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## NOTES ON PERFORMANCE ART, THE BODY AND THE POLITICAL

### *Abstract*

When I use the term ‘political’ related to performance art, I intend to set forth a space of possible, civil negotiation for and among artists and audience to analyse and further debate on how to overcome and transform schemes, rules, conventions and barriers, socially and culturally.

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*“You have to make the art stronger than life so people can feel it.”<sup>1</sup>  
–Tehching Hsieh*

Here I wish to consider performance art as a practice that seeks radical acts that unite the self to the world (the performer’s body and the perception of it) and implying, above all, a space to itself, exhausting, extreme and experimental, connected inexorably to life, to the total complex of relations between people living in society and that, by being subversive in its very existence, is essentially political.

More than any other contemporary artistic practice, performance art is characterized by the immediacy with which the performer expresses his uncompromising position in the world he creates in the very act of performing challenging, through alienated public self-exposure, his relationship with the status.

For a few decades now, performance art has also engaged in a field of study with its history and progress, where a constant critical discourse is required to re-enforce its standards.

Evidence of its increasing popularity is also given by the proliferation of performance art projects and events all around the globe, which are often participatory and rewarded by a larger audience.

*“Calling a meeting is a political act in itself.”<sup>2</sup>  
–Daniel Goleman*

The ephemeral, unconventional and extreme gesture is, after all, the gathering force of the performance, which will never cease to claim its own identity.<sup>3</sup>

Beyond that it might be a socio-artistic constructed and not genuine formation, and because of its dynamic and often unsettling nature that escapes squared and rigid definitions, performance art can be also intended as an effective practice of politicization of social life. It reflects the complexities of human societies and generates understanding for processes and situations that cannot be explained just rationally. It becomes a direct or indirect provocation to the order of social, political and cultural norms that the performance artist rejects, while highlighting in/exclusions of self/others links and processes.

A politically engaged performance artist structures his performances to respond to issues such as, for instance, social obstruction or discomfort of living conditions. His artistic actions are stirred with a sense of appropriation, denunciation and resistance. His mood is often ‘perturbed’. He sees his actions necessary and inevitable in these times of unconditional crisis in which artistic entertainment and creative gimmicks seem to have little reason to be.

If to reflect upon history is already a political act<sup>4</sup> to acknowledge the multiplicity of languages, the variety of expressions, styles, emergencies and the performance artist's cultural background are a determinant to understand the value and the meaning that a performance has.

It should also be important to clarify how performance art, over the years, has been and has contaminated experimental theatre, dance, cinema, medical sciences and technology, to such extent where the overuse of the term 'performing arts' can generate confusion. For this I believe that acknowledging a certain historical continuity is needed, particularly for those performances characterized by political significance.

*"If performance art becomes commonplace in a society over time,  
It will be impossible for it to stir an ethical or political reaction."<sup>5</sup>  
–Anatoly Osmolovsky*

Performance art is a practice born from the need to find alternative ways to free the human being from the strings attached by the idols of the state, religion, culture, tradition, consumerism, and capital in order to build a more truthful, honest, progressive and genuine community among individuals. It is not an abstract ideal of a perfect community, but a community "which is true and genuine because it grows out of the individual spirit, because it is the identity and spirit in every single blooming lively idea, because it is already there between people as a loose alliance."<sup>6</sup>

Yet, when addressing political issues, a performance artist should always ask himself: what are the relations between the needs of intellectual creativity and those of political standards and ethical values?

And what is the ethical responsibility that a performance artist should maintain with respect to others, and with respect to himself?

"These problems, which are raised by the very activity of the artist, and which each must, willy-nilly, solve for himself in one way or another, cannot be treated without reference to aesthetics, of course, but they essentially deal with what might be called the ethics of art."<sup>7</sup>

*"Art is what makes life more interesting than art."<sup>8</sup>  
–Robert Filliou*

For French Fluxus artist Robert Filliou, every human activity can be conceived as performing art: from teaching to learning, reading, writing, walking, eating, etc. because "art is a function of life more than a fiction. It is able to provide a potential revolutionary set of values and should make everybody equal through a form of chemistry."<sup>9</sup>

Art is freedom, a creative, civil bring-forth: a *poiesis* (ποίησις) expressing the presence of us humans in the world and that can be done anywhere anytime.

