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# POINTS OF CONVERGENCE

## ALTERNATIVE VIEWS ON PERFORMANCE

  
**BOOKS**  
N°12



EDITED BY  
MARTA  
DZIEWAŃSKA  
& ANDRÉ LEPECKI

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#### Editors

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#### Translations

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#### Proofread by

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#### Design Concept and Layout

Ludovic Balland Typography Cabinet, Basel

#### Typesetting and Lithography

Noviki Studio, Katarzyna Nestorowicz,  
Marcin Nowicki

#### Typesaces

Ludwig Pro

#### Printed by

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## THE MUSEUM UNDER CO BOOK SERIES

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# TURN O THE DECA

## PERFORMANCE AND DOCUMENTATION: ACTING IN RUINS AND THE QUESTION OF DURATION

Rebecca Schneider is Professor in the Department of Theatre Arts and Performance Studies at Brown University. She is the author of *Theatre & History* (Palgrave, 2014), *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment* (Routledge, 2011), and *The Explicit Body in Performance* (Routledge, 1997). She has coedited the anthology *Re-Direction: A Theoretical and Practical Guide to 20th-Century Directing* and a special issue of *TDR: The Drama Review* on "Precedence and Performance" (2012). She is a consortium editor for *TDR*, contributing editor to *Women and Theatre*, coeditor, with David Krasner, of the book series "Theater: Theory/Text/Performance" with the University of Michigan Press, and consulting editor for the series "Performance Interventions" with Palgrave Macmillan. Schneider has published essays in several anthologies, including *Psychanalysis and Performance, Acting Out: Feminist Performances, Performance and Cultural Politics, Performance Cosmologies, Performance and the City*, and the essay "Solo Solo" in *After Criticism*. In addition, she has collaborated with artists at such sites as the British Museum in London and the Mobile Academy in Berlin, and delivered lectures at museums including the Guggenheim in New York, the Culbenkian in Lisbon, the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, and the Centre National de la Danse in Paris.

It is well known that documentation has become an almost essential practice in contemporary performance-based arts. But we may well ask why "documentation" is also a fundamental concept in performance theory? This is not as easy a question to resolve as it at first appears. The easy answer has been that documents—text, artifact, photographic or video or film image—capture a moment in time. Live performance, composed of time but supposedly disappearing in time, cannot, it is often thought, remain for the archive. So, the thinking goes, performance requires documents for preservation. Bodies and memory are, in this model of thought, insufficient for preservation.

With this distinction between document and performance, the question of the document ties immediately into geopolitical investments in what constitutes history, what constitutes memory (in some opposition to history), what constitutes proper archives, and ultimately, what constitutes remains—which is in one sense to say, what constitutes *the future*. The question of the document concerns what will be given to be, in the future, a reliable remain, though we must remember that reliability is determined in

and as practice. In this case, the document as reliable would mean something that can be given to the archive as a seemingly unchanging remain for future historical analysis, capable of speaking for the past, and suitable for the ways we tell ourselves not only about who we have been in the past, but, by virtue of what it is possible to say about the past, what we can claim as "our" future. The "our" is in double quotation marks here because it refers not to everyone in every culture, but to those whose approach to history subscribes to the Western secular progress model of time that assumes that time disappears into the past, without return. Such a model also assumes that objects and documents and other materials conventionally approached as non-living, remain longer than so-called living or live organisms, human memory, and other fragile or vulnerable "ephemeralities." This question of the document—an artifact given to preserve live performance—becomes a question of time. A question of *duration*.

But how do we parse the duration of the live from the duration of inanimate remains? While it is difficult to separate documentation from the archive—and thus from what has been termed "archival culture" broadly speaking—it is also the case that the document is given to remain *for* the live: for the future of its live encounter again in-time. Anything we give to the archive will be recomposed in a political system that Michel Foucault called "the system of its enunciability"—what will have been already said constitutes what it will be possible to say.<sup>1</sup> Diana Taylor has been eloquent on the geopolitics that historically aligned European colonizers with the archive and the "primitive" colonized with performance. Taylor's *The Archive and the Repertoire* takes us to the scene of encounter between European colonizers and the colonized in the Americas to explain how performance and orature in live modes of telling history were debased in direct relationship to the archiving of written records.<sup>2</sup> In the scenario of conquest, Taylor makes clear the geopolitical systems of privilege by which documentation and preservation of text

1 Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 129.  
2 Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003).

