

A history of performance in 20 minutes

A lecture performance by Guillaume Désanges (Fr)
with Frédéric Cherboeuf



« A history of performance in 20 minutes », a lecture by Guillaume Désanges

« Let's attempt a history of the body in art as a history of silence as opposed to discourse about art. Let's simply show how the history – of art – has, at a certain moment – and for some people – engendered gestures and not objects. And certainly not discourse...

Looked at this way, in a purely formal fashion, the history of performance, or of body art, is not then a history of the representation of the body but exclusively a history of gesture.

Barely sketched, already expired.” GD

A history of performance in 20 minutes is a conference which aims at dividing the history of performance in 10 gestures :

1 – Appearing, 2 – Receiving., 3 – Holding back , 4- Escaping, 5 – Aiming, 6- Falling, 7 – Crying, 8 – Biting, 9- Emptying oneself , 10 – Disappearing, discussing very subjectively those 10 gestures.

The form of the conference itself is important : the lecturer is passively sat while an actor is playing on stage all the gestures of performances that are presented.

The lecture can be considered as a living exhibition.

Since 2004, it has been shown in many art institutions like : Centre Pompidou (Paris), De Appel (Amsterdam), Artists Space (New York), Centre d'Art Santa Monica (Barcelona), U-TURN (Copenhagen), WIELS (Brussels), FRAC PACA (Marseille), MAC-VAL (Paris), FRAC Lorraine (Metz), etc...

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STILLS



(photos : FRAC Lorraine)

TEXT (EXTRACTS)

[...] On the November 19th, 1971, Chris Burden stood up in a gallery in Santa Ana in California. Stood up in front of a gun, a movie camera and a photographic camera.. There is a shot. The bullet goes through his arm. (...) Arghh. Radical performance – the suicide gesture.
Burden is thus immobile, determined. The outcome is inevitable. Shoot, 1971. Inescapable. It's – I don't fight.
[...]

[...] But the most disturbing is not that. Because with Burden it's anti-suspense. You say to yourself : perhaps he isn't going to do it. But yes. He is capable. Finally, it's : an exercise of virility. I fight against the pain. I am strong. The will to power and the superman. I shoot myself but stay alive. Nietzschean. Chris Burden : it's... health. And the worst thing is... illness. The most disturbing then is not Chris Burden, it's Vito Acconci. Blindfold catching, 1970. With Burden it's the firing squad, with Acconci it's torture.
[...]

[...] But don't worry, not everything is so calm. New gesture – crying. Sobbing. Screaming. New gesture... dumb. Paradoxical? Not really. A cry is not discourse. A cry is expression, noise. It's not language. After centuries of visual and then textual discourse in art. The cry is an affirmation of the end of discourse. We've already moved on to something else. Or returned to something else. A simple cry. Just that. Alone. Primal. A return to the essence of art. I cry, after that comes language.... The end of childhood. Head down version. Marina Abramovic (1975). Freeing the voice. To cry is to resist. A quasi-trance. Experimenting with the body's limits. The result – an almost feral bel canto. Like a roar (...). The wild singer.

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Guillaume Désanges (born in 1971, lives in Paris). He is curator and art critic, co-founder of Work Method, a Paris based agency for artistic projects. Member of the editorial board of Trouble Magazine, he collaborates with the magazines Exit Express and Exit Book (Madrid). He coordinated the artistic projects of Laboratoires d'Aubervilliers between 2001 and 2007, and worked with Thomas Hirschhorn (the 24h Foucault project, and Musée Précaire Albinet). He developed several performed conference projects like "A history of performance in 20 minutes" (Centre Pompidou, Paris / De Appel, Amsterdam / MacVal, Paris / U-Turn, Copenhagen, etc..) or "Vox Artisti, his master's voice" (Halles de Schaerbeek, Brussels / Betonsalon, Paris). He organized the exhibitions "Pick-Up" at Public>, Paris 2004, "Untouchable, The transparency Ideal" at Villa Arson, Nice and Museo Patio Herreriano, Valladolid, in 2006-2007, "Jiri Kovanda Vs rest of the World" at gallery gb agency, Paris, De Appel (Asmterdam), Centre d'Art Santa Monica (Barcelone), in 2006-2007. In 2007-2008, he is invited curator at Centre d'Art Contemporain La Tôlerie. He also teaches at Ecole des Beaux-Arts de Clermont-Ferrand.

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Technical requirement :

- 1 table, 2 chairs (one with wheels)
- 2 microphones + amplified sound system
- a stage so that the audience can see the lecturer and especially the performer
- 1 or 2 spotlights towards the stage
- it is important to have an accessible issue for the performer, preferably near the table, in order to leave the room, disappear and come back during the lecture