

archiv performativ: On the transmission of performance art

Archives must be both actively appropriated and initiate action in order to remain culturally relevant as a medium of transmission. This applies to all archival work but especially to the archiving and transmitting of performance art, which the project *archiv performativ* took as the focus of its research, directing particular attention to the relationship between documentation and transcription. Hence one of the aims of the project was to develop an exemplar model which assigns more importance to artistic practice than is usual in traditional, institutionalised archives.

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Part 1 The research project: an overview

1.1. Method and course of action

The research project *archiv performativ: a model concept for the documentation and reactivation of performance art* was devised to conduct use-oriented basic research. In the first phase of our research we questioned institutions and individuals on current document holdings and the handling of documents in the field of performance art. Furthermore, we conducted research in collections and archives and interviews with collectors and users of performance documents. Subsequently we made a qualitative evaluation of the various documentation materials and media which we term artefacts. The findings of this phase of the research were applied in the conception of the practice-led exhibition and mediation project *archiv performativ: a model*. In the second phase of the research, four research teams – consisting of artists, scholars and mediators – spent a month working and experimenting with the available artefacts and specific questions concerning the documentation and transcription of performance art. At the conference *Recollecting the Act. On the transmission of performance art* we presented the results of the trial archive in connection with comparable national and international research projects. All the performances given during the trial archive project and at the conference were documented by the project's participants. From this material we selected six performances as case studies for the third phase of research and analysed the media-specific transmission characteristics of individual artefacts. The findings of all research phases are summarised in Part 4, 'Conclusions and recommendations'.

1.2. Initial hypotheses

The poor accessibility of documents and artefacts of performances created between c. 1970 and today has clearly impeded and even prevented the transmission and communication of performance art, at least in Switzerland. Practice-oriented and artistic research can shed light on actions which can in turn serve as inspiration for theoretical and practical transcriptions as well as be used to build a prospective performance archive.

The field of performance theory is broad, complex and rife with controversies. The following statements, each representing a specific viewpoint within the theoretical discourse, served us as a guide and marked out a frame of reference for our observations.

Firstly, Barbara Clausen, quoted below, underlines the reciprocal nature of performativity and mediality.

“The claim at the heart of this publication is that engaging with performance art does not start and end with the authentic experience but, contrary to its ontological origin myths, is to

be understood as the ongoing process of a contingent reciprocity between event, mediatisation and reception.”¹

The following quotation also stresses the close connection between the live moment and its medial ‘relics’. According to Rebecca Schneider, performance itself can be seen as a kind of document because and by the fact that it transmits cultural practices. Equally, a document can be attributed with performativity.

“When we approach performance not as that which disappears (as the archive expects), but as both an *act* of remaining and a means of reappearance (though not a metaphysics of presence) we almost immediately are forced to admit that remains do not have to be isolated to the document, to the object [...].”²

The third statement by Barbara Büscher describes the archive as a collection of medial transcriptions, the accessibility of which forms the precondition for transmitting performance art.

“These fields of inquiry make it clear that it can no longer be the re-calling (or irrevocable loss) of performative authenticity that is the focus of discussion. The programmatic lack of traces, which for a long time was regarded as a defining feature of performance and its subversive qualities, is being called into question in and through the artists’ own archives. Eyewitness accounts can (now) not be regarded as the only source of future knowledge of past events. The relationship between performance and its remains can not be perceived as that of original and replicable documents but as a medial transformation. Work on the performance (art) archive transforms ‘disappearance’ into manifest medial artefacts of varying provenance.”³

1.3. Qualitative research

1.3.1. Survey of collections / archives of performance art

The evaluation of 18 Swiss and seven foreign collections on performance art, held outside museums and art galleries, enabled us to gain an overall impression of the level and nature of collecting activity, i.e. of the size and focus of collections as well as their structure and accessibility.⁴ In addition, the survey provided us with detailed information on the media and

¹ Translated from the German: „Das dieser Publikation zu Grunde liegende Bekenntnis besteht darin, dass der Umgang mit Performancekunst nicht mit dem authentischen Erleben anfängt und sogleich endet, sondern entgegen seinen ontologischen Ursprungsmythen als fortlaufender Prozess eines kontingenten Wechselverhältnisses zwischen Ereignis, Medialisierung und Rezeption zu verstehen ist“, in: Clausen, Barbara, „After the Act. Die (Re)Produktion der Performancekunst“ in: Clausen / Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien (eds.), *After the Act, Die (Re)Produktion der Performancekunst*, Verlag für Moderne Kunst, Nuremberg 2006, p. 7-8.

² Schneider, Rebecca, “*Performance Remains*”, in: *Performance Research*, 6(2), 2001, p. 103.

³ Büscher, Barbara, “LOST & FOUND. Performance und die Medien ihres Archivs / Lost & Found. Archiving Performance”, in: *MAP media | archive | performance* 1/2009, p. 4, <http://perfomap.de> (last accessed 3.5.2010).

⁴ For the list of collections / archives surveyed and the questionnaire, see ‘Related documents’.

qualitative condition of the artefacts as well as their storage and long-term archiving. After analysing the completed questionnaires, we selected five Swiss and three foreign archives / collections to serve as examples. We interviewed their representatives and made spot checks of their holdings on site. Our main criterion when making the selection was to secure a widely heterogeneous cross-section of collections in Switzerland to investigate and compare with foreign archives. The terms ‘performance archive’ and ‘collection of performance documents’ can to a large extent be used synonymously in Switzerland, especially in view of the fact that there is no archive explicitly for performance artefacts in the country. Although most Swiss collections display an archival and documentary interest, this usually arises directly from core tasks (such as organising performance events, exhibitions and festivals since c. 1970 to the present day). Their activity is, however, more informed by notions of collecting or even coincidentally accumulating than by archival concepts.

1.3.2. Semi-structured interviews and research in collections / archives

During our interviews of a total of nine representatives of the eight selected collections we were able to formulate precise, specifically aimed questions thanks to the information we had from the preceding survey.⁵ In this phase we began to consistently use the terms ‘artefact’ and ‘artefact type’. We use these terms to categorize all primary documents which are created before and during the live act (e.g. scripts, drafts), and all audiovisual documents and materials used in the performance as well as all secondary documents such as photographs, video recordings, texts, eyewitness reports, relics etc. The interviewees provided information on their collections’ current activities and histories as well as the significance and accessibility of individual artefacts. The latter issue is approached in very different ways, ranging from the regular opening times of an organised archive to loose material contained in boxes in private studios. All those interviewed judged the artefacts to be relevant not only for conveying information on performance art but also for research purposes. For this reason, they supported our demand for the wider accessibility of this material although in most cases they do not have the means to provide it. All but three of the Swiss collections / archives surveyed are individual initiatives, without financial backing. During our spot-check research in the collections / archives we focussed on the following questions: to what extent is the material publicly visible or accessible? Which search and organisation criteria are applied? How is the material labelled? These points were examined by the example of two selected artists, or performances.

⁵ For the names of interviewees in collections / archives and interview questions, see ‘Related documents’.

1.3.3. Interviews with users of performance artefacts

Our third step was to question eleven users of performance artefacts about their needs, opinions and experiences in this field.⁶ Most of the interviewees had experience of several spheres of activity, being e.g. artists who also curate, document, teach and research. We asked them about the importance of the individual types of artefact for the practice of transmitting performance art. Furthermore, we inquired into issues such as what a video recording can offer as opposed to an eyewitness report and what role media-specific characteristics play in this. Their answers point to the following conclusions: curators and artists maintain a critical view of the potential of artefacts for providing evidence; the latter, moreover, frequently regard documentation as a ‘necessary evil’ for the purpose of self-promotion. Researchers and educators, by contrast, use artefacts in their work in a more historical-critical light. Regarding the role of technological recording media, two currents of opinion can be discerned: the first can be associated with the concept of ‘trust in realism’ and is characterised by the assumption that ‘reality’ can be conveyed by technological media (photography, video). The ‘original’ live act is central to this position while artefacts and documents are of secondary importance. The second viewpoint can be described as taking a ‘constructivist attitude’, where all artefacts, including photography and video recordings, are attributed with the potential to transmit fragmentary knowledge and information about a performance. From this point of view, the live act is not ‘superior’ to the artefact.

All users noted the importance of language-based artefacts (texts, flyers, image-text combinations) for analysing performances. They also stressed the value of oral or written accounts, ascribing to them the capacity to invite empathetic receptions of a live act. They did not, however, explicitly note that eyewitness reports convey as much about the perception of the receivers themselves. The following points were repeatedly stressed: both eyewitness reports, whether direct oral accounts in the form of audio recordings or written texts, and interviews with artists are important sources of information and both are generally lacking in the collections / archives.

1.3.4. Findings of the qualitative research

The findings of the survey and interviews with the collectors shed light on both the general situation and the value and nature of the individual collectors’ activity and artefacts. This information went into our research reports, which could later provide the basis for collection profiles for potential successor projects. Our assessment of the interviews with users

⁶ For the names of interviewed users and interview questions, see ‘Related documents’; see the published interviews with Swiss artists at http://www.sikart.ch/archiv_performativ.

provided even more specific information on the demand for and usage of artefacts and their transmission characteristics. The interviews were encoded to facilitate comparison. In this way, we were able to deduce the criteria which are considered important for the production, reception and evaluation of artefacts and documents. The findings of the questionnaire and interview assessments were applied to formulate descriptions of artefact types and served as the basis for the representation of artefacts in the model archive's display.⁷

1.4. Practice-led research

1.4.1. The *Host Clubs*, a series of discussion events

The *Host Clubs*⁸ participatory discussion format allowed us to discuss ways of dealing with performance art and its artefacts and the parameters of a living archive practice with selected experts and interested guests. These discussion events served on the one hand as an instrument for networking and communication and, on the other hand, as a way of testing our research questions. Three *Host Clubs* were held to discuss the following central issues: how collections / archives and users deal with documentation methods and artefacts, the relationship between the live moment and its 'documentability', and the significance of the latter.

The *Host Clubs* confirmed what we had assumed to be true about preferences for certain transmission media: the individual, personally coloured report, such as we find in oral accounts, recorded eyewitness reports and subjectively formulated texts, was attributed a high transmission potential. This brought the aspect of the linguistic 'reproduction' or transcription of performance into focus. For this reason, a separate written project in the sense of an extended documentation practice was launched as part of the model archive and conference.

1.4.2. *archiv performativ: a model*, an exhibition and mediation project

⁷ For the descriptions of the various artefact types, see 'Related documents'.

⁸ *Host Clubs* are staged discussion performances hosted by presenter-moderators. Participants sit at tables and discuss issues put forward by the presenter. While the course of the discussion is moderated, its explicit development – the nature of communication, the intensity of interaction – is determined by the audience. The open atmosphere enables the public to engage in various models of participation, ranging from giving concrete input to expressing lively interest to purely observing. Marcel Schwald developed this discussion format in 2008 for various venues in Basel. *Archiv performativ* held the following *Host Clubs* to discuss project-specific issues: *Host Club 1* (26.8.2010) and *Host Club 2* (10.12.2010) in Kaskadenkondensator, Basel; *Host Club 3* (24.6.2011) in the Klingental exhibition space, Basel.

The model archive⁹ was a mediation and exhibition project employing a scenography which divided the space into distinct exhibition, presentation, study and outdoor areas.¹⁰ While it was a publicly accessible site, where selected materials from the performance archive of Basel's Kaskadenkondensator (1998-2008) were on view, its various spaces simultaneously served the roughly 20 guest artists, curators, researchers, lecturers and students from Switzerland and abroad as laboratories for experimentation and research.¹¹ Our intention was not to present artefacts, in the sense of aura-imbued art objects, in an exhibition but to create a space where people conducting experimental research with documents classified according to artefact type could interact. The central aim of the installation was to try out, discuss and publicly present different methodological forms of access and theoretical approaches to transcriptions in a process of reciprocal exchange between various scientific and artistic fields – in other words, to conduct research as a performative process.

1.4.3. *Recollecting the Act*, a conference on the transmission of performance art

This conference¹² considered current theoretical discourses and artistic positions on performance art, the construction of social and cultural memory, sites of memory and archives and processes and practices of reactivating them, while keeping the central focus on fundamental possibilities of transmission and archiving. These were also examined in terms of how they intersect with approaches to memory and media theory. The live performances given during the conference dealt with the issues mentioned above in various ways from an artistic perspective. Some of the artists made direct reference in their presentations or live performances to issues and approaches which had crystallised in the course of the research on the model archive. The trans-disciplinary approach of the conference thus facilitated not only the visualisation of different practice-oriented methods of transcription but also their specialist discussion. In the process, it became clear that there are many artistic methods of transmission which can contribute to theorisation and historicisation. In this respect, we were also concerned with creating a space where knowledge can be exchanged and reflected on and where participants can learn from one another.

1.5. Main points and aims of the inquiry

⁹ Julia Wolf led the research team responsible for curating the choice of artefacts from 44 performances from the archive of the Kaskadenkondensator and placing them on display. Wolf completed her Master of Arts in Art Education on this subject in the autumn term 2011-2012.

¹⁰ For the spatial concept by Michael Meier and Christoph Franz, see 'Related documents'.

¹¹ Klingental exhibition space, Basel, 14.8.-11.9.2011; for the names of participants in the model archive's research, see 'Related documents'.

¹² Kaserne Basel, 6-8.10.2011; for the conference participants and programme, see 'Related documents' (flyer and conference folder).

In the course of the research project, pursuing the following main points proved most productive:

- A) Which specific qualities and characteristics of transmission and transcription are demonstrated by artefacts of performance art?

Findings from the interviews were qualitatively categorised and applied to the various artefact types. We then analysed, compared and reviewed the artefacts (photographs, video recordings, texts, sketches, eyewitness reports, relics), which were produced during the course of the model archive and the conference (see part 3). In this respect, our own involvement, and the possible lack of objective distance to the examined objects which this resulted in, called for careful, critical reflection. The final results went into our recommendations (see Part 4).

- B) How and by what means are users of artefacts and materials inspired to create transcriptions?

During our research in a number of archives, we aimed to examine selection processes and their transparency and to check the accessibility of documents. Our qualitative evaluation revealed that greater efforts must be made here, since performance art can only be inscribed in history by accessible artefacts. For this reason, one of our goals in the practice-led phase was to show how an 'archive' can be operated performatively, i.e. we researched methods of reactivating performance art with artefact users. We were able to show that artistic research can be equally instrumental in transcribing and theorising performance art as theoretical research. Our supposition was confirmed that performance art is particularly well suited to reflecting on concepts and methods of transcription (see Parts 2, 3 and 4). In the assessment phase, in cooperation with the ZHdK's media archive of the arts, we took the first steps towards making the artefacts of our case studies visible in a standardised, researchable database.¹³ Considering questions of conservation and the technical aspects of preserving artefacts would have gone beyond the scope of our project but we would like to point to some other projects which have experience of dealing with these issues (see the links in Part 4).