"Art it is what we do and we do what we want. Now it has become necessary to incorporate the lesson of art as freedom of the spirit into the fabric of everyone's life, so that it becomes an art of living."<sup>10</sup>

The lesson handed down by the Fluxus pioneers is that art is good for interpreting life because it is "something humans do, on purpose, in order to generate mind-changing experiences in themselves and others. The sense of presence and engagement that an art practice creates space for in both artist and viewer makes it very satisfying – compelling, involving -, no matter how it looks or sounds or smells or feels or tastes."<sup>11</sup>

The need to fuse art, life and politics was also crucial for the Futurists: "art sought to bridge the gap between art and life and to bring aesthetic innovation into the real world. Life was to be changed through art, and art was to become a form of life."<sup>12</sup>

Indeed, Fluxus artists' revolutionary thought has refreshed the historical avant-gardes', thus not so much in the name of the 'progress', but in terms of the liberation of the creative spirit of each human being.<sup>13</sup>

For Robert Rauschenberg the process of making art was acting in the gap between art and life, working in that gap between the two<sup>14</sup>; for Allan Kaprow, that the line between art and life should be kept as fluid, and perhaps indistinct, as possible.<sup>15</sup> For George Brecht there was no difference between art and everyday life: "the difference between a chair by Duchamp and one of my chairs could be that Duchamp's chair is on a pedestal and mine can still be used."<sup>16</sup> In terms of the relational aesthetics life-politics-art-performance, Fluxus Happenings were mainly an open invitation to everyone to look and experience particular situations for the inter-human relations, which they produced, or gave rise to and consequently to reflect on the inter-personal relations we all have in our everyday life.<sup>17</sup>

In so far, performance art can resemble reality to any chosen degree and no theory of art could help us pick out the nature of this or that performance, because here the question is not which are the art works, but "how we view anything if we see it as art."<sup>18</sup>

*"The opinion that art should have nothing to do with politics is itself a political attitude."<sup>19</sup>  
–George Orwell*

Life is the art of meeting and encounter. Each encounter carries within various forms of personal and collective ritualities, which generally consist of "a set of fixed actions and sometimes words performed regularly."<sup>20</sup>

We meet and greet one each other. We talk, debate and exchange ideas. We use the word 'political' in the widest possible sense. We all have a political dream, an ideal, a purpose, even if intimate or still unclear. We perform expressing the desire that the world needs to be pushed in a certain direction to awaken, alter or empower other peoples' idea of the kind of society that they – we – should strive after.

There is no man genuinely free from political bias, because "man is by nature a political animal."<sup>21</sup>

*"When man first stood up, he fell."<sup>22</sup>  
–Robert Filliou*

When I use the term 'political' related to performance art, I intend to set forth a space of possible, civil negotiation for and among artists and audience to analyse and further debate on how to overcome and transform schemes, rules, conventions and barriers, socially and culturally. And yet what I note about contemporary performances with a too declared political intent is not how they succeed in summing up the present and demonstrate viable alternatives to actual political and social situations, but how they fail continuously.

I consider failure – and not only in performance art - a positive quality, as it offers room for new possibilities, being a gravitational phenomenon, a segment of movement that brings you towards the core of the problem and that is part of the human condition.

Yet, contemporary political performances tend too often to show reality as it is. They convey the sense that we are all adrift in a sea of troubles and injustices that demand response but that overwhelm the artistic ability to sum them up into a poignant whole.

