date back to the 1870s, the period before the mug shot was invented. The police took the "pédérastes" to commercial photographic studios and had them photographed in a bourgeois setting. The amazing thing is that they stage themselves with the same poses of pride and proudly self-presentation that had been developed as means of recognition by the bourgeoisie.

It is really interesting for us to show these pictures in dialogue with the film: even if police photography usually aims at unmediated objectivity and knowledge, those images show that this apparatus might just as well produce modes of resistance, resistant bodies and queer connections.

and: Could you talk about your idea of solidarity and how in the film it is gradually leading to the concept of "breaking the order", directly referring to Jean Genet?

pbld: While working on *Two* and the discourses of solidarity, we came to the assumption that it could be useful to see not only substances—chemicals or parts of plants, among other things—as a code, but the photographic/filmic apparatus as well in history since the 19th century, the technologies, cameras, practices, discourses and social effects implied therein, in addition to the way we continue to work both in and through them.

In the second part of *Two*, Werner Hirsch, as a kind of a working-class drag queen, re-enacts a fragment of an interview by the BBC of Jean Genet, from 1955. In this part Jean Genet launches the sex, explaining the desire he had the night before. In his dream the technicians of the film revolted. They took his position in front of the camera and started to speak. It has to be said the crew of the BBC, why they are not doing this. (Our re-enactment of the breaking of the fourth wall implies of course a certain amount of self-irony on our part). In this moment Jean Genet not only marks and criticizes the hierarchy of the positions

in the film set (between producers, interviewers, technicians and interviewed), but also points at the main situation in which he finds himself. He compares the interview situation to that of a police interrogation. At the same time, he complains that through the interview situation, "I am entering the norm, I am entering the English homes".

While Jean Genet seemed to be quite optimistic about the possibility to "understand" or "visible change" in the domestic apparatus, he described very well how this apparatus marginalizes him (he is questioned, as in a police interrogation) and at the same time forces him to enter the norm. This vulnerability or precariousness bound to the visual is what we try to keep present in our installations.



and: In your films, the performance goes from stage (like in *Contagious*), to no stage (the *Two* shot in a small studio or a small room, an audience, in *Charming for the Revolution*, you chose to set up the whole duration of the performance outdoors, as if there were no determined space for performance. Would film itself be an ideal space for performing, allowing its presentation in any kind of physical space and therefore perpetuating its initial link with subculture?

pbld: This is a nice question. Film, for our practice, is an ideal space for performing, it is true. It allows for more than just the performers to perform. The camera is an agent of the performance, the filmmaker too. Sometimes we talk with the performers from behind the camera, or in *Two* you can even see us and the whole team, as the camera turns over to us after the poem of Werner Hirsch/Jean Genet. Film makes it possible to question spaces as supposedly "public" or "private" – which might be the case especially in *Charming for the Revolution* (2009), where a burning speech is given outside but not "in public", or in the presence of a different public, namely of a turtle and house birds. Film also induces an off-frame, which is a space that interests us a lot. We like the ambivalence that exists between performing and filming, because it allows us to question authenticity over and over. Is the audience performing or are they a real audience watching a performance by Virginia Davis and Arminia Martini in *Contagious* (2010)? When the camera turns over to the team in *Two*, what parts are staged, what parts are not? Do we actually see "everything" as the turnover suggests? Film allows us to work carefully with the different positions and hierarchies of the gaze.



BERLIN ~ *Faustine Boudey / Renata Lorenz*



Salomée, 2009. Performance:
Florence Buisson, Wu Tsang.
Courtesy: Ellen de Bruijne,
Amsterdam, and Marcelle Aïss, Paris

Eight - M.J. Rodriguez, 2011.
Performance: Werner Hirsch.
Courtesy: Ellen de Bruijne,
Amsterdam, and Marcelle Aïss, Paris

Below - *Contagious*, 2010.
Courtesy: Ellen de Bruijne,
Amsterdam, and Marcelle Aïss, Paris

Opposite - *Charming for the Revolution*, 2009. Performance:
Werner Hirsch. Courtesy: Ellen de Bruijne,
Amsterdam, and Marcelle Aïss, Paris

Next page - *Toxic*, 2011.
Performance: Singer Brooke Takahashi, Werner Hirsch.
Courtesy: Ellen de Bruijne,
Amsterdam, and Marcelle Aïss, Paris





MOUSSE 38 ~ Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz



Le artiste Pauline Boudry e Renate Lorenz lavorano a Berlino, usando installazioni che includono filmati in 16mm, fotografie e oggetti scultorei. Boudry e Lorenz utilizzano l'espressione "antropologia queer" per designare la loro pratica che fa riferimento a determinati momenti della storia queer e femminista. Passando in rassegna recenti lavori come *Toxic*, *No Futuro/No Past*, *Solemnario*, *Charming for the Revolution*, *Normal Work*, Boudry e Lorenz parlano con Anna-Sophie Simast dei loro progetti, dalla creazione di "performance filmate", in collaborazione con dei performer, al loro processo d'installazione e al motivo per cui considerano il film uno spazio ideale per la performance.



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Queer Archaeology

di Anne-Sophie Dinant

ANNE-SOPHIE DINANT: Con il vostro lavoro pro-ponete un modo unico di osservare performance e film. Un'idea evidente del performer a reg-ge Jack Smith, manifestata in delle vostre prime realizzazioni, sembra culminare nel vostro ultimo film *Tenue 0052*. Vi va di raccontare come avete sviluppato questo modo personale di deli-gare e filmare le performance e come mantenete questo richiamo all'estetica di Smith?

PAULINE BOUDRY / RENATE LORENZ: Sì, ci piace definire i nostri film "performance filmati" perché noi sono documentari di performance ma perfor-mance e medium filmico sembrano in qualche modo intrecciarsi in essi. In genere non realizziamo una serie di riprese brevi da parti di vista diversi, ma si prevedono i nostri performer le sequenze lunghe ai pubblici filmati. Per il film *No Future/No Past* (2011) abbiamo usato bobine da tre minuti, finendo ogni bobina senza interruzione e utilizzando la durata del-la stessa come ritmo della performance. La pellicola come materiale di obbligo alla presenza, motivo per cui qualche volta facciamo una ripresa soltanto. In fase di montaggio manteniamo intatte le sequenze lunghe ma inseriamo tagli e ripetizioni che rendono alcuni nostri inserimenti sulla performance. Nei film si vede spesso il "cine" come evasione della massa la scena. Qualche volta inseriamo e fermiamo la musica all'improvviso per sottolineare la presenza del corpo e del processo della produzione.

Ma le nostre installazioni, ci interessa che che accade tra la performance filmata, le fonti d'archivio usate dai performer, la macchina da presa e noi dietro di essa, il pubblico di quale i performer si rivolgono ri-petutamente, e in modo nel quale il pubblico si trova quando assiste al film. Ogni elemento diventa una sorta di attore autonomo dell'installazione.

A proposito di Jack Smith, uno degli aspetti che più amiamo del suo lavoro è il fatto che non fermava-se mai i suoi film. Potremmo dire che il utilizzo di un realizzare altre performance perché si muoveva mentre il performer, rivelando che il video che faceva ascoltare come qualcosa serio. Queste perfor-manze erano in buona sostanza dominate dalla sua presenza. Anche se il nostro di modo di lavorare at-traverso le installazioni è diverso, ci interessa molto questa intenzionalità. Certo tralasciamo ispirazione an-che da altri elementi: il suo modo di filmare gli attori, l'attenzione a tutti i dettagli estetici di costumi e ac-cessori, o naturalmente il ruolo del fallimento, che si sempre un tema anche delle sue performance.

ASD: Il vostro lavoro riflette l'intensità per la sto-ria queer e femminista. Rivelando e immagini documentarie del passato, sviluppiate una ricerca sul modo in cui la marginalità queer è stata tratta-della installazioni. Quella che definite "archeo-logia queer" diventa il punto di partenza dei vostri film che stabiliscono connessioni con il presente attraverso il coinvolgimento, come attori, di figu-re della politica queer storica e contemporanea come Yvonne Rainer, Wu Tsang o Ginger Brooks Takauchi.

PB/RL: Conosciamo in qualche modo di delineare, in meglio storico, momenti del "diverso" nel passato che hanno contribuito lo stato di marginalità. Sono momenti che non fanno parte della "Storia" con la "B" maiuscola. C'è un urgente bisogno di sviluppare passati diversi: per questo le nostre installazioni non si occupano solo del passato o di produrre una nar-razione alternativa. Guardando a momenti, affetti, aperti o reclusi femminili o queer, tentiamo di dare voce a voci volenti attive di creare un archivio di pratiche normalizzanti.

In *Salvaviva* (2009), ad esempio, quasi Wu Tsang, un artista e performer contemporaneo, che porta nel film il proprio background e sistema di riferimenti, relazionale al tempo con diverse figure del passato: Ada Hazzmova, negli anni Venti, e Vida Be-terfield (la danzatrice di Yvonne Rainer, negli anni Settanta). Non cerca così di essere o "interpretare" quelle figure ma di relazionarsi a oggetti, elementi di abbigliamento, gesti di personificazione, e pose. Ci piace definire tutto questo "temporal drag", un'es-pressione coniata da Elisabeth Freeman. "Temporal drag" richiama una comprensione di di-versi eventi, momenti e diverrimenti: solleciti sto-ricamente specifici e vuol dire anche mettere alle modalità temporali di progresso o inerzia e all'idea che quando si guarda alle varietà dei corpi si deter-mina una quantità crescente di conoscenza e illumi-nazione.

ASD: Gli attori sono spesso amici provenienti dalle scene alternative di teatro, performance o musica. Walter Hirsch è il personaggio pri-mario di quasi tutti i vostri film. Cosa vi dice di questa collaborazione che continua nel tempo?