¹³ On the performance vocabulary for the MAdeK database, see 'Related documents'.

C) Which intentional modifications and added value does the 'original' performance idea gain by different forms of recording or other performative methods of transcription?

Through our research we were able to show, among other things, that re-enactments, as a form of transmission, are – intentionally or unintentionally – complicit in the current hype surrounding the concept of the 'original' and presence. They are to be understood as one of many methods of transmission, alongside re-performances and other appropriation strategies. While 'iconic' performances, especially, in which an artist's celebrity plays a central role (e.g. Joseph Beuys, Marina Abramovic) evade critical, productive transcription, works based on written directions or a score seem to positively invite it. However, one should always question a performance's historical contextualisation, the motivations behind reactivation, and whether and for what reason it consciously or unconsciously transcribes or re-inscribes the 'original' concept (see Parts 2, 3, and 4).

Part 2 Theoretical context and terminology

2.1. Documentary evidence

On the strength of our qualitative evaluations, we proposed establishing as extensive a document pool as possible, in order to facilitate the transcription and representation of performance art. Artefacts of performance art are the basis from which we will be able to critically read, assess, reflect on and transmit artistic performance concepts in the future. For this reason, we regard it as essential to link documentary methods and forms in performance art with discourse on the documentary in an art context in general. This will influence and inform the production, handling and assessment of performance documentations and artefacts.

2.1.1. The documentary in artistic practice

Filmmaker and art theorist Hito Steyerl¹⁴ has pointed out that in the discourse on the documentary, two fronts have always collided: firstly, those who hold to the realistic reproduction of images by means of technical apparatus and who believe in the inherent truth in the documentary recording, i.e. who trust the camera as much as their own eyes; and secondly, those who take a constructivist position, on the premise that documentary images are produced and shaped by power relations.¹⁵ Steyerl assumes that the documentary form is always interested in producing truth and speaks in this context of 'documentality'.¹⁶ The truth is a product which is made and constructed via documentary codes, e.g. by the use of black and white photos, interviews, statistics or correspondence. This 'documentality' works with authentication strategies, e.g. with art documentations portraying performances or interventions which illustrate certain effects in the social/political field and therefore create other, new realities. Steyerl makes the point that many artistic works adopt this style and act as if they are interested in the truth rather than examining causes. She distinguishes between two documentary forms which refer to historical events: the realistic form and the reflexive form. While the realistic form makes greater use of the myth of truth, the reflexive form runs the risk of generating an opportunistic, heightened realism. Both forms therefore require a deep awareness of fictionality and documentality. In view of all these variables it is important, says Steyerl, to find a critical position with respect to the truth constructed in images. She suggests examining what documentary images express rather than what they represent: "What is expressed in the hysterical blur of the

- A filmmaker and writer, Hito Steyerl lectures at the Centre for Cultural Studies of Goldsmiths College, University of London, and wrote her doctoral thesis on forms of the documentary in the field of art.

- Cf. Steyerl, Hito, „Documentary Uncertainty“, in: A Prior #15, 2007.

- Steyerl, Hito, „Documentarism as Politics of Truth“, in: <http://www.eipcp.net> 05/2003, last accessed 8.6.12.

CNN images [of the Iraq war] is the general ambiguity and uncertainty of a whole era ... which is defined by more and more images on which less and less can be seen. Their constructed form portrays the realistic image of their circumstances.” Appealing directly to the producers of such images, Steyerl demands “an ethics of the documentary in art, from which more conclusions can be drawn”.¹⁷ In a recently broadcast radio interview she supported her demand with the statement: “(...) but I believe that images are really capable of capturing moments of reality, though often not on the levels that we imagine. If that were not the case, then we documentarists could give up.”¹⁸

2.1.2. The documentary in the field of performance art

We conceptualise performance documentation in the following way: every instance of performance documentation is a translation into another medium and hence a transcription giving rise to artefacts. By performance documentation we understand the sum of all documentation materials; those which are used or produced in preparing a performance as well as materials and media used during a performance and all medial recordings created during the performance, which then make reception and transcription possible.

Where performance documentation is concerned, the question of the documentary, or the production of truth and knowledge, arises from a slightly different angle. The intention of creating a link with the live moment is of course inherent in performance documentation. The documents, as substitutes for the event, are supposed to provide evidence that the event actually took place. While performance theory worked against history writing for 30 years, concentrating entirely on presence and the live experience, emphasising its transience and discouraging any kind of documentation,¹⁹ in the 1990s, the focus of discourse shifted from an ontological to a phenomenological dimension of providing evidence, on the premise that what appears in documents can provide realisation and knowledge. In brief, three developments brought about this change in viewpoints on performance documentation.

¹⁷ Translated from the German: „Was sich im hysterischen Gewackel des CNN-Bildes (Irakkrieg) ausdrückt, ist die generelle Intransparenz und Verunsicherung einer ganzen Epoche ... die durch mehr und mehr Bilder definiert wird, auf denen weniger und weniger zu sehen ist. Die Form ihrer Konstruktion stellt das reale Abbild ihrer Bedingungen dar“... „eine Ethik des Dokumentarischen in der Kunst, aus der mehr Schlüsse gezogen werden können“, in: Steyerl, Hito, „Die Farbe der Wahrheit, Dokumentarismen im Kunstfeld“, Turia + Kant, Vienna 2008, p. 10-15. She is drawing here on Michel Foucault’s concept of ‘governmentality’ (power over the production of truth).

¹⁸ Translated from the German: „(...) aber ich glaube, dass Bilder, wenn auch oft nicht auf den Ebenen, auf denen wir sie vermuten, wirklich in der Lage sein können, Momente der Realität festzuhalten. Wenn das nicht der Fall wäre, dann könnten wir Dokumentaristen es aufgeben“, Steyerl, Hito, in: <http://www.br.de/radio/bayern2/import/audiovideo/artmix-gespraech232.html>, 31.7.2009.

¹⁹ Here we refer to Peggy Phelan’s argument that performance is identified primarily by its disappearance. Cf. Phelan, Peggy, *Unmarked. The Politics of Performance*, Routledge, London 1993.

One of them was initiated by Amelia Jones, who in 1998 established that the performance event needs the photograph to confirm it happened at all.²⁰ According to Jones, performance only becomes a work through its documents. Under American copyright law, a work is only regarded as such if it is available as a copy. A live performance, which only exists for an audience at the moment of execution and is not recorded in any way in writing or by technological means, is not protected by copyright law and can hardly be claimed to be or defined as intellectual property.²¹

Philip Auslander postulates moreover that the documentation or documents themselves can sometimes be the event and not necessarily a testimonial. He is referring here to the fact that since the 1970s performances have been created especially for the camera without being preceded by a live performance before an audience.²² Barbara Clausen underlines this by giving a number of examples of live performances which can only be received in their entirety in a mediated form. She cites, for example, Peter Weibel's subversive intervention "Polizei lügt" [police lie] in Vienna. The action is only intelligible from the photo taken of it,²³ showing Peter Weibel holding a sign bearing the word "lügt" [lie(s)]. He is holding it directly under the illuminated sign of a police station marked "POLIZEI" [police]. The photograph was deliberately taken from an angle which allows the subversive message to be read, which would otherwise remain obscure. "Weibel's status as a performer is not proven until the documentation is received."²⁴

The third influence to be mentioned here is Rebecca Schneider's work. She has determined that performance itself is a form of document, since cultural practices are transmitted through it. For example, in dance, historical codes are embodied and passed on in the form of a repertoire. By a document, she not only understands a stable item of value which is preserved but everything that encourages an action; which is, then, performative and embodies both the disappearance and appearance of something.²⁵ Taking these views into account, we can venture a new definition of documentation in the field of performance. According to Auslander, the priority is not to reconstruct the event as exactly as possible through documents but to make the performance accessible to a broader public through

²⁰ Jones, Amelia, „Presence“ in: *Absentia: Experiencing Performance as Documentation in*: Art Journal, Vol. 56, No. 4, Performance Art: (Some) Theory and (Selected) Practice at the End of This Century, Winter 1997, pp. 11-18, published by: <http://www.jstor.org>

²¹ Auslander, Philip, *Liveness: Performance in a mediated culture*, Routledge London and New York 1999, p. 131-133.

²² Auslander, Philip, „On the Performativity of Performance Documentation“, in: Barbara Clausen / Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien (eds.), *After the Act. The (Re)Presentation of Performance Art*, Verlag für moderne Kunst, Nuremberg 2006, p. 27.

²³ Weibel, Peter, *Polizei lügt*, 1977, from the series "Offenes Werk".

²⁴ Translated from the German: "Weibels Status als Performer wird erst in der Rezeption der Dokumentation bewiesen", in: Clausen, Barbara, *Dokumente zwischen Aktion und Betrachter* in MAP – media / archive / performance, 1/2009, <http://www.performap.de> (downloaded on 3.5.10).

²⁵ Cf. Schneider, Rebecca, *Performance Remains. Performance Research*. 6.2 On Maps, Dartington, UK 2001, p. 100-108, www.routledge.com.

documents. If one assumes that performance produces realisation and documents produce a performance in the first place, this must influence how one works with the documents of performance art in terms of history, mediation and storage. A performance archive cannot, then, be a passive collection but should be the result of performative procedures and activities as well as the reflection of them.

2.2. Reactivating performance art

2.2.1. Transmitting, transcribing, re-inscribing

More so than other art forms, performance art is disadvantaged by the fact that it cannot be transmitted without consideration of artefacts and so does not become inscribed in history. Our investigation looks at documentary artefacts and their potential for transmission and representation as well as methods and strategies of transcription by means of scientific and artistic practices.

First, the terminology must be clarified: transmitting [*Tradierung*] is used not in the sense of handing down tradition, which is often mistakenly understood as a product of static memory. Sigrid Schade and Silke Wenk define the term *Tradierung* in terms of allowing cultural processes of memory-building to be examined via performative practices and their agents. With Judith Butler, they argue that performative practices of transmission are always based on practices of repetition, and repetition means that a shift or deviation from the original model takes place, whether it is intended or not.²⁶ We use the terms ‘transmission’ and ‘transcription’ synonymously on the premise that transmission always constitutes a form of (intentional or coincidental) transcription. By transcription [*Weiterschreibung*], as well as the production of artefacts, we understand various methods such as re-enactments, re-performances and other strategies of appropriation in artistic formats, which can all be classified as ‘transmissions’. These methods generate different forms and levels of transmission intensity: from historical faithfulness to the ‘original’ in re-enactment to interpretative translation in a re-performance and even re-writing or transforming in an artistic work. We classify transcriptions as instances in which the element of alteration or deviation is recognisable, hence also artefacts. By the term reinscribing [*Überschreibung*] in the sense of a palimpsest²⁷, on the other hand, we mean a clear eclipsing of an intentional or specific aspect of a work. Here, a specifically constituent element of a performance – such as a radical idea in a specific historical context, for

²⁶ Cf. Schade, Sigrid / Wenk, Silke, *Studien zur visuellen Kultur. Einführung in eine transdisziplinäres Forschungsfeld*, transcript, Bielefeld 2011, pp. 121-124.

²⁷ A palimpsest (palin ‘again’ + psēstos ‘rubbed smooth’) is literally an ancient or medieval parchment on which writing has been applied over earlier writing which has been erased by scraping or washing.

example – is no longer intact in an artefact or transcription but evokes a completely different experience.

2.2.2. Re-enactment / Re-performance

The term re-enactment denotes projects or theatrical productions which take place outside the context of performance art before an audience, e.g. factually faithful historical reconstructions of past social or military events for the sake of their critical incorporation. These performances follow a practice of replicating past events as closely as possible in order to enable them to be relived. In performance art, the re-enactment is regarded as an autonomous reproduction taking the performance of another artist or artists or a previous performance by the same artist as its model. This can include autonomous actions and appropriations which diverge sharply from the original performances (see Marina Abramovic, “Seven Easy Pieces”). The re-enactment, as an independent performance in front of an audience, can however also result in the reactivation of a performance idea. Since the re-enactment is an artistic method of transmission, strongly oriented towards the concepts of the live experience and authenticity, it shares complicity in the current authenticity hype in which we, with our project, are also implicated. We therefore recommend avoiding an inflationary use of the term re-enactment, using it only in the case of recollections of past live events. We suggest speaking of re-performance in the case of appropriation strategies such as citation and camouflage and when a previous performance is consciously interpreted, contextualised and transcribed.

2.2.3. Authenticity²⁸

Philip Auslander notes that authenticity and the live experience have always been interlinked. Today, electronic media such as television create the impression of ‘liveness’, of disappearance and presence. A football game broadcast is perceived as an absolutely live experience. This interconnection is particularly apparent in the case of live performances by rock musicians: audiences expect the concerts to sound like the ‘original’ recordings, which are attributed with authenticity.²⁹ In his dissertation project, Imanuel Schipper³⁰ links the prevailing hype surrounding authenticity with the decline of the Western world’s (political

²⁸ - From the Greek ‘authentikos’, it “refers to the truthfulness of origins, attributions, commitments, sincerity, devotion and intentions” according to Wikipedia (called up on 6.6.2012).

²⁹ - Cf. Auslander, Philip, *Liveness: Performance in a mediatized culture*, Routledge, London and New York 1999, p. 160.

³⁰ - Imanuel Schipper (theatre studies scholar, actor, dramaturge) examined the staging of authenticity in contemporary productions in the SNF research project “Sehnsucht nach Authentizität” (<http://blog.zhdk.ch/authenticity>). His dissertation project “Authentizität als genuine performativer Begriff” is conducted in affiliation with the Institut für Theaterwissenschaft of Berne University (as told in a conversation of 13.3.2012).

and economic) systems after 1989. He identifies further causes of a growing demand for the authentic as the emergence of virtual realities, globalisation, insecurity following 9/11 and economic crisis. The gradual prevalence of technological media and the development of photographic, video and computer technologies have caused the concept of the authentic to continue to shift and remain fluid, though always performative. It comes to crystallisation at the moment of its use. The feelings of authenticity then experienced tell us more about the producer(s) than about the object received. The commercial market has also discovered this effect. Today, within and beyond the art context, feelings of the authentic are sold to the public in place of 'authentic facts'. To reiterate, in Steyerl's words: "In the age of digital reproduction, documentary forms have a tremendously emotionalising effect, not only on an individual level – they are also an important part of the contemporary economy of affect ... As the tendency shifts from documentary seeing to documentary feeling, ... reality becomes an event."³¹ In view of this, it is advisable to avoid the term or, if used, to state the sense in which an item is described as authentic.