and object as *against* performance became imperial tools for the subjugation of colonized populations. It was important for the colonizers that live performance, oral traditions of transmission, and body-based ways of working the past, would *not* remain as valid indicators of history (except through records, narratives, images that would then become documents of so-called vanishing ways of life). The tracks of body-to-body transmission in ritual, dance, orature, and folklore had to be debased in relationship to the official history given only to exist in document and object-based archives—archives controlled by the colonizer. Performance was relegated to disappearance and marked as the medium of those without history.<sup>3</sup>

Some may assume that we are well beyond the racist and gender-marked claims that have dis-privileged embodied modes of transmitting historical knowledge over time. Many have claimed that attitudes have shifted in favor of a so-called *new* history that incorporates collective memory, performative practices, and man-ages intangible heritage. But it is still possible to argue that these *new* efforts to preserve—efforts that incorporate performance—are still linked to imperial archival conditions that ultimately legislate in favor of private property. The legacy of this imperial approach to performance (capturing performance through visual or textual document for preservation in an archive) is partly at the base of Tino Sehgal's refusal of all documentation, including documents of ownership, for his 2007 sculpture/dance *Kiss*. Sehgal's piece, arguably choreography for live performers who move in shapes that recall Auguste Rodin's 1889 statue *The Kiss*, was acquired by New York's Museum of Modern Art. The acquisition was realized, at Sehgal's insistence, without any traditional documentation and inclusive of the stipulation that photography is prohibited wherever the piece is installed.<sup>4</sup> As per Sehgal's instruction upon purchase, his piece

3 See Ranajit Guha, *History at the Limit of World-History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), for an analysis of the ways in which historiography subordinated and subsumed subaltern people into narratives of Empire and Nation that relegate the subaltern to "peoples without history."

4 Nevertheless, plenty of images of *Kiss* circulate freely in media. See, for example, Holland Cotter, "In the Naked Museum: Talking, Thinking, Encountering," *New York Times*, January 31, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/01/arts/design/01tino.html>.

ance, and so via reenactment, a piece of performance once considered tied to the vanishing moment of its iteration could be regenerated across other bodies re-performing the historical event. The tangle of disappearance/reappearance in the question of live art connected to other modes of thought in the academy—from the investment in “performativity” that foregrounded iteration and repetition as redoing, to questions of the ways in which ideology manifests through repeatable embodied rituals, habits, or sets of acts sedimented in bodily practices. Performativity, originally a theory of linguistics through J. L. Austin, was extended to the body to read the body as a kind of document, a repetition machine. In addition, post-structuralism in conversation with psychoanalytic trauma theory made it impossible to continue to argue that simply because an act was carried out by a live body, it disappeared from any possibility of account aside from technological means of capture (such as photography or video). Ultimately, the growing awareness that apparatuses of capture (such as photography and video) were not entirely trustworthy in the digital age combined with the sense that information was accessible “live” on the internet via late capitalism’s 24/7 affective encounter with consumers, meant that the register of “liveness” was expanding exponentially. Increasingly, liveness (a term deserving of much debate and scrutiny<sup>7</sup>) was at our fingertips at all hours of every day via social media.

The space that previously separated performance in time from archive, document, and object remain has been vanishing. If, as Derrida made clear, archives are already houses for the second-coming of the future, a document is as much about and of the future as about and of the past.<sup>8</sup> Thus, an object or a document can be read as a script—can script the future in the sense of becoming available as a means to future re-performance. History itself, that is, becomes a matter of re-performance. Combined with the basic performance studies notion that any performance is already re-performance—Richard Schechner’s famous “twice-behaved behavior” model put

7 For a breakdown of some of these debates see Schneider, *Performing Remains*, 87–110. See also Schneider, “It Seems as if ... I am Dead: Zombie Capitalism and Theatrical Labor,” *TDR: The Drama Review* 56, no. 4 (2012).  
8 Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

can only be performed live, by living human performers, and all “documents” pertaining to its exchange in time must be carried out orally, with all non-human technological means of recording prohibited. Clearly, at the turn of the twenty-first century, the art world faced a changing dynamic with respect to its relationship to the preservation of art. Efforts to “save” 1960s and 70s performance-based artwork were becoming more pronounced—those who had made and attended these events were aging. At the time of their making, performance-based art, so prevalent in mid-twentieth-century art practices linked to the historical avant-garde, had often (but not always) been considered one-offs. That is, unlike theater that often produces a script and understands itself as grounded in its reproducibility on the stage, or dance that often relies on body-to-body transmission for choreographic practices transmitted through trained dancers across time, performance art was deploying “dematerialized” liveness in direct opposition to artworks that could conventionally be bought and sold in commodified object or document form. Much mid-century performance art was anti-commodity and anti-archive because it was considered “self-destructive.”<sup>5</sup> This mid-century notion situated performance as potentially resistant to commodification and, by extension, against the archive. But as I have written elsewhere, though the notion of performance as disappearance seemed to resist the archive, it was exactly in line with archival logic: it was the archive that dictated, up to that time, that performance disappears, and so this approach to performance as “self-destructive” was, in some senses, exactly in line with traditional archival thinking.<sup>6</sup>