PB/RL: Per non cadere nella trappola della recita-zione, invece che con gli attori lavoriamo con stanz-ze, performance, installati in attori. In genere siamo grandi fan del lavoro delle persone con cui collabo-riamo. Come del fa, è molto importante produrre nella nostra pratica uno spazio collaborativo che ci porti ad aprire con gli amici un dialogo su uno scambio di lungo periodo, o la collaborazione con Walter Hirsch ne è un buon esempio. Ci piace mol-to il suo lavoro di coreografo e infatti ce ne servia-mo spesso come ispirazione: per i nostri film in cui compare, che sono il risultato di una lunga serie di conversazioni e interessi comuni. Le collaborazioni stabili che abbiamo costruito non sono solo con per-former come l'artista Ginger Brooks Takauchi ma anche, ad esempio, con Davidjee Tsai, il re-attore direttore della fotografia, o con artisti come Andrea That, che dirige Lee Complices, uno spazio off a Zurigo dove, da un paio d'anni, produciamo quasi tutti i nostri lavori. Abbiamo appena inizio-to una collaborazione con Elina a Londra su ricerca e produzione. Si può dire che il "lavoro" nel campo dell'arte e le sue condizioni, e come potrebbe funzio-nare diversamente, almeno in questo piccolo ambi-to, diventa parte dell'indagine.

ASD: Vorrei chiedervi il valore della vostra idea di allentamento nello spazio espositivo, che riguarda molto anche il modo di presentare le fonti delle quali partite, nel favorimento del film sulla performance a fotografia storica.

PB/RL: Sono diverse le ragioni per cui scegliamo di accompagnare i film a fonti d'archivio.

Nel caso di *Normal Heart* (2007), abbiamo lavorato con i ritratti e gli autoritratti di una domestica, Han-nah Culwick, assunta a Londra nella seconda metà dell'Ottocento. La fotografia di intervista molto sen-ziale, non solo lei si ritrae con gli abiti da lavo-ro, perché, ma anche perché lei mette in scena in diverse combinazioni di suoi abiti: il giletto borghese, la signora borghese, o lo schiavo nero. Hannah Culwick metteva in scena, e naturalmente era interessata, a queste combinazioni di gerarchie sociali di classe, genere o "razza". In questa instal-lazione ci chiediamo se queste immagini ottocen-tesche possono far capire qualcosa delle situazioni paradossali del lavoro neo-liberista che si è venuta a creare oggi. Se non avessimo presentato la foto-grafia originale, il pubblico avrebbe potuto vedere in Hannah Culwick un personaggio di fantasia, in-ventato da noi. Non volevamo che ci creasse una confusione di questo tipo, ecco perché l'installazio-ne non poteva funzionare senza l'archivio di Hannah Culwick.

In *Tenue*, ci occupiamo della storia della foto segna-letica, la tecnica che riprende gli individui di fronte a di profilo, inseriamo a fine Ottocento della poli-zia per fotografare criminali, anarchici, prostitute e omosessuali, ma usata anche dagli antropologi per classificare le popolazioni della polizia. Trattando-si di una storia caratterizzata da grande violenza, in questo caso abbiamo preferito non mostrare le fonti effettive, così abbiamo scelto foto segnaletiche ad hoc, che danno una sorta di fondale per i nostri performer. Le persone/fotografie che abbiamo cre-ato insieme a Walter Hirsch e Ginger Brooks Takauchi sono ambigue a livello di genere e di origine: in-dossano maschere e abiti costumi e si presentano come avanguardie che integrano non solo imma-gini etnografiche antiche ma anche la sottocultura queer e le manifestazioni di strada.

Dopo aver realizzato il film, ci è capitato di ritrovare nell'archivio della polizia di Parigi un'inimmensa-mente serie di immagini di "pédérastes" (appellativo affettato a omosessuali) a tratti risalenti agli anni Settanta dell'Ottocento, vale a dire prima ancora che fosse inventata la foto segnaletica. Allora la polizia faceva fotografare i "pédérastes" in scudi da foto-grafi commerciali che li ritraevano in un abito a si-stemi borghesi. Le cose sorprendono a che i soggetti si mettono in posa assumendo la stessa espressione di arroganza e auto-presentazione venale codificata come indici di riconoscimento da parte della bor-ghezia.

Ci pare molto interessante presentare queste im-magini in dialogo con il film: anche se la fotografia

è così tanto punto a consentire appetibilità e con-scienza non esclusiva, quella immagine documenta-ria come questo apparato può anche produrre modalità di resistenza, esempi estetici e contestazioni queer.

ASD: Cosa vi dice della vostra idea di società e di come questa si avvicini gradualmente nel film al concetto di "infrazione dell'ordine", con riferi-mento diretto a Jean Genet?

PB/RL: Mentre lavoriamo a *Tenue* e al tema della sessualità, siamo arrivate alla conclusione che potevamo avere un senso considerare la sessualità in rappor-to non solo alle sostanze – chimiche o estratte dalle piante, tra le altre – ma anche all'apparato fotogra-fico/filmico stesso: la sua storia dall'Ottocento in poi, le tecnologie, i temi, le pratiche, i discorsi e gli effetti sociali che implica, oltre al modo in cui contribuiva a lavorare sia dentro che attraverso di essi.

Nella seconda parte di *Tenue*, Walter Hirsch, come una specie di drag queen protettiva, mette in scena un frammento di un'intervista con Jean Genet rea-lizzata dalla BBC nel 1995.

In questo parte, Jean Genet interrompe l'intervista per raccontare un sogno che ha fatto la notte pri-ma del quale i temi del film si ribellano, prendono il suo posto davanti alla cinepresa e cominciano a parlare. A quel punto Genet chiede al tecnico della BBC perché non facciamo lo stesso il fatto che rap-presentiamo l'abbigliamento della quarta parete implica sostanzialmente una certa dose di autoritarietà da parte nostra. In questo momento, oltre a definire e critica-re la gerarchia del ruolo nel set cinematografico tra produttore, intervistato, tecnico e intervistato, Jean Genet pone l'accento sulla situazione storica nella quale si trova, garantendo quella dell'intervista a un interrogatorio di polizia. Nella stessa tempo, le-miamo il fatto che la situazione dell'intervista in quel "a entrare nella norma, a entrare nella casa inglese". Pur mantenendo piuttosto intatto il tema la possi-bilità di "copiare" o di rendere possibile il cambia-mento dell'apparato cinematografico, Jean Genet descrive perfettamente il modo in cui questo le mar-ginalizza nel senso sotto: come, durante un interrogatorio di polizia e, nello stesso tempo, lo sbaglia a entrare nella norma. È proprio questa vul-nerabilità e precarietà legata al video che tentiamo di presentare nella nostra installazione.

ASD: Nei vostri film la performance passa dal performance (come in *Contagious*) all'assenza di performance: la luce-chi di un piccolo studio o di una stanza, un autoritratto, un *selfie* (*Selfie for the Revolution*), avere scelto di ambientare l'intera performance all'interno, come se non esistesse uno spazio a esso dedicato. Forse è proprio il film uno spazio ideale per la perfor-mance, dal momento che non consente la presen-tazione di qualunque spazio fisico e dunque ne persegue il legame intimo con la sottocultura?

PB/RL: Questa è una forza dominante. È vero che per la nostra pratica il film è uno spazio ideale per la performance, perché la cinepresa, oltre a consentire al performer di esprimersi, diventa a sua volta agen-te della performance. Così come lo diventiamo noi, che realizziamo il film, che talvolta performo con i performer da dietro la macchina da presa o, come in *Tenue*, siamo proprio visibili insieme a tutta la sequ-enza, quando la cinepresa si volge verso di noi dopo la parola di Walter Hirsch/Jean Genet. Il film con-sente di indagare gli spazi in quanto teoricamente "pubblici" e "privati" – sono forse accade in parti-colare in *Charmion for the Revolution* (2008), dove il promette un discorso infusato all'esterno ma non "in pubblico", o meglio alla presenza di un pubbli-co diverso, vale a dire una baracca e alcuni grandi suoli. Il film segue anche un buon esempio, che è uno spazio che ci interessa molto. Ci piace l'ambi-entazione esistente tra fare una performance e fare un film, perché ci consente di mettere continuamente in discussione l'autenticità. Il pubblico è parte del-la performance e è un pubblico vero e proprio che assiste alla performance di Vaginal Davis o Aronisa Martinez in *Contagious* (2010)? Quando la macchi-na da presa si gira verso il gruppo in *Tenue*, quel-ghi parti sono necessariamente a quel nel *Stigma* devono sedendo "tutto" così come questa involuzione ha-bile creano? Il film si presenta di mantenere con-tinuo le diverse posizioni e gerarchie dello sguardo.



PAULINE BOUDRY / RENATE LORENZ

Les temporalités queer mises en scène par Pauline Boudry et Renate Lorenz opèrent par délimitation et superposition temporelles et réappropriation d'archives liées aux questions de sexe et de genre – *Normal Work* en 2007 – ou à la période punk – *No future / No past* en 2011. Avec *N.O. Body* (2008), les deux artistes ont effectué une recherche autour de Magnus Hirschfeld, théoricien de la transition sexuelle du début du 20^e siècle. Dans *Sexology Pictures* (publié en 1930), Hirschfeld recollait des photos et des dessins de personnes à l'identité sexuelle « non définie ». Pauline Boudry et Renate Lorenz ont choisi parmi ces images celle d'Annie Jones (1865-1902), célèbre femme à barbe du Barnum Circus. À la fois bête de foire et objet pathologique, celle-ci incarne cette infiltration de la science dans les corps telle qu'elle a eu lieu tout au long du 19^e siècle. Cette photographie va faire l'objet d'un re-enactement par Pauline Boudry et Renate Lorenz dans le film *N.O. Body*. Les interrogations qui traversent l'œuvre sont alors d'ordre historiographique : que se passe-t-il lorsque les parties parlent ? Comment s'opère la définition du normal et du déviant lorsque les freaks ne sont plus objets mais sujets du savoir ? *N.O. Body* est spatialement organisé de telle façon qu'une nouvelle histoire puisse s'y déployer, mettant alors en place les conditions de possibilité d'une nouvelle production de savoir – position centrale du professeur, tableau noir et placement des auditeurs –, mais racontée cette fois-ci depuis le point de vue des anormaux, des déviants, des queers et non plus des experts.