2.3. The 'living' archive as the basis for transmitting performance art

In the practice-oriented research part of our project, *archiv performativ: ein Modell*, in the Klingental exhibition space, we worked under trial conditions to examine the hypothesis that archives, as guardians of memory, must be actively appropriated and initiate action in order to remain vital. While relying on artefacts to do this, by reactivating them we also created new artefacts. With this practice-led part of the project, we were able to contribute examples of the performative transcription of archive material (of performances given 1998–2006 in Basel's Kaskadenkondensator). This performative understanding of archive not only draws on the concept of archive formulated by Michel Foucault but also on more recent models of archival art and practice as well as on ideas which archival theory has itself contributed to discourse on the subject. While Foucault sees the archive as a method of constantly restructuring, transforming and constructing knowledge and statements through agents grounded in specific discourses,³² the art of archiving on the internet works with the concept of 're-using'. Online archival projects place the emphasis on accessibility, then, rather than storage.³³ In line with performance theorist and curator Heike Roms, archival

- Translated from the German: "Im Zeitalter der digitalen Reproduktion wirken dokumentarische Formen nicht nur auf individueller Ebene ungeheuer emotionalisierend – sie stellen auch einen wichtigen Bestandteil zeitgenössischer Ökonomien des Affekts dar ... In der Verschiebung vom dokumentarischen Sehen zum dokumentarischen Fühlen, ... wird die Realität zum Event", in: *ibid.*, Steyerl 2008, p. 13.

- Ebeling, Knut / Günzel, Stephan, *Theorien des Archivs in Philosophie, Medien und Künsten*, Kadmos, Berlin 2009, p. 18.

- Cf. Fertig, Julia, „Die Archivfalle“, in *kunsttexte*. Section Arts, Media, Esthetics, 1/2011, p. 5–6, <http://edoc.hu-berlin.de/kunsttexte/2011-1/fertig-julia-3/PDF/fertig.pdf> (last accessed 8.6.12).

theory now stresses that documents only become evidence through the actions of the archivists. These not only administrate but also construct testimonials by means of filing systems, classification and the like.³⁴ Heike Roms' oral history project provided an important point of reference for our model archive project.

Working in and on an archive, one must make visible, or bear in mind, the selection procedures and omissions which form the archive.³⁵ Consequently, the archive can be understood as categorized memory. Wolfgang Ernst puts it like this: "Like every form of memory, it is less a site of historical storage than a site of keeping [memories] at hand, making [them] available and allowing [them] to be updated; hence it is a question of inquiring into the interconnectivity of its functions in a media-archaeological sense rather than the referential illusion we call history."³⁶ This is particularly true of archives of performance art, which can only facilitate transmission and transcription through their availability and accessibility. As our survey at the start of the project showed, archives for performance art such as the *Franklin Furnace Archive* in New York and *de Appel* in Amsterdam, which have existed since the 1970s, are the exception. No archive for performance art exists in Switzerland, although there are isolated private and semi-private collections and accumulations of documentation material, which artists, organisers and a few institutions hold but do not administrate due to a lack of resources (see Part 1, 'Findings of the qualitative research'). In this situation, although artefacts of performance art are produced and some of them preserved and stored, they are generally difficult or impossible to access. We would therefore like to propose the creation of a Swiss performance archive, analogous to current efforts on the dance and drama scene, and contribute to it the findings of our research.

³⁴ Roms, Heike, „Eventful Evidence. Historicizing Performance Art“ in *MAP – media / archive / performance*, 2/2010, <http://perfomap.de>.

³⁵ Cf. Ernst, Wolfgang, „Das Archiv als Gedächtnisort“ in: Ebeling, Knut / Günzel, Stephan, op. cit. fn 3, p. 187.

³⁶ Translated from the German: „Wie jede Form des Gedächtnisses ist es weniger der Ort der historischen Aufbewahrung denn ein Ort der Bereithaltung, der Zurverfügungstellung und Aktualisierbarkeit; von daher gilt es, medienarchäologisch eher nach der Verkettung seiner Funktionen denn nach seiner referentiellen Illusion namens Geschichte zu fragen,“ in: Ernst, Wolfgang, op. cit. fn 6, p. 186.

Part 3 Comparative analysis of performance artefacts

3.1. Selection of case studies and criteria for comparison

During the practice-led phase of research, the performances given in the model archive and at the conference gave rise to a wealth of artefacts. These were mostly produced or commissioned by us, the project participants. We then made a selection of the artefacts to examine in-depth in our case studies. Unlike most other performance research projects, rather than analysing established, canonised works, we decided to work with examples of contemporary performance art in whose creation and 'documentation' we were directly involved.

This naturally raised the problem of maintaining an objective distance. Alongside our function as documentarists, we were also eyewitnesses of the performances. But to analyse the artefacts effectively we had to maintain a critical distance to the objects examined which, in view of the short periods separating the tasks and our personal preferences, was not always easy to do. In order to give this aspect due attention and to avoid confusion in view of the amount of material, we limited ourselves to examining a selection of exemplar performances and artefact types. (Link with Related docs)

For these case studies, we based our research on methods of source criticism used in media and art theory, examining the artefacts for their transmission intensities. Although we were at pains to do this as objectively as possible, we are aware that by writing our own texts we were acting interpretatively, creating transcriptions of the performances.

When analysing transmission, we applied concepts of art and cultural theory which enabled us to differentiate between the concept or idea of a performance, its implementation and the transmissions conveyed in the artefacts from a 'historical' perspective. Having access to the artists' written concepts proved very useful here. As well as these concept texts, we also examined the following artefacts: photographs (single images and series), video and audio recordings, written and oral eyewitness reports and performance texts.

To facilitate making the selection, after the model archive and conference, we wrote short descriptions of the performances from which we distilled the topics and discourses which correlated with our research questions. Furthermore, we classified the different performances in terms of their characteristics. In order to avoid placing them in a hierarchical structure which, in our opinion, cannot hold for the field of performance art, we decided to use the concept of equal 'genres' which exist alongside each other. Each of the 'genre terms' is based on the performances' parameters of content, form and structure. We are aware that the terminology chosen and the classifications applied reflect our own

perspectives. The aim of our inquiry is to show which artefacts and combinations of artefact are suited to the transmission of certain performance genres.

The selection procedure for the case studies of performances took place in two steps. We took our individual research interest as a starting point. Subsequently, we checked the extent and quality of the available artefacts and adjusted the selection if necessary. Each project participant then chose two case studies.

In the case studies, we first compared different artefacts, types of artefact and recording methods, or analysed their respective media-specific transmission intensities. In this context, we looked for correlations with or deviations from the findings we had already gained from the interviews and linked these with discourses of performativity, mediality, memory / archive / recollection, the documentary and the image-space relationship. We did not go into the role of physical transmission in performance art, since discourse on the body in performance theory has been extensively (and exhaustively) discussed elsewhere. It would however be profitable for a successor project to examine the specific function of body transmissions (e.g. in the form of physical habits, gestures, dance), i.e. so-called body-to-body transmissions, more closely. Performance theorist Rebecca Schneider published observations in this field in 2001.³⁷

Drawing on findings from the interviews, we established the following key points of inquiry for analysing the transmission function of artefacts:

- the informative level, i.e. the aspects of content, form, concept and use implicit in the work process
- the dimension of perception, i.e. temporal, spatial, atmospheric, visual, auditory, olfactory / textural and physical perception processes
- the audience dimension, i.e. spectators' reactions and affective participation
- the contextual level, i.e. what the artefact tells us about the institution(s), site-specific conditions and (arts-)political and historical situation they were made in / are held in.

³⁷ Cf. Schneider, Rebecca, *Performance Remains, Performance Research*. 6.2 On Maps, Dartington, UK 2001, pp. 100-108 digital (www.routledge.com).

3.2. Case studies

3.2.1 Mio Chareteau, *DAY-N*, Comparison of a written and two oral eyewitness reports

Comparison of artefacts of the installation/performance *DAY-N* by Mio Chareteau (artist, Geneva), on 8 October 2011 during the conference *Recollecting the Act: On the transmission of performance art* at Kaserne Basel

A) Synopsis of the performance *DAY-N*

The installation/performance *DAY-N* by Mio Chareteau in the Rosstall of Kaserne Basel lasted eight hours. The performer counted every second of it in French. Kneeling on the floor, she spoke the seconds into a microphone attached to a headset. After each minute counted, she wrote the numbers one to 60 on a metal bar lying next to her on the floor, and after 60 minutes she stood the bar vertically on a flat stand and fixed a speaker to it. Her voice, recorded in a loop, could be heard out of this speaker, counting the seconds. This sequence of actions was repeated until a total of eight metal bars had been erected and had speakers attached to them.³⁸

B) Selection of artefact types

I have selected three artefact types for analysis: first, an oral statement by Irene Mueller, recollecting the performance, which was audio-recorded on 17 March 2012. This eyewitness report was made six months after the performance. Secondly, I consider a written account by Brigitte Mauerhofer, based on her subjective eyewitness report, which was published on 13 October 2011 on the *archiv performativ* blog.³⁹ The account was written during the live event and revised later. And thirdly, I consider a written record of an oral account by Harald Kraemer, given at the end of the conference on 8 October 2011. This personal résumé of the entire programme of the last day of the conference was commissioned by the organisers and written down for reference. It mentions the work of Mio Chareteau in a few sentences; this passage is considered below. All three artefacts are subjective oral or written transmission-fragments of the *DAY-N* performance and form the basis of my analysis. Further artefacts, such as video recordings or visual material in the

³⁸ This brief description is based on my experience attending the *DAY-N* performance as part of the conference *Recollecting the Act*. A more detailed description is not necessary for this case study because the artefact types selected describe the performance very precisely.

³⁹ Cf. <http://archivperformativ.wordpress.com/2011/10/13/textstuck-von-brigitte-mauerhofer/> (called up on 22.5.2012).

form of photographs, were deliberately not selected in order to focus exclusively on the information communicated by these oral and written eyewitness reports.

C) Similarities/differences in transmission and transcription by the two recording methods in view of the constituent aspects of the performance

On account of their medial similarities and the authors' subjective interpretations, the artefacts offer varied insights into the work *DAY-N*. By means of oral language, or language translated into writing, they give precise information about different aspects of the performance. Since this artefact type does not contain any visual material, this element of the performance is left up to the reader's imagination. The written artefacts represent two different approaches: Brigitte Mauerhofer's 'text piece' (*Textstück*) is intended as a literary impression and Harald Kraemer communicates a subjective and interpretative view of the performance. Both texts bear witness to a distinct process of reflection and abstraction which is, however, articulated differently in each.

Another approach is evidenced in Irene Mueller's 20-minute oral statement in which she very vividly recalls her experience of the performance six months after the event. Irene Mueller's statement is based on her graphic memories of the live moment and it conveys the setting and the course of the performance in close detail: "Then Mio sat down next to the first bar, crouched, knelt on the floor. You could see that she was moving her lips; she was speaking very softly into the microphone on her headset. They were very rhythmic lip movements. At some point you also saw that she was drawing kind of regular lines on the bar again and again. Then it became clear she was counting as well. And if you went up very close, right at the beginning, or later, if you listened to the speakers, you could hear that she was counting the seconds, so always up to sixty. Then she drew a line or maybe she had already drawn the line. But just marking the minute, she counted the minute out in seconds and then she started again, going back to one. Just that, really, until she had done the whole hour. Then she took off her headset and played the recording through the technology on the speakers. That is to say, stood the bar up, fixed it on this stand, put the speaker on it and then the first acoustically stored, recorded impression of her action in the last hour was audible."⁴⁰ Irene Mueller's eyewitness report conveys the course of the

⁴⁰ Translated from the German: "Mio hat sich dann neben die erste Stange gesetzt, gehockt, am Boden gekniet. Man hat gesehen, sie bewegt die Lippen, sie spricht ganz leise in das Mikrofon von ihrem Headset. Das waren sehr rhythmische Lippenbewegungen. Irgendwann hat man dann auch gesehen, sie macht immer wieder so regelmässig Striche auf der Stange. Es wurde dann auch klar, sie zählt. Und wenn man sehr nahe rangegangen ist, ganz am Anfang, oder später, wenn man den Lautsprechern zugehört hatte, hat man genau gehört, dass sie Sekunden zählt, also immer bis sechzig. Dann machte sie einen Strich oder vielleicht hat sie auch davor den Strich gemacht. Aber einfach die Markierung von der Minute, sie hat die Minute auf der Sekundenebene ausgezählt und dann hat sie wieder bei eins angefangen. Das eigentlich, bis sie die Stunde voll hatte. Dann hat sie

performance and remembers details which make the account vivid and the subjectivity of what it conveys clear. Her approach follows narrative forms which are also encountered in Oral History.

For me, the different approaches taken in these written and oral eyewitness reports, in which the authors consider different fragmentary aspects of the performance, represent *DAY-N* as a whole. The main aspects of the performance were, on the one hand, the unbroken physical presence of the performer over a period of eight hours, plus the extended spatial presence generated by her voice coming out of the speakers, and the installation setting created by the materials and media used. And, on the other hand, the audience at Rosstall 1 of the Kaserne, who had the opportunity to attend the entire eight-hour performance. In keeping with Angelika Nollert's definition, this work by Mio Chareteau can be described as a 'performative installation'⁴¹ because the event character and the representation of presence play equally central roles in it.⁴² As is shown in the artefacts by the different authors, Mio Chareteau realised this 'performative installation' by translating the time of its duration into a chronological sequence, hence making it a subject of the work. A medial translation was manifested hourly via the speakers and the loop function allowed Chareteau's previous counting to intersect with the present moment over the course of the eight hours.

In his account, Harald Kraemer refers to the temporal dimension of *DAY-N* as follows: "Mio Chareteau performs the painstaking work of a chronicler who meticulously documents the flow of time as it passes. 1 second – 1 minute – 1 hour – 1 working day. 'Without anger or passion'. A process of contemplative continuity becomes an installation which for one evening captures the simultaneity in disjointedness; for the duration of an evening, makes the transience of our actions visible and teaches us that we finite beings can never document the infinite."⁴³

das Headset abgesetzt und dann die Aufnahme via Technik auf den Lautsprecher ausgegeben. Also sprich, die Stange aufgestellt, auf dieser Platte fixiert, den Lautsprecher draufgesetzt und dann war der erste akustisch gespeicherte, aufgezeichnete Niederschlag von ihrer Handlung der letzten Stunde hörbar.“ Irene Müller, audio recording of an eyewitness report of 17.3.12 of the performance *DAY-N*, Mio Chareteau, 8.10.11, Kaserne Basel, *Recollecting the Act* conference.