In the early 2000s, the question of whether performance could remain—and the related question of whether performance itself could be *owned*—came under increased discussion in scholarly and curatorial circles. Performance becomes itself as much, it was argued, through reappearance as through disappear-

5 See Paul Schimmel, “Leap into the Void: Performance and the Object” in *Out of Actions: Between Performance and the Object, 1949–1979*, ed. Russell Ferguson, exhibition catalog (Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art, 1998), 17–120.

6 Rebecca Schneider, *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

forward in *Between Theater and Anthropology*—the conundrum of performance's basis as repetition now recognizes no boundaries from which to isolate an original in strictly non-recuperable time.<sup>9</sup>

By now, we are well aware that art museums, as well as the heritage industry generally, have been increasingly trading in reenactment. We have become well-versed in what Michael Fried dis-paraged as the "theatrical" dynamics, the relational dynamics, the affective dynamics, by which any artifact, document, or material that might be considered evidence of another time, or "out of time" or "timeless," meets the living spectator, the living researcher, the living museum-goer in in-time live encounter.<sup>10</sup> The againness of spectral encounter has always been a given in theater and in dance, and so we see previously solid distinctions between object art and theater art diminishing, though it is important to note that many of the most active art-world reenactors (and here we can think of Marina Abramović) are at great pains to distinguish performance art reenactments from theater (if less concerned about the link to dance). The anxieties about theater are profoundly interesting, and deserve greater attention.<sup>11</sup> But suffice to say, for now, that live art-work once considered to have vanished in a time that would not recur, can now, it is generally accepted, be accessed through body-to-body transmission or explicit re-performance practices that may or may not include the document.

And yet, how is live reenactment, live-relation to the object or document, to be policed for legitimacy and authenticity? If a document of a prior performance is a script for future re-performance, then is any and all re-performance a valid articulation of a prior act? For some, like Abramović, the answer would be no.

9 Richard Schechner, *Between Theater and Anthropology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985).

10 Michael Fried, "Art and Objecthood," in *Minimal Art*, ed. Gregory Battcock (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995). Originally published as "Art and Objecthood," *Artforum*, June 1967, 116–47.

11 The literature on anti-theatricality is vast. See Schneider, *Performing Remains*, 2011, as well as Schneider, "Solo Solo Solo," in *After Criticism: New Responses to Art and Performance*, ed. Gavin Butt (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2004). See Jonas Barish, *Antitheatrical Prejudice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981).

If documents can be faked or manipulated, how much more so re-performance?

In an essay titled "Performance Police," visual art and dance historian Carrie Lambert-Beatty situates the move from performance to re-performance in the museum and argues that questions raised about display become questions about institutions and rights: about, in short, policing. Policing questions, Lambert-Beatty writes:

[...] are about performances in the future: how they will be done, and by whom. In this mode what is owned are rights—the right to enact, stage, perform, or reform the work. On the one hand this seems fairly straightforward—the museum gets to hang up the painting it owns, and the museum gets to stage the performance it owns rights to. The difference is that the museum's right to stage the performance implies that no one else can. In this model each performance carries with it—we might say it is haunted by—the other possible performances, the ones it disallows. Policing [...] is built into performance's institutionalization by rights. [...] The coordinates it gives for performance are [no longer] presence and trace, or embodiment and image, or immediacy and mediation—but circulation and restriction.<sup>12</sup>

Part of the museal policing of performance is a renewed investment in medial specificity. Abramović has argued that performance is "pure" and "different from other arts."<sup>13</sup> But does the "difference" to "other arts" really include all other arts, or is this professed difference actually meant to be pitched most exhaustively against the messy, impure, and historically feminized body-to-body arts of theater and dance? Curator Klaus Biesenbach happily offered

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Carrie Lambert-Beatty, "Performance Police" (paper presented at

"Thinking Performance," Guggenheim Museum, New York, June 18, 2010). Abramović cited in Chris Thompson and Katarina Westlin, "Pure Raw: Performance, Pedagogy, and (Re)Presentation, an interview with Marina Abramović," *PAJ: Performing Arts Journal* 82 (2006): 29–50; Abramović cited in Fabio Cypriano, "Performance and Reenactment: Analyzing Marina Abramović's Seven Easy Pieces," *idanca.net* (blog), September 2, 2009, <http://www.idanca.net/?p=12156>.