When we perform, we produce images. Therefore when we are called to action upon by political circumstances and try to find a way through present cultural conditions of omnipresent urgency, we have to honestly ask ourselves whether our art can keep front to the challenges of our time.<sup>23</sup>

Eventually – as performance artists – we must be aware of the fact that we also create illusions and that, quoting Adorno, "the notion of a 'message', even when politically radical" – and that we want

to convey through a performance – “it already contains an accommodation to the world. The stance of the artist “conceals a clandestine entente (understanding) with the audience, who could only be truly rescued from illusion by refusal of it.”<sup>24</sup>

We should also stay away from self-complacency and the need for approval as they may corrupt and impoverish the essence of the performance itself. And because words often credit all too readily even the most committed works with every noble value, aiming mostly to impress the interlocutor, therefore becoming manipulative at their ease<sup>25</sup>, we should also refrain describing a performance with powerful and often rhetorical words.

It is true that without discernment and observation a performance artist cannot master any subject matter - the mind is a valid tool in which to configure reality - however equally important is the concentration of the emotional life, because feelings “penetrate and animate the whole, the artist has his material and its configuration as his very own self, as the inmost property of himself as a subjective being.”<sup>26</sup>

*“The Personal is Political.”*<sup>27</sup>

–Carol Hanisch

What are the relationships between the body and politics?

What does term ‘Body Politics’ actually mean?

The term refers to the practices and policies through which powers of society regulate the human body, as well as the struggle over the degree of individual and social control of the body.<sup>28</sup> It was first used in this sense in the 1970s, during the ‘second wave’ of the feminist movement in the United States.<sup>29</sup>

“Feminists focus on the female body but the case can be made that society controls both the female and the male body, obviously not always in the same way.”<sup>30</sup>

At the theoretical level, the body has always played a central role in conceptions of political society, serving as an effective metaphor for unified polity. At the empirical level, the body - as an entity to be protected, regulated, punished, included, excluded, etc. - is itself the object of politics. Yet, more fundamentally, our experiences of politics are embodied; we don’t merely think politics, we do and feel it.

In the midst of an actual ostensible landscape of: war on terror, cyber wars, global state of surveillance, economic crisis, values crisis, with its heightened atmosphere of insecurity (which triggered for instance an advancements in biometrics technologies), scandal of torture, controversies regarding racial profiling, and so on, the – human – body, has more than ever before become a crucial site for political action, decision, and judgment.

“Corporeal registers - facial expressions, phenotype, movement, affective expressions, etc. - are now vital markers of difference, determining the degree to which one is recognised as ‘friend’ or ‘enemy’, ‘suspect’ or ‘innocent’, ‘citizen’ or ‘foreigner’.”<sup>31</sup>

Our treatments and perceptions of other bodies are not only culturally and historically formed, but somatically inflected as well. For instance, the veiled body and the question of the other, as well as the body-in-pain and torture, are in these days undeniable matter of evidence. Corporeality (intended as anything which is related to the body, or a characteristic of it) and affectivity (intended as anything belonging to the cognitive realm therefore affecting feelings and emotions) have always played a determinant role in issues such as the racialised body and increasingly in forms of control of the other, such as systems of bio-surveillance and profiling.<sup>32</sup>

Since centuries, in rigidly male-dominated societies, the issue of body politics relied on pain or the fear of it to maintain hierarchical relations of dominance, conditioning wo/men to accept coercion and repression.<sup>33</sup>

Things do not seem to have changed that much.

*“In art, the political goal appears only in the transfiguration, which is the aesthetic form.”<sup>34</sup>*  
–Herbert Marcuse

Yet, contemporary performance art finds difficult to trigger effective changes in society, if not acceptance and resignation by presenting the reality just as it is. Why?

It seems to me that contemporary performance art, when for political denounce and cultural resistance, is shaped predictably in form of statement, sometimes even a deliberate statement, also naïve and too often over striven while lacking of aesthetic form.

Using art to speak about politics without paying the right attention to what art actually requires, is akin to playing soccer with an iron ball.

Marcuse argued that the political may well be absent from the oeuvre even while the artist himself is ‘engaged’. Art, in fact, has its own freedom. It arises from a necessity, which is not just one of the political protest. “In its practice, art does not abandon its own exigencies and does not quit its own dimension: it remains non-operational.”<sup>35</sup>

Within this perspective, artists’ political ‘engagement’ can give rise to problems of artistic approach and technique: instead of translating art into reality, reality is translated into a different – thus aesthetic – form, which many see more futile than what it already is.