⁴¹ Cf. Nollert, Angelika (ed.), *Performative Installation*, Snoeck, Cologne 2003, p. 9. Nollert writes: "The event nature of performativity (the moment, the here and now) is tied in with the materiality of an installation in the sense of a simultaneity of action and experience. Performativity is a constituent part of an installation. The installation generates performativity." ["Die Ereignishaftigkeit der Performativität (der Moment, das Jetzt) wird in die Materialität einer Installation gebunden, im Sinne einer Simultanität von Handlung und Erfahrung. Die Performativität ist für die Installation konstituierend. Die Installation generiert erst die Performativität."]

⁴² Cf. Nollert, op. cit. fn 3, p. 13.

⁴³ Translated from the German: "Mio Chareteau leistet die knüppelharte Arbeit einer Chronistin, welche den hierbei verflössenen Zeitstrom akribisch dokumentiert. 1 Sekunde – 1 Minute – 1 Stunde

Brigitte Mauerhofer's literary impressions describe the atmosphere of the live moment in short, precise sentences. In the following extract she focuses on the performer's concentration and aura: "From time to time, a change in sitting position. Arms crossed over her left knee. Jeans, black shoes, dark, long-sleeved T-shirt with a V-neck. Now right knee on the floor, left knee squatting. She looks at the floor. Asian-looking facial features. Do they correspond with words like humility? Concentration? Silence? Seven bare, black, speaker roundels are set up in neat rows on metal stands ..."⁴⁴ The mood created by the artist's presence can be imagined from this account. The following quote gives a precise description of the author, allowing the reader to draw inferences about the performative installation/performance. "Right at the back in the corner of the Rossstall, a woman, between 20 and 30, is kneeling on the floor, speaking French into a headset that bends left around her ear, neck, near her chin. She is kneeling and speaking. On the right next to her is a metal bar. Minute by minute by minute, precisely timed, the woman writes a number in chalk on the metal bar. [...] now kneeling with both legs, 7 stands are connected to cables. All that is there of the eighth is the stand and the number bar. It is described by the woman speaking. At the end of every minute with the subsequent number."⁴⁵ On the one hand, this description by Brigitte Mauerhofer allows the reader to conceptualise the acoustic level of the performance, manifested in the number sequences it records, which in turn reflect the performative element of the performance as the counting makes the time tangible. On the other hand, this literary transcription of the performance is itself a performative act⁴⁶ since it

– 1 Arbeitstag. 'Ohne Zorn und Eifer'. Aus einem Prozess kontemplativer Kontinuität wird eine Installation, die für einen Abend die Gleichzeitigkeit in der Ungleichzeitigkeit festhält. Einen Abend lang das Vergängliche unseres Tuns sichtbar macht und uns lehrt, dass wir Endliche nie das Unendliche dokumentieren können.“ Kraemer, Harald, Response to the conference *Recollecting the Act*, Kaserne Basel, 8.10.11.

⁴⁴ Translated from the German: "Von Zeit zu Zeit ein Wechsel der Sitzposition. Die Arme über das linke Knie verschränkt. Jeans, schwarze Schuhe, dunkles, langärmeliges Shirt mit V-Ausschnitt. Nun rechtes Knie am Boden, linkes Knie am Kauern. Sie blickt zu Boden. Asiatisch wirkende Gesichtszüge. Passen sie zu den Wörtern wie Demut? Konzentration? Stille? Sieben schwarze nackte Lautsprecherrondellen stehen in Reih und Glied auf Metallständern ...“ Mauerhofer, Brigitte, Textstück (text piece) Mio Chareteau, 13.10.11, (<http://archivperformativ.wordpress.com/category/brigitte-mauerhofer-schreibprojekt/>), called up on 21.3.12).

⁴⁵ Translated from the German: "Zuhinterst in der Ecke des Rossstalls kniet eine Frau, zwischen 20 und 30, auf dem Boden, spricht französische Zahlen in ein Headset, das ihr links um Ohr, den Hals, nahe des Kinns bügelt. Sie kniet und spricht. Rechts neben ihr liegt ein Metallstab. Minute um Minute um Minute präzise getaktet, schreibt die Frau mit Kreide eine Zahl auf den Metallstab. [...] inzwischen auf beiden Beinen knieend, 7 Ständer sind angekabelt. Vom achten bleibt der Sockel und der Zahlenstab. Er lässt sich von der Sprecherin beschreiben. Nach jeder Minute mit der nächstfolgenden Zahl.“ Mauerhofer, Brigitte, op. cit. fn 6.

⁴⁶ The term 'performativity' is derived from John L. Austin's speech act theory, among other things. Austin first advanced the theory that statements are performative if they complete an action by naming it in 1962. This originally linguistic application of 'performativity' was adopted by Cultural Studies and art theory and has been broadly discussed in performance art – and in some spheres, over-used – since the '90s. Cf. Austin, John Langshaw, *How to Do Things with Words*, Harvard 1975.

not only refers to the activity of writing directly at the moment of performance but also presents the author's own artistic interpretation. This is made clear as follows: "She speaks French numbers in a low voice, she kneels and speaks, second by second by second, precisely timed, quarante un, quarante deux, quarante trois ... You hear a speaker roundel parade. Rolling rows of numbers from every roundel, another in time, slightly staggered 47, 48, 4, ... 32, 33, 34 ... 7, 8, 9, ... 44, 45, ... 25, 26, 27, ... 12, 13, 14, ... 57, 58, 59, 60, 1, 2, 3, ..." ⁴⁷ The literary style of this description makes the performer's quiet counting of the seconds easily imaginable and allows the reader to grasp the sensory perceptibility of the time involved. In this eyewitness report, Brigitte Mauerhofer taps into her personal and communicative memories and records her subjective impressions of the live moment. Irene Mueller also remembers the physical presence of the artist, which she describes as follows: "[...] the other image or the other memory is this immense calm and concentration that she embodied. That she radiated too. She is a very delicate, dainty person and this actual sitting on the floor, so being where this bar is too, and being there with a quite concentrated look, the whole time the counting is there. So actually measuring and changing space and time with her body, but also with her voice. Well, that is something that really stayed with me." ⁴⁸ This statement demonstrates the immediacy of the oral language and the affective dimension which is conveyed by Irene Mueller's account. It should be noted here that every eyewitness report – as a process of remembering and translating memories into spoken language – is associative and hence has a fragmentary and situative function.

Mauerhofer's 'text piece' conveys the author's subjective impression via the audience in attendance and is an example of a literary transcription which taps into the individual memories and experience of the author: "'No Exit' it says on the sign in front of the way out. A reminder, a request, to stop at the very back corner of the Rossstall. Its apertures reveal themselves at the same height as the mouths, ears, necks of the listeners, the onlookers, the curious. A man bends down, cocks his ear, a woman stands comfortably in front of one and looks straight ahead at it. Who is listening to whom? Barely a drinks glass, a place of

⁴⁷ Translated from the German: "Sie spricht mit gedämpfter Stimme französische Zahlen, sie kniet und spricht, Sekunde um Sekunde, präzise getaktet, quarante un, quarante deux, quarante trois ... Man hört eine Lautsprecherrondellenparade. Rollende Zahlenreihen aus jeder Rondelle, eine andere im Gleichrhythmus, leicht verschoben 47, 48, 49, ... 32, 33, 34 ... 7, 8, 9, ... 44, 45, ... 25, 26, 27, ... 12, 13, 14, ... 57, 58, 59, 60, 1, 2, 3, ..." Mauerhofer, Brigitte, op. cit. fn 6.

⁴⁸ Translated from the German: "[...] das andere Bild oder die andere Erinnerung ist diese immense Ruhe und Konzentration, die sie verkörpert hat. Die sie ausgestrahlt hat auch. Sie ist eine sehr feine, zierliche Person und dieses auch wirklich am Boden Sitzen, also dort sein, wo diese Stange auch ist, und da eigentlich mit einem ganz konzentrierten Blick, die ganze Zeit das Zählen da ist. Also eigentlich mit dem Körper, aber auch mit der Stimme Raum und Zeit ausmessen und verändern. Also das ist etwas, was mir sehr stark geblieben ist." Müller, Irene, op. cit. fn 2.

calm. The cameraman on the prowl, crouches in the corner and films the woman who, posing immobile, continues to speak. No layering, building up, outrage, breaking down. No troubled waters to pour oil on. More curiosity is roused. Silence. A woman leaves the room by the 'No Exit' gate. Applause. She comes in, bows discreetly, reserved, and smiles."⁴⁹ Sigrig Schade and Silke Wenk propose in their book *Studien zur visuellen Kultur* that the point of concepts of 'collective' or 'social' memory is "to presuppose the historicity and the social framing of all processes of remembering, which by no means only concern 'historical facts' but also policies of remembering."⁵⁰ According to Schade / Wenk, memory research has found that policies of remembering "are well aware of the connections between historically specific constellations, the power and interest policies of dominant social groups and memory constructions"⁵¹. It should be noted that, in this case, the author transcribes the performance *DAY-N* from a subjective and personal viewpoint. The text is linked to a process of remembering which should be regarded as an individual act of literary realisation, which can be read by a specific social group and in a pre-defined context.

D) Analysis and transcriptions

In her essay "*Performance im medialen Wandel*", Petra Maria Meyer points out: "There can be no doubt that the manner in which something is made apparent or portrayed is in direct reciprocal action with the changing media [landscape]. Where the focus is on 'performance of something', the performative body, which appears and acts in different [forms of] materiality or immateriality, can be regarded as a medium."⁵² The oral and written

⁴⁹ Translated from the German: "'Kein Durchgang' liest man auf dem Schild vor dem Ausgang. Ein Hinweis, eine Aufforderung, Halt zu machen zuhinterst in der Ecke des Rossstalls. Ihre Öffnungen offenbaren sich auf gleicher Höhe wie Münder, Ohren, Hälse der Zuhörenden, der Hingehenden, der Neugierigen. Ein Mann beugt sich nach unten, hält sein Ohr hin, eine Frau steht bequem davor und schaut frontal hinein. Wer lauscht wem? Kaum Getränkegläser, ein Ort der Ruhe. Der Kameramann auf der Lauer, kauert in der Ecke und filmt die Frau, die in unbewegter Pose weiterspricht. Kein Schichten, Auftürmen, Aufbegehren, Zusammenbrechen. Keine Wogen, die es zu glätten gibt. Weitere Neugier kommt hinzu. Stille. Durch das Kein Durchgang-Tor verlässt eine Frau den Raum. Applaus. Sie kommt hinein, verbeugt sich diskret, zurückhaltend und lächelt." Mauerhofer, Brigitte, op. cit.

⁵⁰ Translated from the German: "...von der Historizität und der sozialen Rahmung aller Erinnerungsprozesse auszugehen, wobei es keineswegs nur um 'historische Fakten' geht, sondern auch um Erinnerungspolitik." Schade, Sigrig / Wenk, Silke, *Studien zur visuellen Kultur. Einführung in ein transdisziplinäres Forschungsfeld*, Transkript, Bielefeld 2011, p. 124.

⁵¹ Translated from the German: "'...der Zusammenhänge zwischen historisch spezifischen Konstellationen, Macht- und Interessenspolitiken dominanter gesellschaftlicher Gruppen und Gedächtniskonstruktionen durchaus bewusst", Schade, Sigrig / Wenk, Silke, op. cit. p. 126.

⁵² Translated from the German: "Es steht ausser Frage, dass die Art und Weise, mit der etwas zur Erscheinung gebracht oder zur Darstellung gebracht wird, in direkter Wechselwirkung mit dem medialen Wandel steht. Wo der Fokus auf 'Performance of something' gerichtet wird, lässt auch der performative Körper, der in unterschiedlicher Materialität oder Immaterialität auftritt und agiert, als Medium verstehen." Meyer, Petra Maria (ed.), *Performance im medialen Wandel*, Wilhelm Fink, Munich 2006, p. 36ff.

eyewitness reports on *DAY-N* by Mio Chareteau contain very precise descriptions of the performance's modalities. The numbers spoken in French by the performer, which are amplified by the speakers, can thus be considered a medial embodiment of the performance (like the artefacts too).⁵³

'Artefacts', according to Philip Auslander, are the elements which, beyond the act of documenting, constitute the event of a performance in the first place.⁵⁴ This premise supports every form of the documentation and transcription of performance art: the artefacts selected here are examples of the character of *DAY-N*. According to Aleida Assmann, text plays a central role in this as an 'immortalising medium' ("*Verewigungsmedium*")⁵⁵ and an aide memoire, since the process of writing down and inscribing it involves allows it to be read as a medium and metaphor of memory. "Although, however, the act of writing and engraving is analogous to memory, so much so that it may be considered the most important metaphor of memory, the medium of writing has also been regarded as an antipode, opponent and destroyer of memory."⁵⁶ This hypothesis is based on the premise that oral transmission, with respect to its meaning and the authenticity of the message it conveys, cannot be surpassed, as Plato once noted.⁵⁷ I would like to add that the two artefact types considered here, using both spoken and written language, provide a combination which renders the performance *DAY-N* both fragmentarily and comprehensively.

All three artefacts represent subjective forms of transcription. Brigitte Mauerhofer's 'text piece' can be read as an act of writing which, since it generates a certain immediacy and evokes affective moments, can be considered a 'performative' or 'artistic' text form. 'Text piece' excites the reader's imagination and involves them emotionally, retrospectively conveying the feeling of experiencing the performance. In the written and oral eyewitness

⁵³ Cf. Nollert, Angelika, op. cit. fn 3, p. 13. According to Nollert's definition, her work can be classified as an installation – implying a course of action which produces a result – by the concepts of 'Einrichten' (arranging, installing) and 'Einsetzen' (using, putting into action). An installation is visible as a three-dimensional 'structure', which forms a connection with the space and a relation between the artist and the audience. The event duration of over eight hours, during which the installation is constituted, is central.

⁵⁴ Cf. Auslander, Philip, "On the Performativity of Performance Documentation", in: Barbara Clausen / Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien (eds.), *After the Act. The (Re)Production of Performance Art*, Verlag für Moderne Kunst, Nuremberg 2006, p. 27.

⁵⁵ Assmann, Aleida, *Erinnerungsräume, Formen und Wandlungen des kulturellen Gedächtnisses*, Beck, Munich 2009, p. 184.

⁵⁶ Translated from the German: "Obwohl der Gestus des Schreibens und Gravierens dem Gedächtnis so analog ist, dass er als wichtigste Gedächtnismetapher gelten kann, ist das Medium Schrift auch als Antipode, als Widersacher und Zerstörer des Gedächtnisses gesehen worden." Assmann, Aleida, op. cit. fn 18, p. 185.

⁵⁷ Assmann, Aleida, op. cit. fn 18, p. 185.

reports examined here, we can read the authors' individual capacities for remembering the installation-performance *DAY-N* by Mio Chareteau.