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FIG. 1  
THE WOOSTER GROUP, POOR THEATER – A SERIES OF  
SIMULACRA, 2006, PHOTOGRAPH BY PAULA COURT

the analogy that in MoMA's exhibition of Abramović's *The Artist Is Present*, the performers reenacting Abramović's pieces "will be present by as if they were sculpture."<sup>14</sup> Material—flesh and blood—sculpted by Abramović, apparently. This "like" sculpture but "unlike other arts" is interesting, and not surprising, given the longstanding assumption in archive culture that objects, documents, and recordings are the only mode of remaining. But the resistance to theatricality in the representation of live performance art is extremely curious, given the myriad of mid-century work (in performance, photography, inter-media, and appropriation art) that explicitly mined the theatrical, or overtly staged, unauthorized or reauthorized copy, precisely because of theatricality's curious ability to pry open and challenge the question of discreet ownership and legitimate exchange.

Abramović and Biesenbach's overt attempts to dis-tance re-performance from acting and to align performance art with sculpture in the museum—performance becoming sculpture—strives for what it understands as the inverse of theatrical impurity and inauthenticity and yet, looked at historically, the effort is deeply theatrical in and of itself. Think of Stanislaw Wyspiański's 1904 play *Akropolis*, in which Wawel Cathedral statues and artwork come to life to reenact biblical, Homeric, and historical scenes. Statuary becomes live performance. Now think of Jerzy Grotowski's mid-century redo of Wyspiański's *Akropolis* and then think of Elizabeth LeCompte's 2006 redo of Grotowski's redo in her *Poor Theater – A Series of Simulacra* in which scenes from the 1968 film of Grotowski's *Akropolis* were reenacted live by LeCompte's Wooster Group actors with extreme precision that bordered, for some, on sacrilege. [FIG. 1] Arguably, Wyspiański's/Grotowski's/LeCompte's iterations of the play of sculpture-come-to-life and life-come-to-sculpture are cross-generational conversations that articulate a temporal *between* laced with the discursive interruption of difference and argument. (Wyspiański's play on the cathedral's sculpture was not the same as the cathedral's sculpture, Grotowski's Wyspiański was not the same as Wyspiański's Wyspiański, LeCompte's Grotowski was not the same as Grotowski's

14 See Klaus Biesenbach's comment in the MoMA instructional video "The Artist Is Present: Marina Abramović," MoMA New York, <http://www.moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/2010/marinaabramovic/conversation.html>.

Crotowski, nor was Wyspiański's Wyspiański the same as the cathedral statuary—but in this ricochet through reenactment, between the cathedral artwork, Wyspiański, Crotowski, LeCompte, and back, the works are also *not entirely different* from each other either. The theater's logic of re-performance is, in these cases at least, different than the drive for purity, authenticity, or fidelity at the base of Abramovic's efforts toward museal legitimacy in the "policing" actions she advocates. Yet ironically, statuary at the interface between animate and inanimate plays a similarly essential role.

The medial panic around re-performance that occasions sculpture as the art museum's privileged analogy concerns the singularity and originality of the artist and the restriction of rights to that artist's "work." At stake is also the status of timelessness and mastery that object-based art assumed and that performance art maintained only as long as it was considered *not* reproducible (as long, that is, as it was only archival documents, such as photographs, that appeared to underscore an event's singularity and disappearance). Now that museums are re-performing works once deemed singular, the problem of theater and the dematerialized *labor* of performers (who are also artists) recurs to potentially wreak havoc on the previously sacrosanct archival domain of the document. Theater and dance, those troublingly collaborative forms, might challenge lineage with their feminizing, mimetic "take" on an "original" that can be realized only in and through the jump of bodies from one artist (such as choreographer) to another (such as dancer) and on from that artist (dancer) to yet another (dancer). As Schechner articulated in 1965, despite the policing properties of copyright concerning *drama*, there can be no original in *theater*.<sup>15</sup> Or, more troublingly for legitimacy and ideality, the "original" in theater recurs: always and only occurring in and through difference.