“Permanent aesthetic subversion: this is the way of art.”<sup>36</sup>

Art has evolved since the times of Marcuse, but has it really?

Instead of refreshing or conceiving art anew, we have begun to produce well-packaged art (and political) statements of all types at the hands of the system.

Since few years, writing statements to explain and synthesize the content of a work of art has become a condition sine qua non, something that schools, academies, institutions, anything that is ‘brick of the system’ requires almost as an obligation, above all else. I see this as subtle form of slavery. We are living in the world of “the art applications”. Dozens of manuals teach you how to write them properly and how to be ‘successful’. The process of making art has become a secondary thing. We look for tactics and strategies to stich the best label to our art. This doesn’t mean to be subversive, but submissive to the realm of the appearance, which is misleading. We don’t do what we are, we continue to do *as if* and by doing so we progressively loose our own power, yielding ourselves to that same system that we would like to change. We end up becoming merely Beckettian flesh for the grind, mice for the pied piper. And fact is that almost no one really cares of what you state, perhaps a sporadic bunch of temporary net followers, just for the time of a click.

The world won’t change in this way, and probably has never changed. It still moves in mysterious ways. Changes, when they occur, arise from a convergence of multiple random events, which seldom depend on personal free will, actions or desires.

*“Is art emancipated thereby? And are we?”<sup>37</sup>*  
–Chris Mansour

Chris Mansour in his critique of art as “cultural resistance” poses crucial questions, for instance by asking “why must so much art, in order to justify itself as art, rely to such a large degree on a putative ability to perform political work”<sup>38</sup>, demonstrating how “the politically committed art of today is only a shadow of yesterday, partly because its audience is politically confused, while autonomous art remains an impossibility, to the point that they have become both caricatures of themselves.”<sup>39</sup>

The rise of the so called “modernism” was accompanied by changes in socially sanctioned uses and meanings of the human body, developing a series of theoretical frameworks for understanding the role of the modern state in the constitution of modernist bodily politics, i.e. specifically with authors such as Foucault and Bourdieu.

However, to sketch out a series of frameworks for analysing the politics of the body in today's global context, we have to make tangible the body as it intersects multifaceted questions of identity, justice, moral responsibility and ideological non/conformity as a proactive manifestation, privileging freedom of expression in the broadest sense.

'Freedom', what is it?

Corporal self-determination is obviously an important value and not only for performance artists. People should, in general, be able to do with their body what they want, free from interference by the state, by individuals or by societal groups. Yet, although corporal self-determination has a positive and a negative meaning (as it's both liberation/emancipation and subordination/submission)<sup>40</sup>, ethics teaches us that exists the freedom of choice and that is a right that everyone has, to the point of defending it all costs.

*"Since we cannot change reality, let us change the eyes, which see reality."*<sup>41</sup>

–Nikos Kazantzakis

What I personally hope is that we – as performance artists – won't stop making dialectical actions made up of our daily and social experiences, which our bodies translate and isolate in the moment of performance. For me this means to perform on the threshold of my constitutional limits and show and tell of my wounds with no fear.

*"The moment when a feeling enters the body/ is political. This touch is political."*<sup>42</sup>

–Adrienne Rich

In the field of performance art practice, decontextualizing and alienating ordinary common bodily gestures serves mainly to signify new possible meanings. The very materiality of the performer's body becomes the locus of inscription of those meanings, while in turn it reveals the contradictions and incidents that the performer encounters to single them out.

Antonin Artaud's 'Theatre of Cruelty' was perhaps the earliest and most explicit attempt to establish an aesthetic of performance based entirely on a new perception of the body. "When you will have made him a body without organs, then you will have delivered him from all his automatic reactions and restored him to his true freedom."<sup>43</sup>

A body – corpus of gestures – when in relation with another body, it is characterized by the symbolic code of a specific social situation and by completely different cultural terms that the other body may have (audience).