The queer temporalities depicted by Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz work through the delimitation and reappropriation of archives linked to questions of sex and gender – *Normal Work* in 2007 – or to the punk era – *No future/No past* in 2011. With *N.O. Body* (2008), the two artists carried out research on Magnus Hirschfeld, the theorist of the concept of sexual transitions at the beginning of the 20th century. In *Sexology Pictures* (published in 1930), Hirschfeld collected photos and drawings of people with "unidentified" sexual identities. From among these images, Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz chose that of Annie Jones, the famous bearded lady of Barnum Circus. At once a circus freak and a pathological object, she embodied the infiltration of science into the body, as was the case throughout the 19th century. This photograph was the subject of a re-enactment by Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz in the film *N.O. Body*. The interrogations that are to be found throughout the work are thus of a historiographical order: what happens when the spoken-of speaks? How is the definition of normal and deviant decided when freaks are no longer the objects, but the subjects of knowledge? *N.O. Body* is spatially arranged in such a way that a new history can unfold there, thus putting into place the conditions for the possibility of new knowledge production – the central position of the teacher, the blackboard and the placement of the listeners –, but this time, told from the point of view of the out-normals, the deviants, the queers, and not of the experts.



Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz, *N.O. Body*. Installation, film (16 mm sur / on DVD, 15 min) et / and 47 photographies / photographs, 2008. Courtesy: les artistes / the artists, Ellen De Bruijne, Amsterdam et Marcelle Alis, Paris



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Repetition and Change: The Film Installations of Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz

Gregg Bordowitz



Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz, *Charming for the Revolution*, 2009, 16mm transferred to DVD film installation, colour, sound, 12min, still. Still photography: Andrea Thal, performance: Werner Hirsch, camera: Bernadette Paassen. Presented with 6 framed photographs. Courtesy the artists and Ellen de Bruijne Projects, Amsterdam

It was the days of ghosts. Still is. Not the death, but the actual forgetting, even the death of sexuality and wonderment, of all but those who control and those and that which can be controlled. Since an emotion's an announcement of values, in this society of the death (of values) emotions moved like zombies through humans.

— Kathy Acker¹



The composition of the image is carefully staged. The subject stands in front of a wall-size landscape painting. A tall handsome woman, dressed in a work shirt and apron, rolls up her sleeve to reveal the bicep of her tensed muscular arm. She looks directly into the camera, proud of her physique. Visible in the lower part of the frame, some bananas and other fruit are arranged on a tabletop. A potted palm occupies the corner of the foreground. This is one of a number of tableaux vivants that comprise the film loop *Normal Work* (2007), part of an installation by the collaborative artists Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz, and featuring the performer Werner Hirsch.

Hirsch reappears in a number of film loops by Boudry and Lorenz. In *N.O. Body* (2008) Hirsch plays a bearded lady who addresses the empty seats of a medical theatre. It's not clear if she is the subject of an examination. No one is present to examine her. Alone in the hall, she makes a private presentation, playing with a small spotlight, tuning in to the stations of a small portable radio, moving in and out of the light of a projected slide show. Who are the members of her imagined audience? Are they hostile or sympathetic? Looking out into the vacant rows of seats, she laughs. And laughs. She titters, giggles, chortles and howls. Her sustained laughing suggests a spectrum of emotions — humorous one moment, filled with pathos the next, mixing pleasure with pain.

In *Charming for the Revolution* (2009), Hirsch plays a character dressed in a leather jacket, tight white shirt and plaid bell-bottoms. The costume connotes masculine working-class style. The German film director Rainer Werner Fassbinder comes to mind. We learn that the character is a housewife, as Hirsch declaims a revolutionary speech:

I know how work functions I have done that before.

We housewives. They make us work for free!

But in return we don't get anything for free!

The only thing that we get is anxiety and the fear of losing a lousy job!

So just leave me alone.

In the factories, in the offices, in the hospitals, in old people's

homes, online, in the kitchens, in the museums, in the movie

theatres, we are married! Married to a straight white guy called

'the economy'. The only thing to do is to ask for a divorce,

*and a huge settlement.*²

Lest we be convinced of this revolutionary message — haltingly delivered, read off index cards — another character, also played by Hirsch, appears in *Charming for the Revolution* as a counterpoint to the 'housewife'. An extravagantly dressed dandy enters the scene, walking a turtle, slowly biding time, indulging in observation and reverie. Housewife or flâneur, which of the two is the real star of the film?

There's no choice to be made. Each is a star existing in a larger constellation. The characters in *Charming for the Revolution* allude to numerous references in a long history of queers struggling for survival against a hostile world of repressive norms. The housewife is a gender queer feminist, and possibly Fassbinder.

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The dandy is Oscar Wilde and Jack Smith. Composite and jumbled, the characters appearing in Boudry/Lorenz productions represent modes of existence rather than particular persons (even when the characters bear the names of actual historical figures, as is the case in later films). The artists portray the actions of individuals and groups living — indeed thriving — in defiance of convention, law and economy.

From 2007 to 2012 the collaborative duo produced seven film installations, each featuring a film loop from thirteen to seventeen minutes in length: *Normal Work*, *N.O. Body*, *Salomania* (2009), *Charming for the Revolution*, *Contagious!* (2010), *No Future /No Past* (2011) and *Toxic* (2012). The subjects of each film differ significantly, from historical personages to fantasy figures, but they are all tied together by an abiding interest Boudry described in an interview with Andrea Thal:

*We often work with materials from the past that show bodies that have been marked as 'other', freaky, perverse, racialised or socially outcast. But when we do this, we ask a lot of questions about how we can work with these documents without repeating processes or acts of devaluation of these bodies.*³

Boudry/Lorenz are fascinated by the histories of the queer marginalised subjects who serve as the basis for characters appearing in their films. It is significant that their films feature performances executed by stars from the artists' own milieu in Berlin and beyond — performers, film-makers, cultural figures and friends. Projected large scale, on walls or screens, the looped films serve as the central focal points of exhibitions, but they are not the only works on display. Boudry/ Lorenz draw together troves of historical documents to show on the walls of the gallery or museum — photographs, letters and explanatory texts that give a pedagogical aspect to the work. The artists emphasise this scholarly approach to their subjects, often producing books or zines to accompany an exhibition. All of the film installations are supported by an archive that extends to a body of writing, leading from the gallery to conferences, catalogues and the internet. Accessibility is a central principle behind their working methods. Much of the descriptive material for this essay was taken from the growing discursive corpus that surrounds the artists' oeuvre.

In their work, research materials, artists' intentions and critical examinations thus coexist in numerous forms and permutations. Still, their film practice is their central organising activity. The film loops are not conventional documentaries. They are theatrically driven spectacles. The performers are given a certain amount of autonomy. The artists shoot long sequences of performances without cuts or interruptions, but Lorenz is adamant that 'these films are neither meant to be a unique performance nor a documentation of one'. Boudry insists that 'the performance doesn't exist outside the film — it's not staged for the audience that was there the day it was shot, but for the audience that watches the film when it is projected'.⁴

The film-makers use well-established critical strategies to foreground the constructed nature of each film: self-reflexive gestures such as revealing the apparatus, having performers directly address the camera and breaking narrative continuity. No 'character' is shaped by individual psychological motivations. The performances in the films are copies, imitations or enactments of previously documented poses, actions and behaviours. The performers are self-conscious and complicit with their representation by the camera. Boudry/Lorenz are alert to the function of the lens as both a means of disciplinary observation and a point of resistance. The artists have an ethical mandate not to perpetrate violence against their subjects, who have often been demeaned by photographic representations.

Boudry/Lorenz's freaks are prepared to face the glance, the snapshot, the filming by hostile witnesses. Posing for the camera in advance of anticipated capture by the lens is a form of self-defence in the age of surveillance. It's an act of self-authorship. This was the case in the outrageous styles of early punk, where fashion was a means of resistance to the investigative eyes of law enforcement and sociology. Showing up publicly as a fabulous self-creation was a strategy to confound hostile spectators — shutterbugs and scientists eager to police the field of visibility by imposing norms of decency upon the depicted.⁵



Boudry/Lorenz's installations are similarly founded on the premise that subjectivity is lived in public, shaped by history. As they have written, 'The freak is a figure that acts and meddles in the practices of staring, knowledge production and constellations of power and desire.'⁶

In *Normal Work*, Werner Hirsch imitates poses borrowed from the late nineteenth-century photographs of the domestic servant and cleaning woman Hannah Cullwick, who produced a remarkable series of staged photographs that flaunted her strength, her muscles and her big dirty hands. She made these portraits in collusion with a bourgeois male partner named Arthur Munby, with whom she shared a sadomasochistic relationship. The photographs produced from this relationship feature Cullwick in a number of guises: servant, slave, bourgeois man and Victorian lady.⁷ Hirsch posing as Cullwick dressed as a Victorian lady delivers what sounds like an autobiographical account of the performer's own experiences:

*I worked as an assistant in a library and I also worked as a teaching assistant at some point. And I gave flyers out to people in car ... parking lots. Things like that. I cleaned the floors in a dance studio every day. I worked as a bouncer, I worked as a kind of a professor. And I am strong: I think I could do heavy things like carrying luggage in train stations or in airports. And I also maybe want to work in a moving company, to move furniture around. But I still would like to work as a professor in academia and teach. I also have like a master's degree in art and whatever. I just thought, I would do what comes first, carrying or teaching.*⁸

Consumer culture has incorporated a version of continual self-alteration as the promise of success in the market. Wealth and status are tied to mobility across variable possibilities of body modification and fashion eclecticism. Perpetual adjustment of identity — personality, character and look — is perhaps the precondition for success. Adaptability to variable labour conditions, job descriptions and social roles within fluid hierarchies is necessary for survival in today's labour markets. Further, one is not in control of the conditions that shape the requirements of personal modification. The range of adaptability is overdetermined by market demands. Boudry/Lorenz are acutely aware of the 'modern' conditions that circumscribe terms like 'identity' and 'self':

*We think that the negotiations of social boundaries and the crossings of different social positions that Hannah Cullwick performed in her photographs as well as in her everyday life are a kind of prototype for current neoliberal conditions.*⁹

In *Normal Work*, both Cullwick and Hirsch share a set of limited conditions determined within capitalism's corrupt bargain. The confusion of performer with character is an effective strategy that the artists have employed in each of their films. All figures within the frame are chimeras simultaneously occupying numerous periods, decades or epochs.