As I have argued, the separation between live or performance in-time and the archive, document, or object remain is vanishing. With practices of reenactment, the in-time live can be in time again, live. In this way, performance is no longer another word

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<sup>15</sup> "The peculiar burden and problem of the theater is that there is no original artwork at all," Richard Schechner, "Theater Criticism," *The Tulane Drama Review* 9, no. 3 (1965): 22. Emphasis in original.

for, strictly, disappearance. Nor is it the limit category for live art. For many in performance studies as well as in art historical theory the perhaps awkward term "liveness" has come to signify the contemporary slippery slope between animacy and inanimacy in the arts, as well as a word to gesture toward the vexed debates around changing notions of preservation for performance-based work. Or, as example, a television broadcast can be "live," whether or not anyone tunes in to observe it. Copresence is not an indicator of liveness in this example. If the TV is on and a sofa in your living room is the only spectator, the event is nevertheless considered live. Similarly, an art patron who is alive when visiting a stone sculpture at a museum takes part in a scene of living spectatorship that includes the stone she encounters. The art event of the sculptural encounter is, by this logic, live. A document, too, can be performance and trade in the condition of liveness it circulates. In an essay following on his influential book *Liveness*, Philip Auslander has argued that the space distinguishing a document from a performance has shrunk not only because documents of in-time performances are used to re-perform but because performances, made for the document, are inseparable from the documentation that takes place at/in/as (re) performance—meaning that we can no longer parse the live from the recorded or object-based work in any reliable way.<sup>16</sup> As an example, we can think here of the overtly theatrical work of Cindy Sherman—is a Sherman photograph a document or a performance? Is it a document of a performance or a document as a performance or a performance as document of a performance in a document? If we follow Auslander, there was no Sherman performance in any way prior to or separable from the documentation, and no documentation separable from the performance. One decision we make on the order of words regarding Sherman's "photography" would be no more correct than another. Think of Sherman striking a "pose" for a photograph and consider: Was not that pose, that performance, meant to take place in its own future, as the photograph it hailed? Another way to say this is that Sherman's performance is in some ways

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Philip Auslander, "The Performativity of Performance Documentation," *PML: Performing Arts Journal* 28, no. 3 (2006): 1–10.



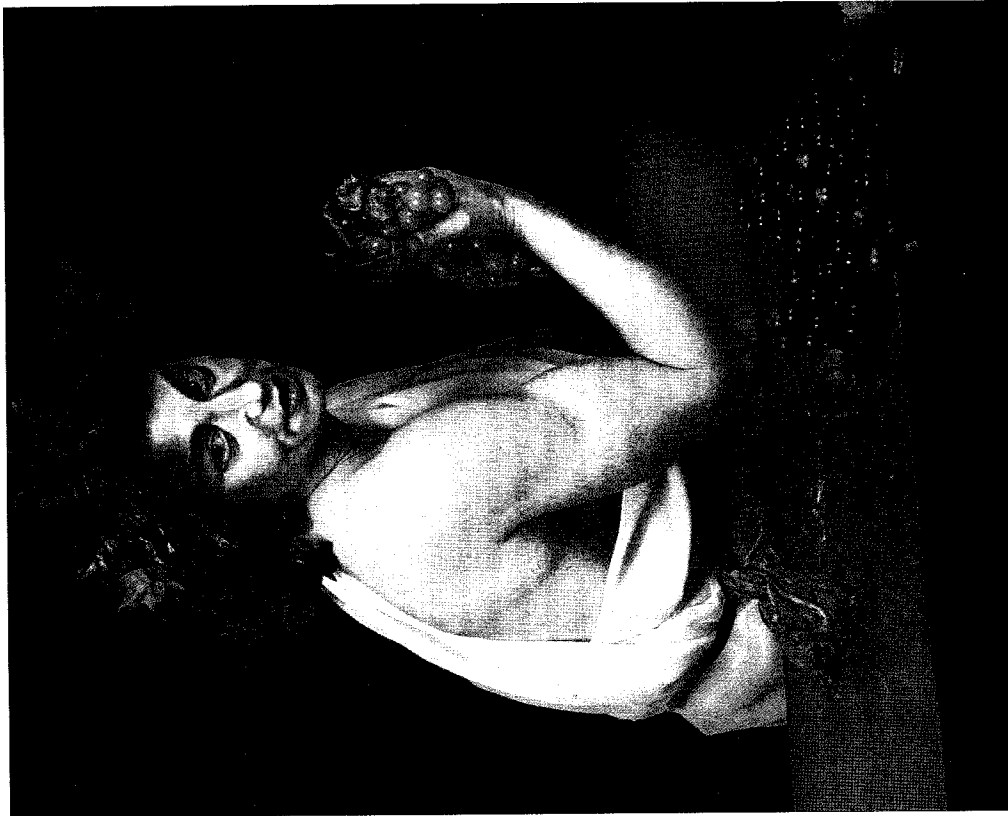


FIG. 2  
CINDY SHERMAN, UNTITLED #224, 1990

extended or deferred from one live event (Sherman's pose in her studio) to other live events (the myriad encounter of the pose with its spectators). [FIG.2]