To put it short, "the body does not have the identity of its wholeness in itself"<sup>44</sup>, but only when it enters in relation with another body and therefore another self.

For example, when a performance may tell of the unresolved ideological debate of the constitution of genders, which appears irreconcilable because of established discriminatory social norms, in a way or another it expresses an undeniable need to love and be loved, respect, feel and live in empathy with each other.<sup>45</sup>

We may continue to fail in attempting to establish better relationships among one another other. So then let's try again, we might fail better than we did before...

*"I'll say there's a body (where there isn't one). I won't say there's a mind (where there isn't one). That at least is true. I'll say there's a place (where there isn't one) for the body: for it to be in and move in, and to move out of and move back into again. No: the body doesn't move out or move back. It stays in, it stays on in– unmoving. All of old. Nothing else ever. Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better."*<sup>46</sup>

–Samuel Beckett

Turning a familiar and accessible feeling like love into striking and unexpected actions can transform normalcy into something previously unimaginable, on the contrary, the absurd, into something revelatory, sharable and acceptable.

We perform and confront ourselves with internalized social norms we are no longer able to discern. Everything is about relationships and their fragility, because ‘this too shall pass’.

To perform always implies a ‘policy of exchange’, where detachment and refusal can’t hide and reveal the violent nature of the context (social/private) from which they emerge, because “to deal with a world so evidently and increasingly unfree, it is to become so absolutely free that our very existence is an act of rebellion (...) and that rebellion cannot exist without a strange form of love.”<sup>47</sup>

We continue to perform because we see that the world we live in is exasperated. We are called to action to seek new forms of organised anarchy. We privilege performance art because it’s eclectic, kaleidoscopic and allows a rejection of accumulated materiality.

Here the performer’s body continues to serve as a political arena. It is the tool of resistance and while using the body as a site for political transformation<sup>48</sup>, it is imperative to keep active the fundamental pars constituent of the being, the spiritual one, to keep our ideal of freedom at its highest degree.

We perform, and yes, we inevitably produce statements of different kinds that in turn clash against other statements; it’s a never-ending game that we have to play effortlessly. We distress our physicality to stress the illusion of a socially constructed subject encased in a body that has been formed by and conformed to a given cultural norm. Our identities are forged by the confluence of cultural codes that are socially reinforced and continuously manipulated, even though they vary considerably from person to person. We respond with time-based actions, which are essentially formless if not for a development, a progression and a denouement of their own.

In the actual scenario, often the performative space is a battlefield of living images where the symbolic representation of the political is realised through the body, for the political is already inscribed into it by nature, although it is something that may remain just as such and that cannot be explained as wish fulfilment.

We challenge the notions of reasoned discursive political practice because we believe that there is no cultural hierarchy. We strive to offer expansive, multiple and diffuse forms of expression disclosing the body to an imaginary that we feel possible.

We puzzle together fragments of immutable truths lurking beneath the surface flux of phenomena, aware that we may succumb to the entropy effect caused by our own very actions. We stifle within ourselves the voices of prejudice. We forget and keep on forgetting. Eventually, we make silence all about us and become an echo<sup>49</sup> and by doing so, we seek to recognise who we really are.

## Addendum

In 1940, William J. Norton Jr wrote of an obligation of the artist to society: in recognizing social crisis and aberrations, the artist should not produce art in absence of ethical awareness and without spiritual and civil content. Artists should not refrain to take precise positions in front of injustices, for the fundament of art lies in the concepts of tolerance and respect.<sup>1</sup>

The recent *Declaration of Human Duties and Responsibilities* or DHDR, also known as *The Valencia Declaration*<sup>2</sup>, enshrines fundamental issues such as the right to life and security, in a fair and equal measure for everyone: young, old, men, women, children, rich, poor, healthy, sick. Considering, therefore, that one of the main challenges of this new century is the efficient and effective implementation of human rights for all people, and that at the same time, it is necessary that all of us, for what we can, fight for its realization.