In *Salomania*, the performer Wu Ingrid Tsang delivers the following opening statement:

My name is Oscar Wilde, the whole country knows me. I choose my friends for their beauty and my enemies for their intelligence. On my grave in Paris it is written, famous for his play Salome and other literary work. I don't hide my male lovers. When the situation in town is getting tense, I go to the colonies, spend the winter in Morocco, where I can do as I please.

*I am Alla Nazimova. I am shooting the film Salome. I am 45, and, as you notice through my accent, I am a Russian immigrant. I am the richest actress in Hollywood. I love women, I don't hide it. I am directing this film, I produced it and I act in the main role. I am Salome, I just became fourteen, I am the Jewish Princess of Galilee, today north of Israel. I will dance for my father-in-law, Yvonne, in exchange I can get all I want. I want blood.*¹⁰



In *Salomania*, Tsang is simultaneously Wilde, Nazimova and Salome. The ‘father-in-law, Yvonne’ is the film-maker and choreographer Yvonne Rainer, the second performer in *Salomania*. Her appearance in *Salomania* serves a number of ends. She teaches Tsang how to perform Valda Setterfield’s solo, inspired by Nazimova’s Salome, who danced in Rainer’s film *Lives of Performers* (1972). In *Salomania*, Rainer also performs as King Herod, for whom Tsang/Salome/Nazimova/Valda dances. Boudry/Lorenz structure their performers as palimpsestic surfaces revealing layers of history — a dense overlay of texts, images and stories drawn from many generations, resembling strategies that Rainer developed in her own films.

The final section of *Lives of Performers* is titled ‘Lulu in 35 shots’. Quoting G.W. Pabst’s film *Pandora’s Box* (1929), the dancers enact the film stills as tableaux. The viewer can see them straining to hold the poses for long durations — eyelids flicker, nostrils quiver — until the poses briefly are disassembled before the following shot.¹¹ For Rainer, speech is movement and movement is language. In *Lives of Performers*, sequences showing her cast rehearsing a dance are juxtaposed with the casually staged set-ups of a scripted melodrama. A large portion of the film is about a relationship between two people played by four performers — two female, two male. The relationships in the script are performed by the combination of players so that it is not clear who is in love with whom, and if the relationship is straight or gay. In this and other ways, Rainer’s films set precedents for Boudry/Lorenz.

As with Rainer’s films, gender is key. However, our understanding of gender has changed dramatically since the early 1970s, when Rainer shifted from choreography to film-making. Boudry/Lorenz’s works are based on the now current theorisations that separate biological sex, gender identity and sexuality into three distinct categories.¹² It is possible for a person to be born female, to be gendered male and to have sex with many differently gendered people; there are more than two genders. Boudry/Lorenz productions feature people who occupy various positions along a very wide spectrum of gender identity. Binary gender construction is both invoked and dismantled in their work by deploying the operative modes of gender construction: performance and imitation. Performers mimic modes of dress and style to signal time period, gender, race, class or social position. In some instances performers instruct each other on how to move and act according to already existing choreographies. Contagion is the third mode of operation — either through infectious laughter, as in *N.O. Body*, or by coughing, like in *Contagious!*

Contagious! is set in a nightclub. Performers dance for an audience of spectators who are susceptible to suggestion, and are moved to copy what they observe. The performer Vaginal Davis restages movements from the ‘Cakewalk’ — a dance developed in the US by enslaved Africans who mocked their white masters’ European dance styles, such as the minuet. Davis’s attitude and performance on stage resemble the movements of Arantxa Martinez, who restages poses and dances from ‘epileptic dances’, made popular in Paris at the same time that Dr Jean-Martin Charcot was researching epilepsy and hysteria in his Hôpital de la Salpêtrière.¹³

In one scene a performer coughs, setting off a coughing fit among the members of the audience. Viewing *Contagious!*, one cannot help but think of the panic surrounding the early days of the AIDS crisis, when disease and homosexuality were publicly linked by government policy in the US. A long history of associations has bound stigmatised behaviours to diseases, connecting outcast minorities to epidemics. If the AIDS epidemic is a subtext of *Contagious!*, it is not overt. Perhaps AIDS is not a concern at all. Instead, the film installation connects the notion of contagion to two conflicting sets of impulses: (a) the wish to exercise the threat of contagion as an empowering gesture, claimed for the enfranchisement of freaks against normative social conventions, and (b) the contradictory urge to challenge the viral repetition of behaviour that underpins social conformity.

Whether or not AIDS figures in the background of *Contagious!*, Boudry/ Lorenz’s methods and concerns regarding queer enfranchisement and resistance to conformity are preceded by theoretical tendencies that



were developed during the 1980s, when postmodernism and post-structuralism promised liberation from identity as an open-ended series of metamorphoses. Kathy Acker is a significant precedent to consider here. Acker mixed a punk ethos with critical theory. Her writing was inspired by a deep immersion in literary history: she followed, copied and exploited models including Georges Bataille, Jean Genet, Pier Paolo Pasolini and the Marquis de Sade. In her essay 'Critical Languages' (1990), she generated 'The Languages of the Body':

1. The language of flux. Of uncertainty in which the 'I' (eye) constantly changes. For the self is 'an indefinite series of identities and transformations'.

2. The languages of wonder, not of judgement. The eye (I) is continuously seeing new phenomena, for, like sailors, we travel through the world, through our selves, through worlds.

3. Languages which contradict themselves.

4. The languages of this material body: laughter, silence, screaming.

5. Scatology. That laughter.

6. The languages of play: poetry. Pier Paolo Pasolini decided to write in the Friulian dialect as 'a mystic act of love ... the central idea ... was ... (that) of the language of poetry as an absolute language'.

7. Language that announces itself as insufficient.

8. Above all: the languages of intensity. Since the body's, our, end isn't transcendence but excrement, the life of the body exists as pure intensity. The sexual and emotive languages.

9. The only religions are scatology and intensity.

*10. Language that forgets itself. For if we knew that chance governs us and this world, that would be absolute knowledge.*¹⁴

Many of the principles in this list remain relevant to Boudry/Lorenz's practice, even though many theoretical terms and tendencies have changed significantly in the past twenty years. Boudry/Lorenz do not see the possibilities of identity transformation as limitless. They understand the determining features of neoliberalism and they are not so optimistic about the possibilities of liberation. Still, their work does contain a strong belief in the chance probabilities of novelty emerging from the irrepressible differences that exist among people. Their work invokes the 'languages of wonder, not of judgement' that Acker calls for as a necessary precondition of 'travel', or mobility, through selves and worlds.

Boudry/Lorenz celebrate difference. They construct their installations to include 'languages which contradict themselves'.¹⁵ They appreciate the power of 'laughter, silence and screaming'.¹⁶ They focus on 'scatology', on buried and discarded archives and genealogies. A kind of poetry is composed through the juxtapositions of texts with gestures. There is an attention, reminiscent of Pasolini, to the local dialects and specific characteristics of the performers — accents, gestures, fashion. And there's a shared set of stakes among all the participants in Boudry/Lorenz's inclusive public project. All the people involved inhabit a milieu where perseverance and survival are common concerns. 'Language announces itself as insufficient' to describe the desires of performers and film-makers.¹⁷ Utopian yearnings exist at the edges of the frames, among the loops and ellipses of a magnificent evolving collage unified by the principle that 'the life of the body exists as pure intensity'.¹⁸



Optimism is shared among the living and the dead. They, we, together hope for the fulfilment of our desires in the present tense.

Boudry/Lorenz's projects mine the past to interrogate current conditions of existence. The project *No Future/ No Past* uses the past to address its audience in the present tense more deliberately than the previous films. This installation is constituted by a pairing of two films, one set in 1976, the other in 2031. Both exploit the look and feel of Andy Warhol's films — shot in real time, and with white exposed leader separating takes. *No Future/ No Past* features a group of five performers — three sitting, two standing — their faces looking off- screen. Each takes the name of a famous (or infamous) punk musician; the film draws on archives from 1970s punk 'to interrogate the radical negativity, the self-destructiveness and the dystopia of this past moment'.¹⁹

In *No Future*, for example, Fruity Franky, playing Poly Styrene, delivers the following 'political speech':

Basically I have one feeling, the desire to get out of here and any other feelings I have come from trying to analyse why I want to go away. I always feel uncomfortable and I just want to walk out of the room. It's not going to any other place or any other sensation or anything like that. It's just to get out of here.

Such deep dissatisfaction with the present and the imperative for another way of being — the desire for something else, a world radically reorganised — are qualities Boudry/Lorenz's work shares with the punk movement. As with previous films, mimicry and imitation drive the actions of the performers. Werner Hirsch plays the on-screen director feeding the cast members their lines. At one point everybody is ordered to look bored. They all oblige, with vacant stares and glum faces. 'Emotions move through humans like zombies.' 'It's the time of ghosts.' The Acker quote I chose as the epigraph to this essay rings most true with *No Future/ No Past*. Are we still coping with the death of values described by Acker? Has capitalism robbed us of an authentic emotional life?