Margarit von Büren, May 2012

3.2.2 Gisela Hochuli, *Analyse der Biografien aus den Archivoschachteln* [Analysis of biographies from archive boxes], comparison of a soundtrack with a picture series and performance material

Comparison of artefacts of a spoken-word performance by Gisela Hochuli (artist, Bern) on 19th August 2011 during the exhibition and mediation project *archiv performativ: a model* in the Klingental exhibition space, Basel

A) Synopsis of the spoken-word sound poetry performance “Analyse der Biografien aus den Archivoschachteln” [Analysis of biographies from archive boxes]

The spoken-word performance *Analyse der Biografien aus den Archivoschachteln* by Gisela Hochuli was given in the first week of the model archive, using data from the curricula vitae of other artists which Hochuli found in the archive’s files. Hochuli processed the data by asking the following questions: “Birth years: How many artists were born in each year?”, “Countries: How often does each appear in the biographies?”, “Cities: How often do they appear in the biographies?” and “Schools?” She then used this material to draw up statistics which she illustrated in diagrams on A3-format sheets. On the night of the performance, these sheets were pinned to the inside of the cupboard doors which led from the exhibition area of the model archive to the media room at the rear. The performer sat in the media room at a small round table and read the collated data into a microphone; her voice could also be heard through a loudspeaker in the exhibition area of the model archive. Gisela Hochuli began her reading before the audience had arrived and did not finish it until the next performance that evening had begun. She described her performance as “Poésie Sonore”⁵⁸, in reference to a procedure which detaches language from its framework of meaning, and read the words of the performance foregrounding the physicality of her voice. To collate the data, Hochuli used scientific research methods which she expressly intended to apply ad absurdum; for example, by generating data which did not seem to contain any relevance. Her work can be interpreted as an experimental transmission proposal, or as a

⁵⁸ This sound-based approach has its roots in modern lyric poetry. ‘Sound poetry’ denotes an artistic form which downplays the role of meaning in language and hence the semantic and syntactic functions of language. It links literary and musical composition and places the emphasis on sound. Pioneers of the genre were involved in the DADA movement and prominent sound poets range from Kurt Schwitters to artists linked with today’s rap and slam poetry scene. Cf. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sound_poetry (last accessed 12.7.12).

trial transmission, with which the performer transformed the selected material into an acoustic experience by sound-poetic means.⁵⁹

B) Selection of artefact types

I analysed the transmission function of the selected artefacts – the soundtrack of the handheld camera (length 5.54 minutes), the photographs (eleven images) and the column and pie diagrams produced by the artist, here classified as artefact type ‘object/material (relic)’ – and considered them in comparison to each other. In order to focus on the specific medial functions of these artefacts, I deliberately disregarded the images conveyed by the video recording.

C) Similarities/differences in transmission and transcription of the performance by the artefacts in view of the different constituent aspects of the performance

Eight photographs show Gisela Hochuli sitting next to a round table on which a light blue, illuminated table lamp is placed. She is holding a microphone in her hand. On some photographs we see her talking into the microphone. On two pictures the inside of the cupboard doors can be seen, which were designed to form an entrance to the ‘media room’ in the exhibition of the model archive. On the doors we see four sheets of diagrams, titled “Jahrgänge” (‘birth years’), “Länder” (‘countries’), “Städte” (‘cities’) and “Schulen” (‘schools’). On another photo, we see the loudspeaker on a shelf via which the reading was broadcast from the media room to the exhibition room. No audience can be seen on the pictures, suggesting that the photographer confined herself to portraying the artist, the material and the medial realisation of the performance. The photographs convey an impression of the setting and the diagrams shown point to the content of the performance and what could be heard through the loudspeaker.

The soundtrack, in comparison, reconstructs some of what was heard at the sound poetry reading. At the beginning, we hear visitors’ voices as they greet each other and chat. After about 30 seconds, the performer’s voice sounds out and proceeds to read out the names of national and international colleges, enunciating clearly, calmly, rhythmically and monotonously. The reading remains acoustically in the foreground while the voices of the visitors and, now and again, steps can be discerned in the background. At the end of the recording, only the voices of the audience can be heard. The volume of the spoken-word performance fluctuates, growing louder or softer according to the distance of the

⁵⁹ This description is based on my personal recollection as an eyewitness; I was present at the public event as well as at the entire first week of the model archive.

microphone on the video camera from the artist or the loudspeaker. The soundtrack, then, conveys the live situation acoustically – both the performer’s voice and the voices of the visitors.

In the given setting, Hochuli’s sound-poetic spoken-word performance could only be perceived by visitors or received in its entirety if they went into the media room or if they consciously listened to the voice coming from the speaker. Since no audience is shown on the photographs, this aspect, which is discernible from the audio recording, is not represented in the visual artefacts.

On the third type of artefact, the diagrams, we read the heading “Analyse der Biografien aus den Archivschachteln” which, if taken as a source reference, allows inferences to be made about the origin of the data. During the performance, these diagrams assumed the function of scripts or notations, while also superficially representing a sociological scientific examination, the ‘findings’ of which were read out. In summary, each artefact in isolation – the soundtrack, photographs or diagrams – conveys only a fragmentary impression of the content of the performance. This spoken-word performance can, however, be reconstructed and appreciated by means of a combination of different artefacts. The circumstances of the performance are legible in the artefacts and the reference to the ‘analysis of biographies from archive boxes’ on the diagrams makes the conceptual background of the performance clear.

The soundtrack of the video recording, lasting just under six minutes, gives no indication of the effective length of the performance. And no further pointers are legible in the artefacts; even the total of eleven photographs offer no indication of the performance’s duration. The choice of site for the performance – a room lit with artificial light – makes the time of day indiscernible. While the artist’s clothing seen on the photos (light, rolled-up beige trousers, a sleeveless black t-shirt and flip-flops on bare feet) suggests warm weather, the visitors’ voices in the background of the soundtrack convey the impression of a relaxed atmosphere. The photographs show that the performance took place in the model archive in the Klingental exhibition space, marking the contextual frame of the performance.

D) Comparative analysis

Gisela Hochuli attended the first week of the model archive and devised her performance during this time. The work can be classified as a spoken-word performance since the performer’s voice is an essential element and distinguishing feature of it. Drawing her inspiration from the archived material and artefacts concerning individual artists who appeared at the Kaskadenkondensator in Basel between 1998 and 2008, Hochuli extracted

the biographical data and left the remaining material aside. Her approach, applying a scientific method for formulating statistics, is remarkable for disregarding the artists' work and concentrating on their biographies. By so doing, she transformed a position of inquiry into a spoken-word performance. This can be read as a simultaneously fragmentary and purposeful transcription of the archive. Hochuli took the data – the artists' *curricula vitae* – out of its original context – the archive boxes of the model archive – and de-personalised it. With her choice of site and title (“Analyse der Biografien aus den Archivschachteln” or ‘Analysis of biographies from archive boxes’) for the performance, she re-established a link with the original context. No acoustic, technological distortions or manipulation were used in the performance; Hochuli spoke into the microphone with a clear, constantly pitched voice. By means of the language embodied by the performer, or language made physical, without any discernible purpose, a performance was created which could nevertheless be expressly linked with the documentary elements of the model archive and even disclosed the source of the data itself.

In terms of history, after Michel de Certeau, this spoken-word performance can be seen as an archiving procedure: “In history everything begins with the gesture of *putting aside*, of combining, the transformation of certain, differently classified objects into ‘documents’. In reality it consists of *producing* such documents by copying, transcribing or photographing these objects, since it simultaneously changes their site and their status.”⁶⁰ The source material used by the artist was transposed to an artistic context by means of a scientific, quantitative procedure, giving rise to independent artefacts (diagrams). The work connotes the gesture of ‘putting aside’. Michel de Certeau emphasises that the problem consists not only of bringing these documentary fields to life, which was realised here in experimental terms by processing the material on the Kaskadenkondensator in the model archive, but also that “lending a voice to silence or validity to a possibility [...] also means transforming something that had a certain status and a certain role into *something else* which functions differently.”⁶¹ The aim of the model archive was to revive the documentation material from the Kaskadenkondensator. Gisela Hochuli's work can be read as an adequate transcription

⁶⁰ Translated from the German: „In der Geschichte beginnt alles mit eine Geste des *Beiseitelegens*, des Zusammenfügens, der Umwandlung bestimmter, anders klassifizierter Gegenstände in ‚Dokumente‘. In Wirklichkeit besteht sie darin, derartige Dokumente durch Kopieren, Transkribieren oder Photographieren dieser Gegenstände zu *produzieren*, da sie gleichzeitig ihren Ort und ihren Status verändert.“ De Certeau, Michel, „Der Raum des Archivs oder die Perversion der Zeit“, in: Knut Ebeling / Stefan Günzel (eds.), *Archivologie. Theorien des Archivs in Philosophie, Medien und Künsten*, Kadmos, Berlin 2009, p. 113.

⁶¹ Translated from the German: „...dem Schweigen eine Stimme oder einem Möglichen Geltung zu verleihen [...] das bedeutet auch, etwas, das einen bestimmten Status und eine bestimmte Rolle hatte, in etwas anderes, das anders funktioniert, zu verwandeln.“ De Certeau, op. cit. fn 3, p. 116

and her sound-poetic spoken-word performance was an experiment that fulfilled precisely this demand.

In my view, the photographs of the performance do not have any iconographic value since they do not allow any inferences to be made about the content of the performance. They are pictures which function according to the 'witness' principle (Gernot Böhme:

"*Zeuglinnenschaft*") since they show what could be seen from the same perspective by eyewitnesses in the same place. "The selection criterion for photography – that nothing is shown which was not visible from a certain position – is trivially fulfilled, recommending it as especially realistic."⁶² This is the case where the eleven photographs considered here are concerned, although they portray the event that took place despite the partial and subjective view which is inherent to every photograph. Every photograph depicts a certain moment within a time continuum and, as an artefact, is well suited to inscribing whatever information it conveys on to the public's cultural memory. The limited number of pictures of this performance leaves it up to the observer to imagine the event and transcription is only possible in combination with the additional artefact types 'soundtrack' and 'object/material (relics)'.

Margarit von Büren, May 2012

⁶² Translated from the German: „Für die Fotografie ist das Ausschlusskriterium – dass nichts gezeigt werde, was von einem bestimmten Standpunkt aus nicht sichtbar war – trivialerweise erfüllt, wodurch es sich im besonderen Masse als realistisch empfiehlt.“ Böhme, Gernot, *Theorie des Bildes*, Fink, Munich 1999, p. 114

3.2.3 Dorothea Rust, *Re-enactment*; comparison of an audio recording with two picture series

Comparison of artefacts of a performance by Dorothea Rust on 2nd September 2011 during the exhibition and mediation project *archiv performativ: a model* in the Klingental exhibition space, Basel

A) Synopsis of the performance *Re-enactment*

The point of departure for Dorothea Rust's performance was a statement she made about her research interest in the model archive. Here, she proposed inquiring into the extent to which the relics of a performance can "together with a short description, text fragments, sketches [...] revitalise a memory and trigger new [ideas]."⁶³ Later on in the statement she defines her concept of relics, which includes all "objects / materials, mostly everyday objects, as they are or modified" which she uses for her performances. Rust sees these objects as "extensions of the body" and her body as an "extension of material". The objects can have an autonomous character and be bearers of memories at the same time. In concrete terms, the artist based *Re-enactment* on an eyewitness report of 2008 on one of her own performances in the archive of the Kaskadenkondensator.⁶⁴ Referring to this and her own memories and some of the utensils she used at the time, Rust developed a performance for *Re-enactment* which formed a complex fabric of spaces, times and actions, presence, repetitions and imagined ideas.

The descriptive-interpretative text of the eyewitness report was used on the one hand as a script, as the basis for dramaturgical action. On the other hand, it was used as functional material, as the performer involved it or 'played on' it along with other objects and utensils (including green wellington boots, a potato fork, music from a laptop and a sack of apples). By so doing, Rust drew the spatial coordinates of the venue and its various internal and external spaces into the performance and set the audience physically in motion, calling on them to actively take part. The central elements of the approximately 40 minute-long performance were the text read out by the performer, her extempore speaking and her different actions and movements which constantly counteracted the effect of what she said.

⁶³ Translated from the German: „...zusammen mit einem Kurzbeschreibung, Textfragmenten, Zeichnungen [...] vitalisierend zu einer Erinnerung und zu Neuem anstossen [können].“ Dorothea Rust, email of 19.3.11 to Pascale Grau.

⁶⁴ The performance in question by Dorothea Rust took place on 5.3.08 in the Kaskadenkondensator, Basel. Cf. *Kaskadenkondensator. Saisonrückblick 2007/08*, p. 10-11.

B) Selection of artefacts

An audio recording⁶⁵ and two series of photographs⁶⁶ were selected for analysis from the available artefact types. In view of their media specific characteristics and the different perception and reception processes they trigger, the analysis should focus on their individual qualities and their general informative value which is central to an understanding of the performance. To maintain this focus, I will forego analyses of individual photographs and consider the two picture series as two independent units instead.

The audio recording I made was facilitated by preparatory talks I had with Dorothea Rust. In my role as ‘audiographer’, my experience of the performance was very much determined by the task of registering it on an acoustic level. But thanks to the prior information Rust had given me about the concept, dramaturgy and planned course of actions, I was nevertheless able to move among the audience and remain close to the action when certain activities took place (changes of location, the performer’s movement in space) as I documented.

The two picture series were taken by two different photographers. One photographer was a member of the project team, with whom the task of photographing the performance had been arranged; the other photographer was a spectator, an acquaintance of the artist, who offered to place a number of his photos – the ones he selected as most suitable – at the project team’s disposal.

C) Similarities and differences between the artefacts in view of their intensity of transmission

Since the performer’s voice is clearly audible on the audio recording, it conveys the content of the text she read out and thus an essential conceptual aspect of the performance, namely the reference to one of her previous performances. The nature of the entire event, however, can only be partially appreciated by listening. The discrepancy created by Rust between what she articulates linguistically and her subsequent performative actions, in particular, is only conveyed to a limited degree. For this reason, the event’s specific conception as a re-performance – with its shifts, contradictions and deliberately produced irritations – remains obscure to a large extent. The recording does, however, provide clues about the course of the performance, about certain actions and about the performer’s interaction, or communication, with the audience. Where the formal configuration of the performance is concerned, changes in the performer’s vocal expression between when she is reading out

⁶⁵ Audio recording made on 2.9.11 (by Irene Müller) on mobile recording equipment with integrated stereo microphone, length 38:33 min.

⁶⁶ Picture series 1 (92 photos by Pascale Grau); picture series 2 (38 photos by Urs Schmid).

text and when she is extemporising, for example, indicate that Rust was basing actions on a script and that alongside her voice she used various utensils and materials on hand on site. Insofar as the performer's usage of the objects, or the movements and activities she carried out, generated identifiable noises, the audio recording allows inferences to be made about these. And if the listener factors in Rust's body as well as her voice, the audible effects of her performative actions (taking deep breaths, breathing heavily with exhaustion etc.) evoke particularly vivid and succinct images of her movements and her physical state. These noises, especially, give rise to a kind of 'audio-body-transmission'; they are noises which – even without concrete, visually confirmed knowledge of the cause of the physical reactions – listeners can relate to their own experiences and (re)transform into images.