The DHDR enshrines also the responsibility for our current interdependence, whatever the field of activity in which the person works. In the preamble is stated: “Recalling that Article 29 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* recognises that individuals have duties and responsibilities towards their communities, and therefore emphasising that the assumption of the duties and responsibilities implicit in human rights and fundamental freedoms rests upon all members of the global community, including States, international, regional and sub-regional inter-governmental organisations, the private and public sectors, non-governmental organisations, citizen associations, other representatives of civil society as well as all individual members of the human family”.<sup>3</sup>

Fifty years after the adoption of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, the starting point of the preamble of DHDR was due to the shared concern regarding the lack of political will to enforce human rights on a global scale.<sup>4</sup>

If politics is unable to carry out properly these tasks, history teaches us that often have been ‘human sciences’ to indicate the path, producing works of deep thought to generate reflection and trigger positive changes in society. Encouraging the discussion around human rights is a key issue of our civilization and a task to which art should not withdraw, to the point of being also dis-functional and destructive for the actual state of affairs.

For Joseph Beuys every person is a potential artist, for intelligence and feelings are source of the creative life. They are the key factors that allow the individual to look at the configuration of the things, the environment and the context in which he operates with more concentrated eyes, eventually to express his concerns towards what he sees and feels because his conscience cannot stay speechless. This is such stuff contemporary art should be made for.



## Notes

1. O'Rourke, Karen. *Walking and Mapping, Artists as Cartographers*. Mit Press: Boston, 2013, p.16
2. Synonyms for 'Political'. Usage. Def.1. *English Thesaurus Online*, n.d.
3. On the identity of performance art.  
Performance art practice is often identity making processes, while the performance itself can be a direct or indirect embodiment of experienced identities, multi-layered identities, contextual cultural identifications and an instrument for cross (trans)-cultural dialogue, formation of social memories or in addressing inclusion and exclusion nexuses for the marginalized or oppressed. In a broader sense, identities are socially attributed imaginary significations. They are part of the dynamic projects of individual and social autonomy (Cornelius Castoriadis). Nothing shapes, represents or reflects better the imaginary constructions of particular societies than arts.  
Referred to: The Second Euroacademia International Conference. *Identities and Identifications: Politicized Uses of Collective Identities*. Call for Panels. Florence: Villa Vittoria – Palazzo dei Congressi, October 17–18, 2014.
4. Since we acknowledge and evaluate a particular historical political occurrence, inevitably we tend to assume our position in front of it. "Politics presupposes diversity of view, if not about ultimate aims, at least the best ways of achieving them." Citation from: Miller, David. *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Political Thought*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987, p. 390.
5. First International Conference. *Performance Art: Ethics in Action*. Moscow: Garage Centre for Contemporary Culture, December 12-14, 2013.
6. *Der Sozialist* (15 July 1911). Gustav Landauer to Martin Buber. Quoted in: Maurer, Charles B. *Call to Revolution: The Mystical Anarchism of Gustav*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1971, p. 101
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9. Filliou, Robert. *Teaching and Learning as Performing Arts*. Cologne: Koenig, 1970, p.78.
10. Ibidem, p. 23 and p.24.
11. *Fluxus and the Essential Questions of Life*. Sectional narratives. New York: Grey Art Gallery, Sept. 9–Dec. 3, 2011.
12. Marinetti, Filippo Tommaso. *Critical Writings: New Edition*. Eds. Günter Berghaus. New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2006, introduction, p. xvii-xx.
13. Filliou, Robert, *ibid.*
14. Rauschenberg, Robert. *Untitled Statement*. In: Dorothy C. Miller, ed., 'Sixteen Americans'. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1959, p.58.
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English edition: Pleasance, Simon and Woods, Fronza. *Relational Aesthetics*. Dijon: Presses du réel, 2002.
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19. Orwell, George. *Why I Write*. First edition published by Gangrel, London, 1946. Reprinted by Penguin, London, 2004, p. 5.