In Acker's novels, dystopian patriarchal societies are methodically described as impervious to change. The only hope for overthrowing male domination is achieved through the exploits of her protagonists who undermine the social order by following all the corrupt rules of male supremacy to their logical dead-end conclusions. Acker's protagonists rise up from slavery by embracing and exploiting their status as slaves. Boudry/Lorenz's queer feminist practice operates along similar lines. The characters of their film loops are doomed to repetition, trapped in history, replaying old gestures, occupying well-established roles. In *No Future/ No Past*, the cast passively takes direction.

Still, beyond the disdain expressed by Hirsch's on-screen directions, there is something energetic in *No Future/ No Past*, something that escapes the gloomy affectless performances of the punk characters. Three musical acts, which happen at the edge of the frame or just outside it, generate moments of enthusiasm and expectation. If there is a promise of finding a way out of the staged torpor, it lies beyond the camera's range. The action contained within the frame simply shows a theatrical play on film with contemporary people claiming the identities of past figures. By repeating in the present what others have stated in the past, the performers' behaviours elaborate (reiterate) an ongoing process of historical change. Reaching into the past and drawing connections to present-day existence, Boudry/Lorenz create a counter-hegemonic genealogy of ways of being-in- the-world. In spite of all the constraints that capitalism, patriarchy, racism and colonialism continue to exert upon social relations, we have ample evidence of people and subcultures that persevere in bold defiance of instituted norms. Boudry/Lorenz recognise and embrace the deviations that are structurally necessary to the development of modernity. Customs are altered by iterations, variations and constant modifications.



The film installations are apparently based on an historical model of evolution-ary change. Thus far in the film installations, the panacea of revolutionary change is rejected. Ideals such as freedom, love and beauty are abandoned by the queer feminist left positions Boudry/Lorenz clearly endorse. The film installations and all the supporting theoretical material surrounding their production — including catalogues, essays and interviews — demonstrate that the artists have avowed commitments to radical social change, although not to the treacly promises of flawed utopian programmes. Their work is genealogically related to the history of counter-hegemonic cultural production, but they avoid the future-oriented expectations of traditional ‘social change’ artwork. Their film installations are designed to frustrate the very attempt to prescribe revolutionary conditions. There’s no programme to follow, no list of tenets to adopt. The primary concerns are perseverance and pleasure in the moment.

Toxic, their latest film project, faces the problem of revolution directly. The film features Werner Hirsch and Ginger Brooks Takahashi. Like many of the above-mentioned productions, their performances draw upon the spirit of Jack Smith, who performed with his own sense of time, indifferent to an audience or camera. This film shows Hirsch and Takahashi staggering around the aftermath of some kind of party. The floor is covered with glitter, streamers and cigarette butts. Hirsch, wearing a sequin dress, leopard-print bra, false breasts with a hairy chest and a messy bouffant wig, picks a cigarette butt off the floor, lights it, draws on it and coughs up glitter from her nose and mouth.

Takahashi wears a shredded white denim jacket with the sleeves cut off. Colourful and thick dark make-up is applied around her eyes. She holds a microphone to her mouth as she laconically delivers a litany of intoxicants, medicines, hormones and environmental disasters:

...alcohol, cocaine, acid, heroin, AndroGel, oestrogen, chemotherapy, ecstasy, silicone injections, mushrooms, Atripa, Celexa, Wellbutrin, the Great Pacific Plastic Patch, radioactivity crossing national borders, hydrolic fracking, opium, Tylenol, aspirin, Aleve, caffeine...

The elements on the list affect the body by soothing pain, producing pleasure, changing gender or treating depression. Or, they infect the body with poisons. *Toxic* is about feeling overwhelmed by stimuli and sensations. The performers seem hung-over, sick, tired and dejected.

Toxic ends with Hirsch reprising a television interview with Jean Genet, given to the British television arts programme Arena in 1985. Hirsch, like Genet in the interview, exhorts the crew of the film to revolt against the hierarchy of film-making. The technicians, the argument holds, should occupy the position of privilege, sit in front of the camera and speak as the subjects of the interview. The camera duly turns around to reveal the director and crew — we see a boom operator, crew members, Takahashi and, most importantly, Boudry and Lorenz. Hirsch angrily explains how it feels to be marginalised, accusing the directors and crew of representing ‘the norm’. The interview set-up is another version of cops interrogating a thief. Dispirited, Hirsch ultimately takes responsibility for upholding the positions of power instituted by the interview format. Genet/Hirsch is a marginalised subject who willingly participates in the process of subjugation. As a result, the subject feels anger, disappointment and sadness. Self-disgust.

These feelings are the affects (poses and postures) that Boudry/Lorenz attempt to marshal as rallying points for the audience. Rather than engage the audience through enthusiasm, optimism and joy — historically the kinds of emotions revolutionary media aims to produce — Boudry/Lorenz appeal to queer feelings, such as awkwardness and alienation.

In *Toxic*, the film-makers indict themselves. Revealing themselves behind the camera is an act of self-abnegation. It places the artists within the range of the norm. More than that, it makes them seem pathetic. It’s no longer a revolutionary gesture to reverse roles and turn the camera on the film-maker(s). That



gesture is now a worn cliché. There is no doubt that Boudry/Lorenz are aware of this. They're not trying to overturn the social order with one powerful gesture. For Boudry/Lorenz change comes through constant reiteration.

It is still the 'day of ghosts'. Forced to mime our emotions, now cheap commodities, we continue to fight 'the death of wonderment and sexuality' by repeating the words of the dead. Through such exhortations change does arrive, constantly. One can never return the same. All of the historical citations and repetitions enacted in Boudry/Lorenz's works return us differently to the problem of liberation. 'Differently' because the words and actions enacted in the artists' film loops are not identical copies of the originals to which they refer. The citations are merely the apparatuses for a new seat of authority. In Boudry/Lorenz's work, transgender people, lesbians, women and queers become self-determining subjects constantly evolving through performance as a mode of being. Performance in this case means the act of taking control of history by becoming its subject through repetition. Rather than producing a revolutionary break with history, the artists repeat moments of queer liberation over and over to the point where the past becomes an ever-present tense. The subject of history becomes a self-negating position constantly altering the terms of its identities to suit its own desires. Freaks rule! In the film installations of Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz there is no static oppressive presence that enforces a regime of supremacy. That's over.

Footnotes

1. Kathy Acker, *My Mother: Demonology*, New York: Grove Press, 1994, p.14. ↑
2. *Temporal Drag*: Pauline Boudry/Renate Lorenz, Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2011, p.1943. ↑
3. 'Stages: A Conversation Between Andrea Thal, Pauline Boudry, and Renate Lorenz', Berlin, September 2010, available at <http://www.boudry-lorenz.de/texts/> (last accessed on 9 May 2012). ↑
4. *Ibid.* ↑
5. The tactic of 'hiding in the light' was developed out of a history in which the 'lower classes' were particularly vulnerable to the conjunction of law enforcement and modern photography in the early and middle parts of the twentieth century. Scholars such as Dick Hebdige and John Tagg made significant contributions to the theorisation of the emergence of subcultures as a response to the vigilant eye of the spectacle and the history of the camera as a sociological tool in the hands of the law. See D. Hebdige, *Hiding in the Light: On Images and Things*, New York and London: Routledge, 1989; and J. Tagg, *Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993. ↑
6. Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz, 'Laughing about N.O. Body', available at <http://www.boudry-lorenz.de/texts/> (last accessed on 9 May 2012). ↑
7. See P. Boudry and R. Lorenz, 'Normal Work', available at <http://www.boudry-lorenz.de/normal-work/> (last accessed on 9 May 2012). ↑
8. *Temporal Drag: Pauline Boudry/Renate Lorenz*, op. cit., p.1960 ↑
9. R. Lorenz, 'Interview with Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz by Antke Engel on *Normal Work*', available at <http://www.boudry-lorenz.de/texts/> (last accessed on 9 May 2012). ↑
10. *Temporal Drag*: Pauline Boudry/Renate Lorenz, op. cit., p.1908. ↑
11. Yvonne Rainer et al., *The Films of Yvonne Rainer*, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989, p.76. ↑
12. See Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, New York and London: Routledge, 2006; and J. Butler, *Undoing Gender*, New York and London: Routledge, 2004. ↑
13. See P. Boudry and R. Lorenz, 'Contagious!', available at <http://www.boudry-lorenz.de/contagious/> (last accessed on 9 May 2012). ↑
14. K. Acker, *Bodies of Work*, London: Serpent's Tail, 1997, pp.91—92. ↑
15. *Ibid.* ↑
16. *Ibid.* ↑
17. *Ibid.* ↑
18. *Ibid.* ↑
19. P. Boudry and R. Lorenz, 'No Future/No Past', available at <http://www.boudry-lorenz.de/no-future-no-past/> (last accessed on 9 May 2012). ↑

<http://www.afterall.org/journal/issue.31/repetition-and-change-the-film-installations-of-pauline-boudry-and-renate-lorenz>



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LE BEAU VICE

SUNDAY, APRIL 29, 2012

Toxic Affair (Boudry/Lorenz aux Labos d'Aubervilliers)



Toxic: installation aux Laboratoires d'Aubervilliers (détail), avec Werner Hirsch d'Orion.
Toxicité photo/André Sorel Charles



Ginger Brooks Takahashi dans Toxic

Si l'on pouvait parler de couche d'image comme d'une couche d'âme, alors on dirait que Toxic, le film de Boudry/Lorenz, le traite. On dirait que Toxic, en treize minutes divisées en deux séquences, traverse, contamine et sensibilise la couche d'image, de la pellicule cinématographique (le film a été tourné en Super 8mm) à la représentation, des rôles aux performant/se/s, du genre des sujets à leur objectivation photographique, de l'animal à l'humain, du décor de scène à son sol, du tapis de palettes et de mégots jusqu'au plateau, du dispositif de l'enregistrement filmique jusqu'à la potentialité des

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Tom Holmes, le deuil, c'est lui qui nous le dit, c...