The recording runs the entire length of the performance. 'Noiseless' moments give rise to gaps in information which influence the listeners' subjective sense of time and consequently impede their appreciation of the course of the performance. The ambient sound, on the other hand, allows some inferences to be made about the character of the space; as well as noises (steps, giving information about the nature of the floor etc.) and spoken articulations, it conveys changes in location and hence the performance's dramaturgical structuring into several parts. Since the recording was made stereophonically, it is also possible to follow the movements of the performer and the audience within the space, further aiding the listener's spatial awareness and orientation.

The audio recording provides information about the ambient situation particularly when its elements (the size of the audience, audience behaviour, changes between various locations) generate an acoustically perceptible 'expression'. Audible reactions from the audience (noises and sounds such as laughter or soft talking) evoke ideas of possible events; at the same time they give clear information about the audience's affective participation. An idea of this participation is also conveyed by the audible 'pauses for reaction': the time it takes the audience to carry out the performer's requests, and the subsequent intensity with which they do so.

Turning to the two series of photographs, I will consider the larger group of 92 pictures first. In terms of content, this picture series conveys information about the individual actions and the utensils which were used and how they were used. In addition, the photographs provide information about the performer's movements, her location changes and her interaction with the audience. The amount of photos and especially the photographer's changing position and focus, which becomes apparent (in picture details, perspectives) when the photos are seen in sequence, signalise a certain temporal length; the pictures do not, however, allow

any precise inference about the performance's temporal structure to be made since they do not contain any information about the intervals between individual pictures, or the duration of individual actions. Rather, they offer a contrived visual narrative which – one may assume – outlines the most important moments in the dramaturgical course of the performance. The picture series conveys certain facets of the conceptual structure, such as Rust's involvement, or setting-in-motion, of the audience and each of the locations of actions. The manner in which Rust (inter)acts with the various utensils and the surroundings is visible on the photos. Furthermore, the photos provide information about the fact that these actions generated certain noises, i.e. they evoke acoustic ideas. The element of re-performance and the reference to the eyewitness report of 2008, which was a determining factor in the concept, by contrast, remain 'blind spots', since none of the photos shows the pages of text from a perspective that allows them to be read.

The picture series conveys the dimensions and nature of the spatial situation and allows inferences to be made about the location and context, the time of year, the light situation and other ambient factors. Furthermore, the photos provide indications of the physical (and mental) state of the performer; for example, physical strain and concentration can be read in her facial expression, gestures and posture.

Since there are two picture series of this performance by different photographers, I will briefly summarise the specific qualities of each. While the larger picture series 1 is distinguished by the fact that it tries to capture as many moments as possible and especially to include the audience, the picture composition and formal aesthetic qualities of the second picture series signalises much more of an autonomous interest in each individual picture. Thus the first group allows the course of events in terms of the performance's content to be appreciated; it comprehensively reproduces the events of the performance – albeit only fragmentarily and from a subjective perspective. The photos of the second group, by contrast, show a visual interpretation of the performance, isolating certain subjectively chosen moments from the course of events. A photographic position can be discerned in these photos which, even during the subjective experience of the action and movement continuum, concentrates on 'photogenic' moments or – as the fact of their selection shows – specifically regards such 'strong' images as worthy of transmitting.

D) Analysis and transmissions

As described in the synopsis above, two central facets of *Re-enactment* consist of, firstly, phonetic speech – in the form of sober diction when reading out text, extempore speaking, singing – and, secondly, the content of what is said. When reading out the report, written by

someone else, the performer speaks of herself in the third person; she carries out what happened 'next' in the previous performance in the words of the eyewitness – and in the process announces what will 'now' happen next. In this way, the performer constantly oscillates between two positions. On the one hand, she is the acting, performing agent. This is often reflected in her own articulations, directly addressing the public (such as “Folgen Sie mir bitte! Bitte folgen Sie mir, wo immer ich hingehe” (“Follow me please! Please follow me wherever I go”) or „Ich habe das nicht geübt“ (“I haven't rehearsed this”). On the other hand, when she reads out text she assumes an observing and describing position – by the objective distance she maintains while she speaks (as reader) and by her own inner-textual presence as a 'text object'. This presence and her presence as reader do not, however, temporally coincide, since the former lies in the past. The characteristic style of her account, or the manner in which she 'talks about' the previous event, shift Rust into a reception situation, aligned with the 'current' audience whose impressions she seems to communicate (to them), even though she is in fact transmitting past observations. The moments and action sequences described evoke images in the imaginations of the visitors which are not, however, congruent with the current 'reality' – an irritation is generated and the coincidence of the two performances is broken.

It is self-evident that the artefact type of the 'purely' audio recording cannot convey a performance's visual aspects or concrete dimensions of movements and actions and requires no further discussion here. The striking acoustic manifestation of the audio recording on hand here, however, does convey the basic features of the performance's conceptual configuration and stimulates the individual listener's imagination: the recording evokes images which, although they are largely not congruent with the events taking place – can be related to the listener's own experiences and ideas and hence enable each listener to create a subjective, new construction of the performance.

The reception of an acoustic event always factors in spatial and temporal dimensions as well as the physical presence of the listeners. In my opinion, it is precisely these aspects which make the audio recording considered here an interesting document for transcribing the performance *Re-enactment*. Referring to observations on spatial perception such as Gernot Böhme⁶⁷ has set out, Vito Pinto concludes that acoustic phenomena generate an interactive space which “as an aspect of the sonosphere [...] broadly overcome the spatial separation of speaker from listener”. And, expanding on these “interspaces”, he writes: “The interspace is determined by the sounding manifestation on the one hand and the physical

⁶⁷ Cf. Böhme, Gernot, „Der Raum leiblicher Anwesenheit und der Raum als Medium von Darstellung“, in: Krämer, Sybille (ed.), *Performativität und Medialität*, Wilhelm Fink, Munich 2004, pp. 129-140; here, especially pp. 133-135.

disposition of the receiver on the other hand. Such ephemeral medial events can evoke certain emotions, associations and memories in the listener. [...] Medial spheres are part of the atmosphere, which can stimulate an event or a specific spatial constellation, and at the same time part of the receiver who, with his individual mood or sensitivities, contributes his influence on the ephemeral event [...].”⁶⁸

Precisely on account of the specific configuration of Dorothea Rust’s *Re-enactment* and the lack of ‘visual distraction’, the audio recording generates an acoustic event, the reception of which transmits essential facets of the performance and – as set out above – transcribes them as an independent medial event. Irritation, incongruence, communication and participation are constituent elements of *Re-enactment* and they are also the elements and themes which are audibly imprinted on the audio recording and which make it an autonomous aural experience.

The ‘audio recording’ artefact type works with individual experiences, subjective sensitivities and, as a result, independent and (re)constructive interpretations, especially on the level of reception. All instances of documentation, including audio recordings, are of course shaped by the attitude and position of and information held by the person recording. Nevertheless this form of authorship in the case considered here has, in my opinion, less far-reaching implications for the artefact and its reception than in the case of other technological recordings such as photographs or video recordings. The photographers, by contrast, are inscribed in their photos as their author; by means of these documents they stylise ‘their’ view of events. Each of the pictures conveys a certain perspective and draws the viewer’s attention to the specific detail in space and time which is focussed on and the picture composition which this generates. In this sense, the two series of photographs considered here each represent an independent, differently configured, visual interpretation of an event. They will have a fundamental influence on future readings of this event and will no longer be separable from them.

Irene Müller, May 2012

⁶⁸ Translated from the German: „...als ein Teilaspekt der Sonosphäre [...] die räumliche Trennung zwischen Sprecher und Zuhörer tendenziell überwindet [...] Der Zwischenraum wird bestimmt durch die klingende Erscheinung auf der einen Seite und die leibliche Disposition des Rezipienten auf der anderen Seite. Solche sphärischen medialen Ereignisse können beim Hörer bestimmte Emotionen erzeugen, Assoziationen und Erinnerungen evozieren. [...] Mediale Sphären sind Teil der Atmosphäre, die ein Ereignis oder eine spezifische räumliche Konstellation bedingen kann, und zugleich Teil des Rezipienten, der mit seiner jeweiligen Stimmung bzw. Befindlichkeit seinen Teil zum sphärischen Ereignis beiträgt [...]“ Pinto, Vito, „Mediale Sphären. Zur Einführung in das Kapitel“, in: Kolesch, Doris / Pinto, Vito / Schrödl, Jenny (eds.), *Stimm-Welten. Philosophische, medientheoretische und ästhetische Perspektiven*, transcript, Bielefeld 2009, p. 88.

3.2.4 Axel Toepfer and Boedi S. Otong, *Broom Study #12*; comparison of two types of video recording

Comparison of artefacts of a performance by Axel Toepfer (artist, Basel/Leipzig) and Boedi S. Otong (artist, Jegensdorf), on 9 September 2011, during the exhibition and mediation project *archiv performativ: a model* in the Klingental exhibition space, Basel.

A) Synopsis of the performance *Besenstudie #12*

The project team invited Axel Toepfer (Toepfer) to extend his *Besenstudie* concept by another edition for the model archive. His original concept involved inviting the public to participate in a performative installation of supplied materials. An eleven-performance marathon took place on 30 April 2011 in Kaskadenkondensator Basel. Here, lots were drawn to determine the order of participants and each had a time limit of “what felt like 30 minutes” for their action. All the material was put back in its original position for each successive performance. In this way, the materials were performatively charged eleven times over. Toepfer made these materials available to the model archive to be displayed as artefact type ‘object/material (relic)’. This artefact type has a fluid character. Used material is not automatically a relic but becomes it later according to the context or the significance it is attributed by the relevant agents. For *Besenstudie #12* Toepfer invited Indonesian artist Boedi S. Otong (Otong) to work with the same materials (relics) once again. Toepfer linked this installation with his own interest in subjective camera work and staged himself as a filming performer. The live performance consisted of Otong improvising an examination of the material with his body and voice while Toepfer moved around him with a handheld camera, filming sometimes extreme close-ups. The video made during the live performance and edited directly in the camera was subsequently screened and discussed with the audience as an independent form of performance transmission and transcription.⁶⁹

B) Selection of artefact types

During the course of the research project it emerged that the time-based video recording, though the most common form of documentation, is the most highly disputed among users because of a perceived general lack of understanding of ‘techno images’. In his book

⁶⁹ This description is based on my knowledge of Toepfer’s written concept and my experience as a spectator at the performance in the model archive and at the subsequent discussion.

Medienwerk, Vilem Flusser stresses the need for improving our knowledge of how technologically generated images work: “Man can only regain control of machines with a well-trained techno imagination.”⁷⁰ For this reason, I decided to examine the artefact-function of two different methods of video recording. The first was a complete rendering (termed ‘FULL FILM’ below). This is the most common type of video recording, filmed by a camera fixed on a tripod, aiming for the widest possible view and, by keeping movements to a minimum, a ‘neutral’ or comprehensive rendering. Authorship in this case is intended to be unrecognisable or unimportant. The second recording method – represented here by Toepfer’s video recording (termed ‘VIDEO’ below) – involves a moving, often handheld, hence subjective camera, creating close-up recordings using a zoom function and by the documenting person’s own movements, which can react to changes quickly and directly. Various audience perspectives are suggested by this method.

C) Similarities/differences in transmission and transcription by the two recording methods in view of the constituent aspects of the performance

Filmed from a static vantage point at a distance, the FULL FILM preserves aspects of content/form/concept of the two-part performance in front of an audience; first, the live performance by the two artists/performers and, second, the screening of the video just filmed. (An audio recording was made of the subsequent discussion). In the first part of the FULL FILM, both Otong’s body and voice use and actions and Toepfer’s body and camera use are legible. Furthermore, the development of a form of interplay between the two artists/performers is apparent in the FULL FILM, as well as the fact that the just-filmed video was projected on to the front wall to be screened in the second part. The FULL FILM also makes conceptual aspects of the installation clear, such as the performers’ assumption of different roles, which must have been arranged in advance. Moreover, the performance’s division into two parts plus discussion, as shown in the FULL FILM, reveals a curatorial intention. The VIDEO, by contrast, communicates sharply focused and blurred close-ups from various angles as well as manipulations of and movements with the camera carried out by the person filming, which translate the visual experience into a subjective visual language and give a new account of the live event.

In view of the audiovisual/affective aspects: the static camera position chosen for the FULL FILM, maintaining the same perspective throughout, did not allow the first three minutes of

⁷⁰ Translated from the German: „Nur dank einer ausgebildeten Techno-Imagination könnten die Menschen die Apparate wieder unter ihre Herrschaft bekommen“, in: Flusser, Vilem, *Medienkultur*, S. Fischer, Frankfurt am Main 1997, p. 101.

Otong's action to be conveyed, because it took place at the far front on the left of the floor at the feet of the spectators in the front row. Later it becomes visible in the recording that the person documenting directs the tripod over the heads of the audience and pans round or zooms in slightly as the situation requires. Both recording methods convey the ritual-like actions carried out by Otong and his use of his voice: for example, in both we see the performer throwing a large piece of crumpled up paper like an animal skin against the wall while crying in a whiny voice. While the VIDEO conveys all Otong's actions and voice use from the start, it does so partly in a fragmentary and distorted way. We see a lot of close-ups of Otong's face and hands from many different angles; for example, at one point his face fills the entire frame and he can be clearly seen and heard to be hissing. Besides Otong's voice, we hear loud noises arising mostly from the camera being manipulated, such as clicking when it is switched on or off or a setting is adjusted. This generates a rhythmic alienation from the original sounds and creates an independent audio-aesthetic.

Furthermore, the sound recording in the VIDEO often runs on where Toepfer has inserted white or black surfaces, sometimes full-frame, sometimes cut off and blurred. He produced these images by panning to a white wall while the camera was still running or by holding his hand in front of the lens. The VIDEO gives a clear rendering of Toepfer's ad hoc restructuring of the visual experience.

Both recording methods convey auditory and affective aspects of Otong's complex voice use. Otong used foreign or nonsense words, repetitive plaintive sounds or aggressive-sounding tirades. These sound expressions triggered reactions and feelings in the audience.