20. Definition of 'Ritual'. *Cambridge Dictionary online*, n.d.
21. Aristotle. *Politics*. Book 1: section 1253a, chapter 2 (2). II edition. Chicago: University of Chicago press, 2013, p. 4.
22. Filliou, Robert, *ibid*.
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24. Adorno, Theodor. 'Commitment'. In: *Aesthetics and Politics*. London: Verso, 2007, p. 193.
25. *Ibid*, p. 193.
26. Hegel, George, W. F. *Aesthetics, Lectures on Fine Art*. Volume I, trans. T.M. Knox. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1975, p. 283
27. Hanisch, Carol. *Notes from the Second Year: Women's Liberation*. New York: Shulie Firestone and Anne Koedt editors. 1969, p. 76, the quote is the title of her article. Retrieved on May 27, 2015 from: [http://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/wlmpc\\_wlmms01039/](http://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/wlmpc_wlmms01039/)
28. In 1970, the Boston Women Health Collective published a 193-page course booklet on stapled newsprint entitled *Women and Their Bodies*. It was revolutionary for its frank talk about sexuality and abortion, which was then illegal. In 1971, they changed the title to *Our Bodies, Ourselves* to emphasize women taking full ownership of their bodies. Retrieved on May 27, 2015 from: <http://www.ourbodiesourselves.org/history/>
29. "Body politics" arose out of feminist politics and the abortion debates. Body politics originally involved the fight against objectification of the female body, and violence against women and girls, and the campaign for reproductive rights for women. "The personal is the political" became a slogan that captured the sense that domestic contests for equal rights in the home and within sexual relationships are crucial to the struggle for equal rights in the public. (...) The feminists who followed at the end of the twentieth century accepted this stance on rape and violence against women and girls, but they found the gender ideals of second-wave feminists too confining. Members of this generation, sometimes called third-wave feminists or post-feminists, endorse a range of body modification and gender practices that include butch-fem gender roles, gender blending, transgender lifestyles, transsexual surgeries, body piercing, and tattoos. Retrieved on May 27, 2015 from: <http://encyclopedia.jrank.org/articles/pages/6016/Body-Politics.html#ixzz4P7asB92c>
30. The concept is also used to describe the opposite: the struggle against the social and political powers that try to control the body and the act of reclaiming bodily self-control, or corporal self-determination. Retrieved on May, 29, 2015 from: <https://cosmologicallyinsignificant.wordpress.com/2009/12/08/the-politics-of-the-body/>
31. University of Singapore, Module Overview, USP3508, 'The Politics Of The Body', 2012/2013, Semester 2.
32. Surveillance systems detect, monitor, gather, interpret and communicate data that might relate to disease activity and threats to human health. In the recent years the use of profiling (also of DNA) has even gone too far, with police arresting people because of certain characteristics they might have in common with criminals, or worse yet, because of their skin color. Those in favor of these systems argue that in the age of terrorism, we can't afford not to examine people based on certain patterns, even if that means suspicion based on race and gender... Abortion, organ trade, capital punishment, corporal punishment, imprisonment, sex trafficking and slavery, sexual violence, arranged marriages, rules prohibiting interracial marriage, gender discrimination, homophobia, form of body seclusion and different forms of surveillance (prisons, close circuits video cams, advertising, magazines etc.), bestiality taboos, legislation against assisted suicide, abusive child-rearing practices, genital mutilation etc. are other possible cases of body politics. Clearly, this isn't a complete list of all, but it can serve the purpose. Retrieved on May, 29, 2015 from: <http://cosmologicallyinsignificant.wordpress.com>
33. Editorial Reviews. From 'Publisher Weekly', 05-01-1995: Esler, Riane. *Sacred Pleasure: Sex, Myth, and the Politics of the Body: New Paths to Power and Love*. New York: HarperCollins, 1995. <http://www.publishersweekly.com/978-0-06-250293-3>
34. Marcuse, Herbert. "Art and Revolution". In: *Counterrevolution and Revolt*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1972, p. 105

35. Ibidem, p. 105

36. Ibid, p. 106-108.

“Art just for politics would mean that the imagination has become wholly functional: servant to instrumentalist Reason. (...) Art can never eliminate the tension between art and reality. (...) The aesthetic representation of the Idea, of the universal in the particular, leads art to transform particular (historical) conditions into universal ones: to show as the tragic or cosmic fate of man what is only his fate in the established society. There is, in the Western tradition, the celebration of an unnecessary tragedy, an unnecessary fate-unnecessary to the extent to which they pertain, not to the human condition but rather to specific social institutions and ideologies.”