The idea of a hail helps us think about the time of performance in an extended register (or as a register of extension). A hand waved in a gesture of call for example, or a pointed finger in a gesture of "Look at that," or a vocal call projected by a policeman as in "Hey, you there!" (to sonically recall Louis Althusser's famous example of interpellation<sup>17</sup>), casts itself into the future in anticipation of response: A wave in return; a look toward the point; a response to the policeman. The time of a hail is suspended, like an echo, in anticipation of a spectator or auditor or participant in another sensory encounter. A hail is relational and extended, in anticipation of encounter. Not simply the purview of live performance, the hail is, interestingly, what W. J. T. Mitchell implicitly gives to any and all documents, images, and objects in *What Do Pictures Want*.<sup>18</sup> And in "Dances with Things," Robin Bernstein writes succinctly, "Things hail."<sup>19</sup> I like the notion of the hail, or the gestural call, because it inaugurates an interval, a space for radical heterogeneity, an *open* possibility for response from any number of others.

The idea I am working with here is that a hail is a gesture, extended off of itself in time and/or space, and as such it carries with it the (live) event even as it anticipates a (live) response. The space between call and response suspends a kind of liveness, if you will. The hail anticipates a response. The hail reaches toward response, and extends or suspends its activity in the interval it opens before response. It is, in this sense, an ongoing live event—a performance in anticipation of response in a temporal register that need not be linear in time (as one might, for example, call out to other times and other places not so neatly plotted for the forward march of secular, capitalist time). As durational event, a hail partakes or

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Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), 85–125.

18

W. J. T. Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want: The Lives and Loves of Images* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 37.

19

Robin Bernstein, "Dances with Things: Material Culture and the Performance of Race," *Social Text* 27, no. 4 (2009): 68.

extends some aspects of the live event we are discussing as performance, further complicating any clear distinction between performance and documentation: For who is to legislate the duration of the echo chamber, the shelf *life* if you will, of a hail? A hand waves, passed to a hand that waves back, and that hand then waves again to another hand, and another, and another—the jump of event across bodies and between objects and documents in hailing “intra-activity,” to quote Karen Barad, is extensive, without legible duration.<sup>20</sup> In fact, extensivity is arguably the medium of any hail. As Carrie Noland has recently written after Marcel Mauss, gestures are primarily “iterable techniques” and iteration is, of course, reiteration.<sup>21</sup>

Art as hail or as gesture, in the form of performance, object, document, or gestic reenactment, persists in encounter and circulation. It indicates, like instruction, a set of possible past and future actions, past and future responses. Even the act of looking was/is will be a live encounter (for time comes undone in its absolute linearity when loosed from the policing of the archive). A response, taking place after a performance event, is already implicated in the call and is already part of the event of articulation that produces, it is possible to argue, a document. The document circulates performatively, itself a response inaugurating other responses, itself a call inaugurating other calls. As I argued in depth in *Performing Remains*, the document takes place in its future, live. The boundaries of performance's liveness are opened, in this way of thinking, to cross-temporal exchange. It becomes possible to think of liveness as both a product of a document cast into its future, and to think of

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I have already mentioned Mitchell and Bernstein, but many in contemporary “new materialism” have no trouble thinking about the liveness of things previously relegated to inanimacy—a thing’s “intra-action,” to use Karen Barad’s word. See Karen Barad, “Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter,” *Signs* 28, no. 3 (Spring 2003): 801–31; Crahan Harvey, *Animism: Respecting the Living World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005); Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010). See the work of Bruno Latour generally. On the changing borders of animacy see also Melinda Cooper, *Life as Surplus: Biotechnology and Capitalism in the Neoliberal Era* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008).

Carrie Noland, *Agency and Embodiment: Performing Gestures/Producing Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 101.

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the live as already documentation—an encounter, via repetition, of cross-temporal, responsive acts. This is documentation not only as dislocation off of an event—much as a hail travels off of itself in time—but as relocation in cross-temporal exchange by which a live act is live, again.