In view of the temporal-spatial (ambient) aspects: Temporal structures such as the process and course of the action, the duration of the individual parts and the entire performance are comprehensively conveyed by the FULL FILM (1st part: 23:20; 2nd part: 10:00, total length: 37:20). The selective use of the camera in the VIDEO, by contrast, causes the temporal structure to be halved. The FULL FILM shows the space to be small, bright, cramped and half-filled with an audience which often blocks the camera's view of action taking place on the floor. The VIDEO, on the other hand, hinders the viewer's spatial orientation due to its many close-ups and the movements of the person filming. While the FULL FILM conveys an atmosphere of tension, showing Otong in a trance-like state and Toepfer as his active counterpart, the VIDEO communicates the interpretative perspective of the person filming, whose manipulations of or with the camera cause some of Otong's actions to appear more dramatic while other actions fade into the background. In every case, they are affectively charged and appear at times more powerful than in the FULL FILM.

In view of the physical-textural aspects: Toepfer's physicality, or his body use, is legible in the FULL FILM as a kind of dance or choreography. Both the FULL FILM and the VIDEO convey how Otong's hands grasp the material and how he strikes himself hard and rhythmically on the forehead. While Toepfer's entire person can be seen in the FULL FILM, in the VIDEO his presence is only indirectly conveyed by the dynamic camera movements, suggesting his physical 'fusion' with the camera. At one point in the VIDEO, the thumb of the person filming can be seen; at another point, his shoe, indicating his physical presence.

In view of the site-specific or political situation and audience reactions: In the FULL FILM one sees the spectators from behind, moving their heads to and fro like at a tennis match. A sense of uneasiness among the audience is also conveyed: some people slide around in their chairs and look around questioningly. Some start or give a constrained laugh when Otong makes loud noises. One person leaves the room after a few minutes; two others leave after the live part. In the VIDEO, by contrast, the spectators are seen only once, very briefly, from the front, when Toepfer filmed from a position behind Otong. Otherwise, they fade into the background visually and acoustically while the camera films close-ups. The overall context of a specialist experiment, in which an audience participates in the making of a video, a live event and a discussion, is legible in the FULL FILM. The VIDEO, on the other hand, tells the viewer nothing about the situative context, since the space, setting and audience can only be vaguely guessed at behind the images in close-up.

D) Discourse, analysis and transcription

Comparative analysis points to discourses and concepts of the documentary. How forms of the documentary reproduce reality has always been disputed. According to Hito Steyerl, the main line of conflict runs between upholders of realism and upholders of constructivism. While the former pursue a naïve, technology-trusting positivism and believe that the documentary form depicts natural facts and conveys them truthfully, which one can see with one's own eyes, the latter view the documentary form as a construction in which even the concept of reality is seen as an expression of the prevailing ideology, which cannot be believed. In this way, constructivists contest the fact that reality can be depicted at all. The prevailing distrust of truth in images, the growth of which can be easily understood in view of the rapid development of technological media and the possibilities they present for manipulation, gives rise to a dilemma – and new forms of documentary images. "They are available around the clock; they turn duration into 'real time', distance into intimacy,

ignorance into false knowledge.”⁷¹ Yet the desire for truth remains. Parallels to these positions can be seen in the two examples of documentary practices in performance art described here. The FULL FILM is a documentary method often applied on the false assumption that the technological apparatus record everything ‘objectively’, realistically and truthfully. This form of documentation is highly valued by historical researchers because it is perceived as ‘neutral’ and does not appear to confront the viewer with considerations of authorship. The VIDEO is an artistic work in a documentary mode, which not only reconstructs the event by its live editing and use of different effects, it is also an example of an aesthetic which emotionalises perception. The switching on and off of the camera and the use of the ‘night shot’ function create an audio-visual staccato aesthetic which might be described as ‘video scratching’⁷². “In the age of digital reproduction documentary forms do not only have an incredibly emotionalizing effect on an individual level; they are also an important part of the contemporary economy of affect. [...] As the tendency shifts from documentary seeing to documentary feeling, [...] reality becomes an event.”⁷³ In my view, the VIDEO addresses precisely this issue. But where does this desire for authenticity, emotion, feelings and affects stem from? Marie Louise Angerer suggests describing this interest as a dispositive, “...in which philosophical, art and media theoretical discourses are fused with those of molecular biology, cybernetics and cognitive psychology into a new ‘human truth’”.⁷⁴ Since the new, transparent, digitally supervised human has become a calculable entity, the affective body is being re-discovered and re-evaluated in art and visual discourses. Axel Toepfer himself says that his subjective camera work was based on Bergsonian and Deleuzian concepts of movement-images and affection-images. Referring to Bergson, Deleuze sees the image ‘as movement’ and ‘in movement’; that is, equivalent to movement: “Every thing, that is to say every image, is indistinguishable from its actions and reactions: this is universal variation.”⁷⁵ Toepfer, too, in keeping with Deleuze, creates a subjective image of perception in his role as a documenting performer. That is to say, the

⁷¹ Translated from the German: „Sie sind rund um die Uhr verfügbar, sie verwandeln Dauer in *real time*, Distanz in Intimität, Ignoranz in trügerisches Bescheidwissen“, in: Steyerl, Hito, *Die Farbe der Wahrheit, Dokumentarismen im Kunstfeld*, Turia + Kant, Vienna/Berlin 2008, p. 12.

⁷² According to Wikipedia, ‘scratching’ in music is a DJ technique used to produce distinctive sounds by moving a vinyl record back and forth on a turntable.

⁷³ Translated from the German: „Im Zeitalter der digitalen Reproduktion wirken dokumentarische Formen nicht nur auf individueller Ebene ungeheuer emotionalisierend – sie stellen auch einen wichtigen Bestandteil zeitgenössischer Ökonomien des Affekts dar. [...] In der Verschiebung von dokumentarischen Sehen zum dokumentarischen Fühlen [...] wird die Realität zum Event“, in: Steyerl, op. cit., fn 3, p. 13.

⁷⁴ Translated from the German: „...in dem philosophische, kunst- und medientheoretische Diskurse mit molekularbiologischen, kybernetischen und kognitionspsychologischen zu einer neuen ‚Wahrheit des Menschen‘ verlötet werden“, in: Angerer, Marie-Luise, *Vom Begehren nach dem Affekt*, Diaphanes, Zurich/Berlin 2007, p. 7.

⁷⁵ Deleuze, Gilles, *Cinema 1. The Movement-Image*, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis 1986, p. 58.

whole is seen by the person filming, who is himself a part of this whole. In this process, he produces affection-images, i.e. close-ups, or 'faces' in the Deleuzian sense, detached from the space. Abstracted from all spatio-temporal co-ordinates, they become the expression of feeling.⁷⁶ The live situation becomes the production site of a video which oscillates between documentation and the independent artistic product. In his portfolio Toepfer describes his approach as follows: "My work revolves around the central question of the intense experience of communicated images, made possible by a subjective appropriation of the image narration."⁷⁷ The VIDEO presented immediately after the performance confronted the spectators with a reality which either completely eclipsed their own memories or layered different modes of perception – their own and Toepfer's – over each other. At the same time, the artefact was extended by its participation in the event – with the making of the VIDEO and the cooperation between Toepfer and Otong made transparent and discussed during the event – so that the entire setting should be regarded as a transcription of Otong's performance. In my view, the two artists/performers demonstrate a broader definition of authorship, such as Giaco Schiesser describes in his article "Barthes und Foucault revisited". Foucault's rewriting of the author concept, though necessary, is now outdated and being taken further by contemporary artistic practice, Schiesser says. Network societies, which challenge concepts of the work and the author and the principle of intellectual property, have in his view set more transformations in motion. Authorship and the role as artist have become phenomena of performative production. This does not devalue individual authorship but frees it from the aura of original artistic creativity.⁷⁸ Toepfer and Otong are authors (in the sense of 'arrangers' who take up and re-order found objects and make them newly recognisable by means of transformation) in a production entailing collaborative authorship made transparent. Furthermore, the video produced hereby is also to be regarded as a form of artistic documentarism in the field of performance art. The subjective video recording could, in combination with other artefacts, give conventional audiovisual performance documentation new impetus by demonstrating how patterns of perception are subjectively constructed.

Pascale Grau, May 2012

⁷⁶ Deleuze, op. cit. pp. 95–97.

⁷⁷ Translated from the German: „Meine Arbeit kreist um die zentrale Frage einer intensiven Erfahrung der Bildmitteilung, die durch eine subjektive Aneignung der Narration von Bildern ermöglicht wird.“

⁷⁸ Cf. Schiesser, Giaco, „Autorschaft nach dem Tod des Autors, Barthes und Foucault revisited“, in: Hans Peter Schwarz (eds.), *Autorschaft in den Künsten. Konzepte – Praktiken – Medien (Zürcher Jahrbuch der Künste, Vol. 4)*, Museum für Gestaltung Zurich, Zurich 2007, pp. 20–30.

3.2.5 Ewjenia Tsanana, *Sense of Time in Performance Contexts*; comparison of a video recording with a performance text

Comparison of artefacts of a lecture-performance by Ewjenia Tsanana on 7th October 2011 during the conference *Recollecting the Act: On the transmission of performance art* in Kaserne Basel

A) Synopsis of the lecture-performance *Sense of Time in Performance Contexts*

The lecture-performance which Ewjenia Tsanana gave on 7th October 2011 as part of the conference *Recollecting the Act* in the Kaserne Basel was listed in the conference programme as an 'insert', i.e. one of a number of presentations developed by artists during their stay at the model archive. Once Tsanana had arranged her chair, overhead projector and microphone on the stage, she sat down and began her performance with a short, extemporised introduction, outlining the story of the performance's conception and development. Having had to leave the model archive early, a representative of the artist had given the original talk in her place. This conception would have been repeated at the conference if Tsanana had not unexpectedly been able to return.⁷⁹ Subsequently, the artist began to read out the text looking at the different ways she experienced time as a performer and as a spectator at performances. She prepared the ground by saying "I will even regard and define the way time is experienced as the way time behaves. I will turn the tables. No, it is not I that senses [time], time comes to me and gives me a wealth of subjective [notions]. [...] I will divide time and order the [different] parts, fit them into moulds or give them faces, personify them and – if I can – give them appropriate names."⁸⁰

In the course of the 30-minute talk, Tsanana intermittently demonstrated her observations and characterisations of time in the more concrete form of drawings copied on to transparencies. In addition, she emphasised some of what she said with gestures, all the while retaining a relaxed-appearing posture, seated next to the overhead projector and behind the microphone. Some striking elements of the presentation were Tsanana's

⁷⁹ Irene Müller performed this task at the evening event at the model archive on 9.9.11; Chris Regn and Andrea Saemann had agreed to take over in the case of Tsanana's absence from the conference.

⁸⁰ Translated from the German: „Ich werde gar das Zeitempfinden als Zeitverhalten betrachten und definieren. Ich werde den Spieß umdrehen. Nein, nicht ich empfinde, die Zeit besucht mich und schenkt mir reichlich Subjektives. [...] Ich werde die Zeit zerteilen und diese Teile sortieren, sie in Formen einpassen oder ihnen Gesichter geben, sie personifizieren und – sollte es mir gelingen – ihnen die passenden Namen geben.“ Tsanana, Ewjenia, „Zeitempfinden in Performance-Zusammenhängen“, <http://www.friedensallee.org/zeitempfinden/> (last accessed on 13.5.11), p. 1-2.

carefully structured argumentation and graphic linguistic descriptions as well as the contrasts created between emotional involvement and physical restraint, seriousness and humour, listening and seeing, reading and showing. With these elements and strategies, which Tsanana wove into a precisely configured and subtly balanced sequence of events, only to soon break up their interplay again, she developed a performance which is ultimately based on her own reflection and constitutes this process as an event in the act of performing.

B) Selection of artefact types

From the artefact types available, I selected firstly one of the two video recordings⁸¹ and secondly the performance text with integrated drawings which was published online⁸² for closer consideration. In view of the lecture-performance format and the conception of the performance text, which may be regarded as the performance's 'score' in a broader sense, this choice seemed most appropriate. My own experience as the performer's 'representative' at the first performance on 9th September 2011 links me in a specific way with the text and the drawings⁸³, further motivating my theoretical interest.

C) Similarities and differences between the artefacts in view of their intensity of transmission

The uncut video recording transmits all the central aspects of the lecture-performance: the performer's position on the stage and the arrangement of the setting as well as the course of the lecture and its acoustic and gestural configuration. The camera follows the action with steady panning shots and slow zooms; its fixed position at the front of the stage conveys an observer's perspective, corresponding with the front edge of the auditorium. Event though the video recording does not show the audience, it does provide information about the ambient situation and – via the auditory level – about the audience's affective

⁸¹ Video recording of 7.10.11 (by Axel Toepfer), uncut recording made with a moving camera and zoom; sound recorded with a room microphone, orientated to framing; length 30:00 min. The performance was also recorded in wide shot.

⁸² Cf. Tsanana, Ewjenia, op. cit. fn. 2. On the artefact type of the performance text, cf. also Nein, Lilo (ed.), *Translate Yourself! A Performance Reader for Staging*, Vienna 2009.

⁸³ The text version used then differed from the performance text primarily in the opening and closing passages, containing additional references to the performer's gestures, the arrangement of the transparencies and when the projector was switched on and off. Ten transparencies were used at this performance; Tsanana added two more drawings for the conference.

participation. Below I will consider the specific characteristics of this lecture-performance and how they are transmitted by the video recording. The close-up shots of the performer, in particular, convey her physical presence, characterised by her relaxed posture, sparing gestures and minimal facial expressions, which altogether signalise cheerful but concentrated composure. Since the sound on the video was recorded via a directed room microphone, Tsanana's voice remains constantly related to what is visible in the frame. Her voice is manifested as a spatial articulation, integrated in the interplay of gestures, actions and facial expressions. This becomes especially apparent at moments when the camera focuses on the projected drawings and the performer 'slips' out of the frame.

Thanks to the good sound quality, the performer's melodious voice, its tonal colour and her characteristic manner of speech are clearly conveyed. In addition, the background noises which were also recorded – pages of text being turned on a clipboard, the projector being switched on and off, transparencies being placed on the projector – provide a second acoustic structure, the rhythm of which helps the listener to follow the lecture. In this way, in my opinion, an essential conceptual element of the lecture-performance, as a hybrid format at the interface of science and art, is transmitted, namely that it 'produces' knowledge.

Moreover, the video recording also gives an indication of the value of the text of the talk and possible future forms of performance: In her extemporised introduction, Tsanana explicitly states that it is nice for her to 'pass this on', by which she presumably meant the performance as much as the text of the lecture. From this, one may infer that for the artist, 'other' forms of transmission or re-performance are not a less-than-ideal solution but rather that transcription by third parties is intended – an assumption which is also supported by the performance text considered below.