Toxic Affair (Boudry/Lorenz aux Labos d'Aubervill...

Peter Fischli without David Weber (1946-2012)

prochains posts

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Pour celles et ceux à qui ça aurait échappé: Virg...

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Chantal Akerman, M+KHA d'Anvers.

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Zoe Leonard, Observation Point, Camden Arts Centre...

Prochains posts, au plus vite.

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Elizabeth Catlett (1915-2012), digne doyenne de la...

Un appel des scènes nationales et CDN d'Ile de Fr...

Alice B. Toklas Oral History Excerpt

► March (14)



spectatrices et des spectateurs.

Sur le plateau des *Labos*, espace de production (et de projection jusqu'au 28 avril), un rideau de scène lamé violet et des plantes vertes encadrent un écran légèrement de guingois où défile un diaporama de faces et de profils diversement masqués. Tel est le décor, à la Broodthaers, d'une fausse entrée (Werner Hirsch) puis d'une voix inventariant les noms au générique du film en train d'être tourné et dans la foulée, ceux de différentes substances plus ou moins déposées, "designer drugs" ou pas, traitement hormonaux, molécules, matières médicinales et/ou déséquilibres écologiques.

Ce sont des substances qui modifient l'humeur, l'atmosphère, le corps, l'immunité, la vitalité, l'économie- on pense aux *emprunts toxiques* et à la formidable émission de *This American Life* (<http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/418/toxie>) où l'on avait acheté, cultivé, remonté la chaîne de l'empoisonnement bancaire jusqu'aux maisons laissées en gage. Des substances qui altèrent: un coup porté à l'essentialisme du terme.

Comme l'écrit la théoricienne Mel Y. Chen en ouverture de son *Toxic Animacies, Inanimate Infections* (un livre à paraître, un article dans GLQ, une référence bibliographique pour les artistes) : "Une toxine est menaçante mais elle fait également signe. Elle n'est pas nécessairement vivante mais elle anime la morbidité et la peur de la mort." La toxicité est un agent contradictoire selon ses utilisations: instance d'énonciation de ce qui est sain et malsain, curateur ou morbide, elle affecte en même temps l'immunité de ce que nous nommons la vie et la mort, devenus "ce qui est animé, ce qui est inanimé, ce qui est moins animé", selon les termes de Mel Chen. L'absence de jugement quant aux bienfaits ou aux méfaits des substances déclinées renvoie à la figure de celle qui les énonce, Ginger Brooks Takahashi, aux yeux cernés de charbon de la malade comme de l'actrice triomphante du muet. Animation et contamination interagissent dans la tâche qu'elle se met alors à accomplir, remuant au balai et à l'aspirateur le sol maculé de paillettes et de cigarettes (une réactualisation de *The Secret of Rented Island* de Jack Smith), qui reste intoxiqué, brillant et vénéneux, malgré le simulacre de ménage. Toxique: une forme d'émancipation loin des normes du "bien être"?

Un coup de clap, et un renversement s'opère. Sous le feu des projecteurs, Werner Hirsch en robe et perruque, une pelouse de poils drus au dessus de son généreux clivage, s'anime à son tour, proposant la révolte des techniciens qui le chasseraient de son siège, renversant le regard sur l'équipe qui le filme, accusée de faire "le travail d'un flic" et de constituer une norme qui le marginalise, d'autant plus qu'il a peur de s'y intégrer. Le discours de résistance de Werner Hirsch est, en l'occurrence, la citation d'un extrait d'une interview de Jean Genêt, peu avant sa mort, par BBC2 en 1985. Son actualisation est double, d'abord auprès de l'équipe de production du film, puis de nous, spectatrices et spectateurs, qui en occupons les places. Et puis, Werner Hirsch crève ici l'écran, littéralement.

Si des figures du toxique s'immiscent dans les discours sociaux,

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environnementaux ou politiques, qu'en est-il dans le discours visuel? Quel est, en effet, le degré de toxicité de l'identité photographique, de la performance cinématographique ou du spectacle que produit même sa déconstruction? La question (**) déborde dans un hors-champ: une salle d'exposition où sont présentées sous vitrine plusieurs exemples de "portraits-cartes de visites" de ceux ---costumés en petit Lord, en mignon, en marin, en bourgeoise--- qui sont sommairement échantillonnés en tant que "Ped" - abréviation de pédéraste- par la police d'avant le Bertillonage (1870). Le trouble vient, en quelque sorte, de la volte-face de l'image, où la mise en scène d'un fantasma, recadrée par un simple jeu d'écritures, devient l'objectivation d'une sexualité potentiellement dangereuse.



Toxic, installation (détail)

On peut dire que l'élément contaminant, sur la scène de *Toxic*, se constitue tout autant des figures animées que de celles qui sont "moins animées": le rideau, le sol, l'écran avec le diaporama et les plantes vertes. Les relations entre ces éléments-là donnent à l'ensemble sa taille ou plutôt son échelle, dont l'équivoque tend à rapprocher le film exposé des tableaux de *Cabinets d'Amateurs*. Au XVIIème siècle flamand, ces représentations de murs à tableaux et d'autres objets placés dans un rapport pictural de contiguïté et de conversation, nécessitaient d'ailleurs qu'y figurent de petits personnages. Des "amateurs" s'inscrivent ainsi au sein de représentations qui ne sont jamais que les citations, dans une autre dimension, d'œuvres existantes-- des représentations au 2è degré, qui parfois représentent elles mêmes un mur à tableaux, etc., dans une abyssale machinerie d'intégration. Cette façon de s'inscrire dans une histoire, non de ruptures modernistes, mais de reprises et d'articulations d'échelle, paraît aussi l'une des instances du *dispositif toxique*, que Boudry/Lorenz ont mis en place.



PS 1: Ce n'est sans doute pas pour rien que Pauline Boudry et Renate Lorenz ont changé, simplement quelques mots dans leur citation de Jean Genêt -ceux précisément où il explique: *"I'm in the process of entering the norm, I'm entering English homes, and obviously I don't like it very much"* par: "... I'm in the process of entering the art galleries and obviously I don't like it very much..."

PS 2: le 21 avril avait lieu une excellente conférence de Nana Adusei-Poku en compagnie des artistes et de Virginie Bobin, intitulée : The end of Detox – Visual Myths and Estranged Dualisms.

PS 3 : Toxic, le film et pas l'installation, est programmé au sein du cinéma de la Triennale.

(**) à ce sujet, il faut rappeler les travaux d'Ariella Azoulay quant au "Contrat civil de la photographie".

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PUBLIÉ PAR ÉLISABETH LEOVICI À L'ADRESSE 7:56 PM

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PARIS

Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz

MARCELLE ALIX

Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz's exhibition "Salomania" focused on the infatuation that performers and authors have had with the New Testament figure of Salomé. Her veiled sexuality and exoticism have often been perceived as arousing a perverse desire, itself a manifestation of a preoccupation with the dark relationship between Eros and Thanatos, epitomized by the trading of her sensual dance for the head of John the Baptist. Oscar Wilde's controversial 1891 play *Salomé* was the origin of much of the dancer's modern mythology and is one of Boudry and Lorenz's main references, which also include passages from Flaubert's short story "Hérodiade" as well as from his Egyptian journal, and particularly the Russian-born actress and film producer Alla Nazimova's bizarre 1923 silent-screen adaptation of Wilde's play, realized in Hollywood with a cast rumored to have been made up exclusively of gay and lesbian actors. Presenting such an intriguing matrix of historical sources, the artists treat Salomé as a composite "image-desire"—using a term they have borrowed from Elzabeth Probyn's book *Outside Belongings* (1996)—standing for a mental projection of strong and often contradictory feelings, rather than as a specific character.

At Marcelle Alix, the upstairs gallery functioned as a sort of a cinema foyer dominated by twelve gigantic Art Deco fans modeled on those in Nazimova's film, made of wood, plywood, black rubber, and ostrich feathers. Displayed on a wall were framed reproductions of old photographs with numerous historical personages in them, including the director, choreographer, and dancer Aida Overton Walker and the dancer and costume and light designer Loie Fuller, in addition to Flaubert, Wilde, and Nazimova. A short text accompanying each photograph explained its subject's involvement with the story of Salomé and put it in the context of his or her private life, while often mentioning the evidence of historical misinterpretations. For instance, revisionist scholars have recently argued that although during his trip to Egypt Flaubert might have had an affair with the courtesan Kuchuk Hanem—as mentioned in his journal—the inspiration for the description of Salomé's dance in "Hérodiade" came most likely from his seeing a famous male-to-female transvestite perform. Such biographical "white spots," often related to the ambiguous trading of one's sexuality, are what motivate Boudry and Lorenz's work, more than the legends that have grown around the brief biblical mention of Salomé's dance.

The looped sixteen-and-a-half-minute video *Salomania*, 2009, projected downstairs, reconstructs the dance of the seven veils on its own, treating the footage of Nazimova's performance from her silent movie as a main visual referent. To bring the dancer into the present and show how different performers have used it to express their complex desires and historical interests, the video also shows the artist and trans-activist Wu Tsang—who introduces himself as a composite of Wilde, Nazimova, and Salomé—preparing to stage an adaptation of the dance as a drag performance, while presenting the princess as transgender. One of the most engaging moments in the video shows Tsang rehearsing with Yvonne Rainer the movements from her 1972 dance composition *Valley's Solo*, which was also inspired by Nazimova's original production. Like the installation upstairs, the video tells the story of the impact of Salomé's performance on the imagination of the dancers who have practiced their own "Salomania," transgressing established norms in both art and life through their highly choreographed sexuality.