Staying with the idea of the hail as a way to think about the slippery spaces between performance and documentation, documentation and performance, I’d like to now consider a brief segment of mid-century film. Let’s imagine that we could sit together, now, and watch the entirety of Rossellini’s 1954 film *Voyage to Italy*.<sup>22</sup> If we were to do that, we would be spectating actors’ one-time live performances preserved on film. But what of the “live performance” remains in the film as document of the one-time live? And what do we see when we watch the no longer live, live (presuming we are living when we watch it). *Voyage to Italy* is essentially about a dying marriage. A couple, played by Ingrid Bergman and George Sanders, are on a trip to Italy. It doesn’t matter why. In the film we repeatedly see the actors, and particularly Bergman, walking about in the ruins of the ancient Roman Empire. In viewing the film, we view Bergman viewing, or, more accurately, we watch the filmic traces of her viewing when she was alive to view. In one scene, she goes to an art museum in Naples, accompanied by a docent who points out various statues to her gaze. As she looks at the statues, various expressions pass across her face and her head tilts or her shoulders shift, in subtle ways that look as though she is taking the statue into her body. At one point, the film works to “capture” a gaze explicitly exchanged between inanimate statue and seemingly animate Bergman, as if animacy and inanimacy could jump across bodies interchangeable with each other. Watching the film, we seem to be spectating over Bergman’s mid-century shoulders as the gaze of the statue arrests her into stillness. But the relationship set up by the film—between viewers, the actress, and the stone statue we all encounter—is complex. Not only are we seeing Bergman seeing statuary, but we are seeing her as statue, and all of it—stone statuary

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*Journey to Italy (Viaggio in Italia)* is a 1954 Italian drama film directed by Roberto Rossellini starring Ingrid Bergman and George Sanders.

and living actress—are of course seen as film. Rossellini repeatedly brings to our contemplation the question of what is live and what is not, and eventually this question ricochets against us—the audience—prompting us to question our own status among the various varieties of detritus: The detritus of stone, the detritus of a marriage, the detritus of film. At moments—still, silent, watching—we viewers may more resemble the statuary than the actress who walks among them. Among the ruins of stone, and in the light of film, do we all, together with Bergman, partake of the question: What does it mean to (be) live?

Rossellini zooms in on Bergman's performance of affect—her cringing, wincing, and emoting—as well as on the faces of the statues that appear to carry if not provoke the emotion in Bergman. Affect, that is, jumps. Statuary and Bergman intertwine as affect appears to bounce off of statue and onto Bergman and back onto statue. In the film there is a liveness, a livingness, that Rossellini also gives, explicitly, to the stone itself. In fact, the liveness of Bergman's body-in-relation occurs acutely in relationship to her encounter with the inanimate—or that which is conventionally given to be inanimate: stone. And again, there is no stone. There is no living actress. There is only film—light and screen and us: watching live.

Well before the invention of the camera, and the notion of document that became documentary image, stage theater—that medium often fetishized as essentially “live”—was riddled with stone. At the ruins of the Theatre of Dionysus in Athens, for example, statuary line the *skene*, reminding us that for the ancients the live took place in relation to the effigy and the effigy took place live.<sup>24</sup> In fact it is possible to argue that the mask “comes to life” when the living face is occluded, a relation paradoxically basic to the live art medium of theater historically. So too the massive *skene frons* in Empiric Rome, arguably the historical base of the medieval cathedral as well as the

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Though the statuary at today's Theatre of Dionysus in Athens is dated to the Roman era, there would have been effigies of Dionysus himself present at theater competitions of the fifth century BCE.

modern screen, performs an expansion of the liveness-of-the-living by sharing that livingness with the stone still.<sup>24</sup>

But let's return to the scene of our viewing the ruins over Bergman's shoulder. If we were to watch the full movie *Voyage to Italy* together, we would see more of the bounce of affect when Bergman and her semi-estranged husband visit Pompeii for a scene in which the divide between live and non-live is troubled further. In a scene in Pompeii, for example, affect bounces back and forth between stone “remains” of the live and the quintessentially lost “modern” couple struggling with a dead, or almost dead, marriage. And all of this, of course, is expressed in a medium that is neither—neither stone nor re-live performance, but photography and the moving sequence of stills through which film becomes itself. *Voyage to Italy* bounces filmic scenes of animate-meets-inanimate, inanimate-meets-animate into our eyeballs and our ears. The light and sound are material—they enter our bodies as we watch—becoming live parasitically, as Mei Chen in her recent book *Animacies* writes of metal toxins, by living in/with/through us. This is what I have elsewhere discussed as *inter(in)animacy*: animate and inanimate mingling to the point of indeterminacy.<sup>25</sup> So which is it? None of it is live or, as Rossellini suggests, all of it is live?<sup>26</sup> Document or performance? The difference becomes undecidable—all in a movie about a marriage literally “on the rocks,” a marriage more devoid of affective connection than ancient statuary. Of course, by the end of the film we are left unsure of whether Bergman and Sanders will resuscitate their marriage. Ruins are often,