37. Mansour, Chris. *The antinomy of art and politics: A critique of art as “cultural resistance”*.

Platypus Review 39, September 2011.

Stable source: <http://platypus1917.org/2011/08/31/antinomy-of-art-and-politics/>

38. Ibidem

Quoting from the text by Mansour C.: “(...) Cultural resistance seeks to dissolve the boundary between art and political life by making art socially responsible. It aspires to educate its audience, provoking them to experience a new kind of ‘attitude’ towards life. But in seeking to invite its audience to share a certain attitude, cultural resistance art unwittingly reinforces what may be one of the most disturbing aspects of the status quo that it claims to be disrupting, namely, the fact that so much of politics exists only at the level of subjective ‘attitudes’. (...) Its medium and form of expression merely becomes a vehicle, incidental. (...) Form becomes a mere instrument for expressing content that is outside the experience it brings. (...) Cultural resistance is often defended on the grounds that it creates ‘pre-figurative political space’, (...) but it takes a certain aesthetic arranging to create a zone in which people can feel ‘free’ or see the injustice of the status quo more clearly (...) Eventually, it creates the semblance of momentary freedom rather than making legible the unfreedom that still remains.”

39. Ibid.

40. Retrieved on May 29, 2015 from: <https://cosmologicallyinsignificant.wordpress.com/2009/12/08/the-politics-of-the-body/>

41. Kazantzakis, Nikos. *Report to Greco*, ‘The Son’, Ch. 4. Trans. P. A. Bien. London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1973, p. 45.

42. Rich, Adrienne. ‘The Blue Ghazals’. In: *The Will to Change*, London and New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1971, p. 20.

43. *The Deleuze and Guattari Dictionary*. London and New York: Bloomsbury. 2013, 2004b: 377. A phrase that Antonin Artaud used only once at the end of his radio play *To Have Done with the Judgment of God*.

44. Naegel, Rainer. *Reading after Freud: Essays on Goethe, Hölderlin, Habermas, Nietzsche, Brecht, Celan and Freud*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1987, p. 112-113.

45. Editorial Reviews. From ‘Library Journal’, 06-15-1987: Esler, Riane. *The Chalice and the Blade*. New York: HarperCollins. 1987. “Eisler calls for a new sexual revolution, centered on a move toward partnership sexuality and its integration with spirituality and society in order to develop a place where everyone can realize a more satisfying and pleasurable life. Eisler examines the history of humanity's deep and powerful yearning for connections within intimate relationships and the key need of empathy between humans.”

46. Beckett, Samuel. *Worstward Ho*. New York: Grove Press, 1983, incipit.

47. Camus, Albert. *The Rebel: An Essay on Man in Revolt*. New York: Vintage Books, 1984, p. 304.

48. Tedford, Matthew Harrison. ‘Art qua Politics’. In: *Art Practical. Performance. The Body Politic*, Issue 2.15, April 14, 2011, Introduction.

49. Max, Raphael. *The Demands of Art*. Trans. Norbert Guterman. Bolingen Series LXXVIII. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968, p.8.

### Notes to the Addendum

1. Norton, William J. Jr. 'Modern Art and Social Responsibility'. *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 37, No. 12, Jun. 6, 1940, pp. 325-332. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2018434>
2. The DHDR aims to strengthen the protection of human rights. It was written in the city of Valencia under the aegis of UNESCO and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in 1998 on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It consists of 12 chapters and 41 articles. Stable URL: <http://globalization.icaap.org/content/v2.2/declare.html>
3. Ibidem.
4. Similar concerns have been argued also by the United Nations Millennium Declaration, the Rome Statute, the Global Compact, the Earth Charter Initiative, the Kyoto Protocol, and by many declarations of UNESCO.