—Marcelle Alix

View of "Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz: Salomania," 2012





Galerie

Pauline Boudry/ Renate Lorenz

Galerie Marcelle Alix

Danser sa vie ? Alors que le Centre Pompidou célèbre le dialogue entre danse et arts plastiques, Pauline Boudry et Renate Lorenz nous en donne une étonnante version transgenre. Derrière une forêt de plumes d'autruche noires et blanches, le duo suisse s'empare du mythe de Salomé, l'ameuse danseuse aux sept voiles qui réclama à Hérode la tête de Jean le Baptiste. Parmi quelques clichés, une photographie d'Oscar Wilde déguisé en princesse juive rappelle que c'est sous un œil *gender studies* que le mythe est ausculté. Ce que confirme un film dont les images happent la curiosité. Au premier plan, un acteur qui pourrait être hermaphrodite danse comme un papillon en mimant le film qui lui sert d'arrière-plan. Il s'agit du *Salomé* réalisé en 1923 par l'actrice russe Alla Nazimova, qui n'embaucha que des homosexuels sur le tournage. En maître de cérémonie, la chorégraphe et réalisatrice underground Yvonne Rainer, qui aime à se définir comme « lesbienne politique » et regarde d'un œil presque tendre les deux corps et deux temps s'affronter dans le mouvement des voiles. ■ EMMANUELLE

LEQUEUX

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Tél : 03 505 435 80 - Du mercredi au samedi de 14 à 19 heures. Jusqu'au 28 janvier. MarcelleAlix.com



PAULINE BOUDRY/RENATE LORENZ « *SALOMARIAS* »
DORVILLE ET TALLON

PAULINE BOUDRY ET RENATE LORENZ DIDACTIQUE QUEER

Renate Lorenz et Pauline Boudry inculquent aux publics d'art contemporain les rudiments d'une pré-histoire des attitudes queer. Leur cinéma d'exposition brave le danger d'un devenir-genre du queer en en pointant à la fois l'aspect immémorial et la permanente redéfinition.

Dans la foulée du linguistic turn, plusieurs auteurs se sont plu à identifier d'autres « tournants » pour tenter de subsumer des pratiques discursives sous une grille interprétative modale. Si ces viréments ont caractérisé des changements dans la manière de pratiquer la philosophie ou la recherche en sciences sociales, ils ont aussi été investis par les artistes. La définition d'un « tournant » sera le plus souvent le moyen pour les commentateurs (la critique, la théorie) de qualifier des effets de mode, des tendances conjoncturelles constatées au sein des pratiques.¹

Le méta-turn : didactic

L'actuel art contemporain, sans doute moins dogmatique que jamais, semble faire des turns autant de perles qu'il enfle sur son collier d'apparat. L'artiste n'est pas nécessairement à la traîne des autres pratiques d'appréhension du réel, mais, dans sa consommation omnivore,



Vue de l'installation de Pauline Boudry et Renate Lorenz *Didactic* / *Apprentissage* au Centre d'Art Contemporain de Berlin, du 41. juin au 14. août 2011. © Photo: Cédric Schönwald



Pauline Doudry et Froude Larves, *À L'Écoute*, 2008. Vidéo sur écran, 30 minutes, 16 mm.

Il se nourrit (et nourrit aussi son art) notamment des kits prêts-à-penser émanant tantôt des paradigmes tantôt des seuls effets de mode de ce qui lui apparaît comme les instances régimes de la pensée. Ce portrait quelque peu pathétique de l'artiste doit néanmoins être immédiatement corrigé par l'espoir – et le constat fréquent – que celui-ci s'ingénie à tordre les modèles qui lui échoient dans les mains au gré des tendances.

À cet égard, il y aurait à investir l'actualité même de fond des artistes professant, soit une posture un peu plus disciplinaire au sens habituel des turns (linguistic, ethnographic, etc.), mais disciplinaire au sens encore plus englobant et encore plus négatif de la discipline scolaire et du minimum cognitif vital professé par un Jules Ferry (car il y a bien un paradigme éducatif disciplinaire et humaniste lié à cette figure historique). Cette recherche sur le didactisme de l'art contemporain nous conduirait à travers des pratiques par lesquelles les artistes, bien

qu'écouillant entre une posture de maître ignorant (suivant en cela les injonctions de Jacques Rancière) et une posture d'authentique érudit (à la Duytsaerts), élaborent des formes (plastiques et/ou performatives) riches en contenu cognitif. Le spectateur est susceptible d'en ressentir fort d'une connaissance (et non seulement d'une émotion ou d'une expérience) qu'il n'avait pas avant de découvrir l'œuvre dont il est question. Évidemment, la posture didactique, alertée que nous sommes par les travers de ses divers précédents dans l'histoire de l'art¹, suscite la méfiance. Cette attitude peut consister (comme chez Duytsaerts et Sorel) à établir la modélisation (professionnelle) empruntée ou à faire douter de l'authenticité de l'apport cognitif pour en faire ce qu'on pourrait appeler un dépot cognitif. Le plus souvent, ledit apport se voit mis en concurrence avec des puissances d'agencement coutumières (sans exclusive) aux artistes et la part didactique se complique d'un concours de formes qui fait œuvre.

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Le travail du couple Pauline Boudry et Renate Lorenz se réclame lui, non pas d'une didactique, mais d'une « archéologie queer ». Néanmoins, leur usage de la notion semble plus proche de l'usage extensif que l'on fait de la notion de « pré-histoire » (comme étude d'un des degrés d'appréhension d'un objet avant même que celui-ci ait été formellement constitué en objet que du rôle qu'il a pu donner Foucault à l'anthropologie lorsqu'il l'oppose à l'histoire des idées. Ainsi, l'y aurait eu (et en effet il y eut) du queer avant le queer, comme il y eut avant la photographie avant la photographie. En médiocrités et en artistes queer, Boudry et Lorenz eshument des abysses de l'histoire quelques personnages néanmoins déjà très identifiés comme des têtes de la recherche universitaire féministe et post-féministe. L'une de leurs opérations didactiques consiste ainsi à déplacer dans le pré-carné de l'art contemporain des doctrines même aux universitaires. En cela, il y a lieu de

risquer que leur démarche de sensibilisation des mentalités a de bonnes chances d'aboutir sur le public restreint auquel elle se destine un impact similaire à celui d'un film tel que *Minores* d'Abdellatif Kechicheau sur le public qu'il recherche. Dans les deux cas, l'art associe fiction et faits historiques au service d'une contre-propagande. Comme les « valeurs » traditionnelles contre lesquelles tous les féminismes se rejoignent, à savoir une misogynie consubstantielle à la société patriarcale dans laquelle nous vivons (c'est la part inévitable de cette lutte). Mais aussi, du moins chez Brudny et Lorenz, contre divers types de ségrégations des déviances et des minorités et ceci jusqu'au sein même du féminisme (c'est la part queer et post-gender de cet au-delà du féminisme traditionnel que nous connaissons aujourd'hui).

Plus précisément, « l'archéologie » de Boudry et Lorenz vise à désigner certains personnages ayant constitué en leur temps et parfois à ourdre des courants de résistance à divers types d'assignations (de genre, sociales et/ou culturelles). La « femme à barbe » Annie Julien a été

troubler l'assignation faite à toute femme biologique de rassembler à l'idée qu'une certaine idéologie (dominante) persistait à se faire du « la » femme. Incapable de composer avec ce trouble, la société de la fin du XIX^e siècle n'a pu que botter en touche en assignant à Annie Jones le statut officiel (donc une mascarade institutionnelle) de monstre et en l'exhibant comme tel. L'approche qu'ont Renate Lorenz et Pauline Boudry de ce cas de figure, dans le projet *N.O. Study* (2008), est emblématique d'une méthode procédant par soulèvement. Permettons-nous ici une analogie avec le procédé littéraire consistant à indiquer entre parenthèses (ou en note) « Je souligne », après avoir livré au lecteur une citation d'un autre dans laquelle un ou plusieurs termes auraient été distingués, non pas par un soulèvement le plus souvent, mais au moyen d'italiques. De façon analogue, Boudry et Lorenz procèdent à des citations imaginaires (en utilisant des archives photographiques ou filmiques) au sein desquelles elles soulignent les aspects qui leur importent dans une perspective queer. Cette perspective induit d'ailleurs chez elles une implication personnelle plus ou moins attestable par laquelle elles seraient fin par premier collectivement : « Nous analogues ». Habituellement, les deux artistes confient à une tierce personne, parler, choisir pour une étiquette de service, le soin de souligner littéralement par désignation ou par reproduction mimétique et superposition certains éléments des archives présentées.

Les projets de Renate Lorenz et Pauline Boudry articulent plusieurs modes de présentation en jouant d'effets de complémentarité et de redondance. Les redondances sont caractéristiques à la fois de la visée didactique et de la stratégie d'implication ou de signature (le « je » du « je souligne »). Ainsi pour un même projet, certaines images, certains objets issus du corpus archivistique convoqués apparaîtront à la fois dans le film, dans l'édition et dans le flipsey en mode exposition. Le film peut être considéré comme la pièce maîtresse de ce dispositif complexe du (ré)montration. Il contient les deux éléments forts de la manière de Boudry et Lorenz de revisiter l'histoire et de la déposséder : la présentation d'un choix d'images mais surtout leur recentralisation par la performance d'un performer queer jouant tel ou tel personnage clé d'une généalogie queer virtuelle. Le screen subjectif passe alors en avant par une opération d'irrémixtion de la performance live à la projection d'images d'archives. Ces quelques constantes structurées ne produisant pourtant aucun effet de routine, car chaque projet remet en scène l'histoire de façon très différente.