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Like Brenda Laurel, I would give the history of the computer screen to the imperial *skene frons*. See Laurel, *Computers as Theatre*, 2nd ed. (New York: Addison-Wesley Professional, 2013).

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Schneider, *Performing Remains*, 29.

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When asked by Eric Rohmer and François Truffaut about *Journey to Italy* in a *Cahiers du Cinéma* interview, Roberto Rossellini described the importance of Naples: “... that strange atmosphere which is mingled with the very real, very immediate, very deep feeling, the sense of eternal life,” in “Interviews with Roberto Rossellini,” *Cahiers du Cinéma, The 1950s: Neo-Realism, Hollywood, New Wave*, ed. Jim Hillier (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 211.

the film makes clear, more live than the living who meet them half-way in the always half-life that is art.

If on the one hand live encounter can be a mode of preservation across time, and on another hand, with Bergman, the so-called live may be less alive than the ruin she encounters, or additionally, if the live is a matter of ricochet between animate and inanimate, stone and living, document and performance—how do we determine which is which? Which live art, which documentation of live art? Which animate, which inanimate? If the document in some senses remains not only as an indication of the past, but as a “scriptive thing”<sup>27</sup> regarding the future, what limits can we put on the duration of the live?

I recently made a trip to witness, first hand, negative handprints in the prehistoric caves of France. I wanted to pursue my interest in the hail and the duration of the live in the context of gestural reiteration. If gestures are primarily iterable techniques, then how could one iteration (my hand, say, raised in hail) be understood in total temporal insulation from subsequent (or previous) iterations? Iterations necessarily jump—time, space, and bodies—to become themselves as “gestures” in reiteration. Heading to France I wondered: If I meet a Paleolithic hand (a first hand) with a second hand, what would become of first and second? Why would I be more “live” in responding to, or even recognizing, the Paleolithic hand, then the seeming first hand was/is/continues to be in making the hail—casting it, if you will, into the temporal jump required of iterability? And in the logic (if that can be the right word) of call and response, wouldn’t response, in reverse, initiate the hail *as* hail? That is, even if the cave hand wasn’t “originally” intended as a hail, does it become one—even illegitimately—by virtue of response? If I fundamentally recognize the Paleolithic hand because I also have one, and recognize the gesture of the upheld palm because I also make one or might make one, does liveness, as a matter of exchange, exist in reiteration, in call and response, and therefore manifest a continu-

ity of duration that is almost beyond imagination?<sup>28</sup> An unsettling way of posing the question might be: Why would my live hand be any less ancient, any less prehistoric or outside of history than the Paleolithic hand (considered as gesture) when I witness the Paleolithic hand *first hand*? Is the Paleolithic hand only a document, the trace of another hand at another time? Or is it a hail, occurring live in the future of its encounter? And conversely, is my live hand a document, taking place at an event? Constituting the “scene” of my recognition—however limited or faulty or belated that (mis)recognition may be?

I do not have any answers to these questions. And perhaps it is too easy to think of these teasing questions with hands, which conveniently come to us as inversions of one another. And yet it is hands, very often, that pass our documents between us, just as live performance can be said, colloquially, to be in our hands. Of course, while in France I also visited Lascaux II, the fabricated tourist’s cave beside Lascaux itself, now closed to tourist visitation. The faux cave is remastered like a photograph, and was constructed to reiterate, gesture, hail the original cave it stands, quite literally, beside. The fake cave was constructed to save the original from the detriments of, precisely, the live. The live it appears—with all its mold, exhaled CO<sub>2</sub>, and principle of change—is not that which disappears. The live, in relation to the Paleolithic, now outlives and actively destroys the document at hand—a sad inverse, if you will, of the idea that live artwork is ephemeral in relationship to stone. The cave beside the cave inexorably gestures to the “original” cave in a gesture of mimesis that is an effort at preservation—the copy, again, preserving the original as original by submitting it, live, to reiteration.