Pauline Boudry et Renata Lorenz, *Aut. Body*, 2008, Vidéo couleur, 10 min 30 sec.



Pauline Boudry et Renata Lorenz, *Aut. Body*, 2008, Vidéo couleur, 10 min 30 sec.

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Pauline Boudry et Ronald Carver, *Colombiana*, 2008. Vellore, Inde: VVO, 37 p.

[illegible]

Le projet *N.D. Body* se situe au carrefour de l'anthropologie visuelle, des gender studies et des transgenre studies. Il se fonde sur une relecture critique du travail du sexologue allemand Magnus Hirschfeld. Celui-ci s'était intéressé dès les années 1890 à la notion de « transition » par laquelle un individu peut désirer se situer entre un genre biologique et un autre¹ et ainsi échapper à l'aspect moralithique des assignations normales de genre en assumant une certaine indistinction sexuelle. Bien que fondée sur des prémisses d'un autre temps, les recherches d'Hirschfeld peuvent par certains aspects apparaitre aujourd'hui comme anticipant certaines intuitions théoriques bien plus contemporaines telle que la théorie du « devenir » développée par Deleuze et Guattari, théorie qui participe des réflexions liées au genre et dont se réclament en partie Brudry et Lorenz. Hirschfeld² avait constitué une archive visuelle de plus de huit cents pages, résultat d'une longue collecte à travers le monde qui témoignait de scènes de vie de nombreux individus performant le genre dans une rela-

lien plus ou moins lâche à ses idées-typiques. Cette manne éclectique fe cohobier des images scientifiques de type anthropométriques à des clichés privés de mises en scène *S/M* et à des planches anatomiques d'animaux hermaprodites... Évoquant *N.O. Body*, les auteurs se placent à souligner le levrier que peut constituer l'apparente proximité formelle entre une paranoïa maso-affiliée d'un masque dans le dispositif scientifique (le masque servant alors à ne pas offenser sa pudeur) et une autre personne nue, dans un scénario *S/M*, chez qui le masque est cette fois un marqueur de soumission consentie. Ce déplacement de sens par la circulation d'un même signe d'un contexte à l'autre est d'ailleurs un ressort important du *madus* opérant de Lowry et Bourdy.

Mais si elles soulignent, dans le parabente ce détail relatif à la circulation des signes et des signifiants, Pauline Boudry et Renate Lenzin le soulignent aussi par le mandat qu'elles confient à Werner Hirsch qui, dans sa présentation, revêtira à son tour quelques instants un masque noir. Dans la circulation des signes qui s'opère

•ecoliography/Jan'lee Study et Gekale Luvet•

• 24K 14 • 14K 14 • 14K 14 • 14K 14 •



“ Le travail du queer peut aussi contribuer à assouplir en soi-même des positions par trop rigides, quand bien même celles-ci ont elles-mêmes pu s'ériger contre des systèmes normatifs

Le rayonnement cette bonne conscience des dévils qui habitent Salomé et que sucroite Salomé. Du plus, ces personnes ont elles-mêmes une relation conflictuelle avec différents types de carcans normatifs et c'est en cela que Boudry et Lorenz les associent en un des dilemme qui trace en pointillés leur « archéologie queer ». Dans un savant jeu procédant la encore d'une chaîne de enseignements successifs, les deux artistes ont réuni le chorégraphe star Yvonne Rainer et l'artiste activiste transsexuelle Wu Ingrid Tsang pour Rimer une transmission de sible, Rainer ayant réinterprété la « Danse des sept veilles » de Salomé¹ dans son *Void* 2 solo de 1972. Dans un dialogue retranscrit par Renato Lorenz et Pauline Boudry, Wu Ingrid Tsang entremise avec malice Yvonne Rainer sur le choix d'un tel archétype de la séduction qui plus est d'après le solo interprété par Alia Nazemova dans le mouvement corp qui fut son libre hommage à Salomé. C'est l'occasion pour Rainer de laisser entendre que la chorégraphe salutiérice de Salomé pouvait bien fasciner le carcan antinormatif qu'elle s'était façonné en enroulant en 1969

Ce point précis du dispositif, souligné dans le *Tratado Semántico* par sa réinscription écrite, a le mérite de mettre au jour le fait que le travail du quaker peut aussi contribuer à assouplir en soi-même des positions par trop rigides, quand bien même celles-ci ont elles-mêmes pu s'élérer contre des systèmes normatifs (ici, le code dominant de la danse classique et moderne). De façon semblable, le jugement concordant du Wêde vis-à-vis des illustrations de Beaudouy n'a pas empêché que le socle de la pièce puisse résulter de cela même qui les sépare et les unit à la fois. Texte et images ayant pu en quelque sorte se « quakeriser » mutuellement, il tant est qu'un système esthétique puisse en quakeriser un autre. Tous ces glissements dans les interprétations successives permettant à la fois la transmission d'un idéal original faisant image ou symbole et une implication subjective de chacun des maîtres de cette chaîne. Pareille mobilisation vivante, parvienne communautaire virtuelle ne sont pas sans évoquer le dynamisme de la narration telle que décrite par Walter Benjamin dans le *Korteweg*.

Boulay et Lormez thématisaient les ressorts de l'identification et de la participation dans leur projet *Contagious* (2010). Le film est de nouveau à contribution deux personnalités fortes. De fait, aussi, Vignani Davis et Anaïs Martinez, dans ce rôle de réinterprétation de deux danses (la danse épileptique et le cake-walk) ayant eu un grand succès en France dans les années 1930. C'est cette fois la production photographique résultant des expériences du Professeur Charcot sur l'hystérie et l'épilepsie qui constitue le matériau exhumé. Spécialiste du sujet, Rae Ruth Gordon a analysé dans plusieurs textes³⁰ ce passage violent que Boulay et Lormez mettent en scène et en images : passage d'une socialisation de la médecine à une mise en art de la maladie, les fameuses « Leçons du mardi » de Charcot ayant joué un grand rôle dans cette mise. Dans les danses, les chorégraphes et les films alors produits, la filzaire qui fascine et qu'un naïf croit souvent des femmes ou des étrangers, « l'inconscient corporel » ou « le mécanisme cérébral » tend à abolir la raison.



Hautbeac by Rikate Lerens, Côtage/S&S, 2010. Vidéoformat, 1080i/25, 12 min.



Hautbeac by Rikate Lerens, Côtage/S&S, 2010. Vidéoformat, 1080i/25, 12 min.

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Des travailleuses normales, des luttes normales¹⁸

Deux autres projets de Renate Lorenz et Pauline Boudry participent de cette première période d'une œuvre aussi riche que récemment constituée, il s'agit de *Normal Work* (2007) et de *Charming for a Revolution* (2009). Tous les deux sollicitent de nouveau les qualités de présence, d'intelligence et de charme de Werner Hirsch en figure queer aussi séduisante qu'elle est à même de défier du regard des millions d'inquisition normative. *Charming for a Revolution* prend les apparences d'un film activiste, mais il semble dénoncer aussi bien la norme patriarcale à laquelle le personnage s'oppose dans sa décharge verbale que l'inefficacité des revendications du féminisme de première génération qu'il réclame pourtant. Empruntant ironiquement aussi bien au devenir-animal qu'au préotytisme universel des mœurs du film de Picolini Uccelacci e uccellini, il fait de la course des oiseaux (rencontrer aussi, des femmes) le lieu des illuminés (Saint François d'Assise) ou des queers de tous genres. Ainsi, l'attitude queer semble solidariser avec les luttes du féminisme d'après guerre avec une empathie quelque peu déphée (ces luttes initiales restent toujours d'actualité alors même que le féminisme a changé de nom).

Enfin, *Normal Work* (2007) est lui aussi un projet fondamental au sens où il touche tout à la fois à des mécanismes d'assignation de

genre, de classe et de race. Pauline Boudry et Renate Lorenz versent cette fois à leur dossier iconographique les mises en scène photographiques de 1868 du couple constitué par un land anglais (Arthur Munby) et par une « femme à tout faire » (Hannah Cullwick) qui fut aussi la femme de sa vie. Contrôlant le dispositif et ses significations, Cullwick est instrumentalisée sa relation avec Munby pour s'affranchir (au moins à ses yeux dans un premier temps) des assignations sociales qui l'affligeaient. Boudry et Lorenz investissent particulièrement dans leur film et dans l'ouvrage *Normal Work* le contexte spécifique du contrat sadomasochiste qui unissait ce couple ainsi qu'en témoignent leurs récits de vie respectifs. Dans le film, ce contrat est transposé en un contexte lesbien¹⁹ par le truchement de la relation dominant/dominé (et inversement) entre Werner Hirsch et l'opératrice du film. Ce projet, à l'instar de chaque chantier ouvert par Pauline Boudry et Renate Lorenz a le grand mérite de basculer aussi bien la pensée conditionnée de la société dans laquelle nous vivons que celle des mineurs (queer et post-queer) qui s'y opposent.

Cédric Schönwald

Pauline Boudry & Renate Lorenz et alii

Nothing Personal

Du 8 janvier au 3 mars 2011
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à rue Troyon-Beaux Paris 201.
M/L 04 50 04 30 80.

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Du 23 janvier au 4 avril 2011
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à Klaus Galert Strasse,
Rueschert (Schweiz),
M/L +41 55 230 52 94,
Contacteur: Alexandra Blatter.

PROCHAINEMENT

Pauline Boudry & Renate Lorenz

54 Biennale de Venise 2011
Du 5 juin au 4 octobre 2011
au Teatro Fondazione Sacca
3013 Ca' Sagredo, Venise (Italie),
M/L +39 041 522 44 98,
Contacteur: Andrea Tadi.



Pauline Boudry et Renate Lorenz, *Normal Work*, 2007, 1700 gmm, 35mm/16mm, 13 min.