The second artefact type, the performance text, is a retrospectively produced artefact in the form of a purposeful transcription of the lecture-performance. It combines the lecture text with scanned-in presentation transparencies which the artist put together on her website and offers "in two reader-formats [...] on the one hand as a website, where the reader to an extent co-performs and 'places' the pictures on the 'projector' him or herself and, on the other hand, in the somewhat more reader-friendly form of printable text with integrated pictures."⁸⁴ The website is organised into two areas, one of which describes the performance and its inception (titled "über den Text" [about the text] in the menu) while the other contains the above mentioned lecture text and drawings. While the text is organised

⁸⁴ Translated from the German: „...in zwei Lese-Formen [...] einerseits als Website, wo die Leserin / der Leser teilweise mit-performt und die Bilder selbst ‚auf den Projektor‘ legt und andererseits etwas lesefreundlicher als druckbaren Text mit integrierten Bildern.“ Email from Ewjenia Tsanana to Irene Müller of 10.5.12.

into chapters and paragraphs, headings are emphasised in a different colour and typography, and individual words or parts of words are underlined, it is not easily consumable in sections but configured as one long, continuous document, which must be scrolled through to be deciphered. At certain points, hyperlinks to picture files appear allowing the corresponding drawing, or its combinations, to be called up in the neighbouring right-hand side area. These links follow the rhythm of the transparencies laid on the projector during the lecture-performance. And they prompt the reader to carry out an action: the picture is only inserted when the link is clicked on and removed again when the reader clicks on “Zeichnung entfernen” [remove drawing] at the end of the section.

Tsanana describes situations, or moments, from which she develops ideas on the nature of the corresponding time(s). These gain physical contours and appear as female figures, sensory stimuli, bodily sensations or three-dimensional structures. The ‘language images’ which the artist formulates prompt associations within the (audio)-visual and physical-affective field. The text often switches from sensations to observations, from factual report to characterisation; it describes the simultaneously concrete and fluid-transitory character of time. There is a succession of apparitions of time; the future past, remembered present and anticipated future are unrolled to the reader and briefly halted, or defined, in the drawings. The reduced, stylised drawings underline the humorous, anecdotal character of Tsanana’s text, by no means diminishing the seriousness of her analysis but rather accentuating its subjective urgency.

D) Analysis and transmissions

On considering the conceptual configuration of the lecture-performance and analysing the selected artefact types, questions of authorship and the kind of transcription intended by Tsanana are inevitably raised. These questions in turn touch on aspects of transmitting a specific event and releasing lecture-based content. The video recording examined here conserves one particular staging of Tsanana’s performance. Although a second, ‘creative’ and interpreting personality is tangible in the recording, Tsanana’s position as the author of the text and the drawings, as the lecturer or performer, remains undisputed. Particularly for the genre of lecture-performance⁸⁵, which has experienced something of an upswing in the last twenty years and which combines elements of lecture art with those of scenic performance practices, this form of subjective, not-quite-static video recording represents an interesting model for transmission. The cameraman or camerawoman’s focus remains on

⁸⁵ Cf. e.g. Peters, Sybille, *Der Vortrag als Performance*, transkript, Bielefeld 2011, pp. 179ff.; also projects by the curators’ collective *Unfriendly Takeover*, cf. <http://www.unfriendly-takeover.de/> (last accessed on 13.5.11).

the lecture and the action on stage, ensuring that at least one of the constituent elements is present in every take: the person giving the talk and the content presented, consisting here, in Tsanana's work, of both drawings and read-out text. The parallel organisation into 'lecture' and 'performance', the simultaneous talking and showing and the way these are staggered in space, are transcribed in the video recording in a focussing movement in space and time. The panning shots, for example, are directed by the cameraman's subjective interest and so place their own emphases without ultimately allowing the course of the lecture to fall out of view.

The performance text published online, in comparison, is intended as a transcription. As such, it is detached from the performance in question in October 2011 and brings the independent, performative process of the individual reading to the fore. In this sense, anyone who reads the text aloud or silently, deciphering or interpreting it, produces it anew and puts their individual stamp on it. This form of appropriation is intensified by the constant use of the first person in the narrative situation and gains further impetus from the 'possibilities for interaction' integrated into the narrative flow. It seems appropriate here to refer to Lilo Nein's observations on the translatability of performance texts and the resultant "shared authorship": With reference to Walter Benjamin's remarks on literary translation, Nein posits that "each text is [...] exposed to several 'movements of afterlife'".⁸⁶ In this way the text loses its putative autonomous status and becomes more like musical notation, which is always subject to a certain form of interpretation. Pursuing this idea further, a connection may be made between the author and Roland Barthes' provocative argument against the dominance of the author. Barthes claims: "...a text is made of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue, parody, contestation, but there is one place where this multiplicity is focused and that place is the reader, not, as was hitherto said, the author."⁸⁷

The above observations on Tsanana's intentions concerning the transcription, or appropriation, of her performance text correspond with these theoretical arguments. Interestingly, the text itself contains indications that it was conceived as a fragmentary fabric of interrelation between a writing 'author', the act of writing and future reading. In this sense, to illustrate "the nature of time at the moment of performance", the artist creates a picture of a long tube through which air flows upwards during the performance⁸⁸. Reporting in this section from the perspective of the audience, she describes herself as being linked to

⁸⁶ Nein, Lilo, op. cit. fn. 4, pp. 13-21, here p. 13. The author cites Walter Benjamin's essay "The Task of the Translator", cf. in: id., *Illuminations*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York 1968, pp. 69-82.

⁸⁷ Barthes, Roland, „The Death of the Author“, in: *Image-Music-Text*, Fontana, London 1977, pp. 142-148, here p. 148.

⁸⁸ Tsanana, Ewjenia, op. cit. fn. 2, p. 9.

the surface of the tube by threads which can transmit the intensity of the performance to varying degrees according to how taut they are. The tube moreover has chambers, “interpretation and projection spaces”, which according to Tsanana are “either opened by the performer him or herself, or by me, the observer, or by the prevailing atmosphere.” But this is not an immutable situation, since “if personal feelings (like flashes of insight, affective agitation, embarrassment etc.) and thoughts or influences from without distract or even disrupt my attention, the tube gets kinks.”⁸⁹ Although the artist describes these “gaps in attentiveness” in an otherwise compelling performance as moments of frustration, in my view, analogies can be drawn between the activities surrounding the fluid, partially interrupted and extended spatial structure of the performance and the process of its (intended) transcription in the form of auto-reading, or auto-performing. These in turn raise questions of authorship. Just as every performer assumes a responsibility as the author of their own concepts and ideas, the reader shares in the responsibility through the act of reading and ‘performatively’ translating the text. This idea of shared responsibility, Nein sets out, ultimately reflects the conception of a “shared authorship”, in which responsibility is divided up among the parties involved but without halving or devaluing it.⁹⁰

In the comparison of these two artefacts, two different methods of transmission come to light. The video recording of Tsanana’s lecture can be regarded as an independent transcription. This is articulated as the receiving, interpreting transmission of a specific talk and its content. The performance text, on the other hand, operates as a motor for the performance’s continual ‘rewriting’, which is generated by the individual act of reading, by which its content is also released.

Irene Müller, May 2012

⁸⁹ Translated from the German: „...entweder von der Performerin oder dem Performer selbst geöffnet worden [sind], oder von mir, der Betrachterin, oder von der vorherrschenden Atmosphäre [...] Wenn eigene Gefühle (wie Erkenntnisfreude, affektives Betroffensein, Fremdschämen, etc.) und Gedanken oder Einflüsse von außen meine Aufmerksamkeit woandershin lenken oder gar unterbrechen, bekommt der Schlauch Knicke.“ Tsanana, Ewjenia, op. cit. fn. 2, p. 10.

⁹⁰ Nein, Lilo, op. cit. fn. 4, p. 21.

3.2.6 Steffi Weismann, *LapStrap*; comparison of an audio recording with a picture series

Comparison of artefacts of an interactive performance with audio technology by Steffi Weisman (artist, Berlin), on 19 August 2011, during the exhibition and mediation project *archiv performativ: a model* in the Klingental exhibition space Basel

A) Synopsis of the performance *LapStrap*

LapStrap is an interactive solo performance by Steffi Weismann with audio technology. Weismann wears a hip belt fitted with audio equipment (microphones, a signal processor, an amplifier and several speakers) which she controls herself as she moves about the space with the audience, entering into dialogues about the context of the event with spectator-listeners. The performer appears as a human sound-processing machine, producing and performing phases and loops of sound, speech, listening and thought and re-using pre-produced sound collages of Weismann's voice and voices from the audience. In this way, on an audio level, past performances are linked with the current situation.⁹¹

B) Selection of artefact types

I have limited my analysis to two artefact types which process seeing and hearing separately and which I compare in terms of their performative function in transcribing the situation. To examine the specific medial functions of the audio recording and the chronological series of 60 photos, I ask: In which way do the two artefact types retell the performance or represent the idea of the performance? The audio recorder was not switched on until it was clear that the performance had begun, for which reason the first informal nine minutes of the performance are not recorded. From the first 14 photos in the series, however, we see that the performance already began in the display room of the exhibition. Only the photos convey, though fragmentarily, the entire course of the performance; the soundtrack documents only from the point when the audience follows Weismann into the back room.

C) Similarities/differences in transmission and transcription by the two recording methods in view of the constituent aspects of the performance

⁹¹ This description is based on Weismann's concept description and, since I was not present at the event myself, a video recording of the performance (which is not considered in the comparison) as well as an analysis of the artefacts.

With regard to content and form: The chronologically numbered photo series makes the performance's dramaturgical arrangement in two parts legible. The photos show the course of the performance and the performer's movements and gestures, hinting at the production of an auditory level. The audio recording clearly demonstrates the fact that it is a kind of acoustic composition, concerned with sounds and recording, statements on past events and spoken statements in real time. Both artefact types convey the fact that Weismann's appearance was an audio performance in which the presence of the performer as a moving 'sound-processing body' played an important role. Both artefacts also indicate the use of technical equipment including microphones, amplifiers, speakers, a loop device and a voice modulator.

To describe the differences between the artefact types, I will consider the auditory level first: The audio recording transmits live produced and pre-produced elements in which the voices of the performer and voices from the audience can be heard both live and in a pre-recorded or modulated form. Sounds arising from the live situation, e.g. creaking and rustling, and sounds generated by technical manipulation such as loops and voice distortion and apparently fed in over speakers can also be heard. As one of the project's participants, I know that statements by other participants working in the model archive in the first week were used for these, as well as the short responses of spectators at the live event to the performer's question of how they feel. While these words and statements can be heard and understood without knowledge of the context, the intention behind them (or object of them) can not necessarily be inferred from the audio recording. It is striking how the performer's voice is clearly recognisable and distinct from the others on the audio recording, whether sounding in real time at the live event or played back over speakers, although the recording reproduces all voices via speakers.

Certain photos in the picture series point to the auditory level by the performer's gestures they show, e.g. Weismann holding a microphone to a guest's mouth. Moreover, certain physical and textural dimensions can only be inferred from the picture series, since the audio recording evokes nothing in this respect. The picture series reveals on a visual level how the performer acts and what she does. Weismann takes up various physical positions in front of the audience. Sometimes she stands, legs apart, with her back to the audience, so that attention is drawn to the speaker attached to her behind. She touches and operates the hip belt in the manner of a self-assured gunslinger. The photos highlight the hip belt and its technical equipment and the wearer's pelvic region. They also convey the technical side of Weismann's performance, showing her turning knobs and operating a loop device, a Mikroport or an external microphone.

On the spatio-temporal (ambient) dimension: The chronologically numbered picture series allows the viewer to make out Weismann's movement in time and space. The performer changes her positions, standing sometimes at the front by the audience, sometimes going back to the wall. The dimensions and composition of the spatial situation, with furniture and technical equipment, are rendered visually, from which an ambient mood can also be read. We see a lot of wood, bright light and a lot of spectators in a cramped space. The photos portray temporal fragments; the performance's duration remains unclear. Over approximately 15 minutes, 60 photos were taken, so that one must have been taken roughly every 15 seconds. This implies that the photographer took pictures relatively steadily and evenly throughout. No impression of the space is conveyed by the audio recording. Although loud and soft passages can be heard, we cannot tell to what extent these arose from the sources being at different distances to the recording equipment or from the performer's deliberate adjusting of the speaker volume. The sound does, however, convey the impression of an intimate atmosphere. What we hear congeals into a single sound collage, which reflects the temporal structure of the performance but also conveys breaks and pauses which cannot be explained since nothing can be heard.

Observations on audience reactions and the contextual or situative dimension: Human sounds such as soft laughter, chortling and snorting can be heard as well as dialogues. For example, Weismann asks "Was ist jetzt?" ['What's up now?'], somebody in the audience answers "Hitze!" ['Heat!'] and a short time later these words can be heard in a technologically processed loop. Listening closely, the real time speech and sounds can be distinguished from the pre-produced and relayed statements. Weismann's real time interactions with the audience are primarily conveyed by audio means and only to a slight degree by visual means. Only six out of 60 photos show members of the audience as well as the performer. The photographer's focus remains on the performer and never wanders to the spectator-listeners – both during the walk through the model archive in the first part (picture nos. 577-586) and a little later, when Weismann interacts with or questions four people (picture nos. 604/605; 610/611). These few pictures show a pensive, attentive audience, with arms and legs crossed, sitting or standing leaned against the wall, gazing at the floor. Only those who are being questioned are smiling or smirking on the photos. The fact that the artist conceived this as a situative work, i.e. one that reacts with the site, the space, the spectators and the context, can only be surmised from the photos.

The audio recording, on the other hand, conveys a clear impression of the context and the site-specificity, e.g. when, after the walk through the model archive, Weismann asks the

audience what happened to those who missed the live event or when she asks the spectators what they would remember. Weismann's speech points to the fact that live and remembered experiences are the theme of her work and that she performatively involves the audience in this. The spatial context is communicated only by the photos; the fact that it is a windowless room made of wood representing an exhibition space and an archive.

D) Discourses, analysis and transcription

The picture series considered here, of a steady stream of photos taken throughout Steffi Weismann's performance *LapStrap*, is a traditional, documentary form of performance photography.

In 1997, U.S. performance theorist Amelia Jones pointed out that photos and performance are inextricably linked and mutually dependent. The performance needs the photo to be recognised as a performance and the photo needs the performance which preceded it. The performance can only be described as original by the photo which documents it. Jones writes: "The photograph needs the body art event as an ontological anchor of its indexicality."⁹² Philip Auslander describes photographs depicting performances which actually took place as a 'documentary category' (cf. the photograph *Shoot* by Chris Burden). This represents, Auslander says, the traditional view of the relationship between performance art and its documentation. He contrasts this with the 'theatrical category' of photographs of performances which are realised solely in the medium of photo-montage (cf. *The Leap into the Void* by Yves Klein).⁹³ Barbara Clausen supports Auslander's proposal when she says that documentation mysticizes the lost moment and is hence repeatedly sought after as a substitute. By staging and repeating the disappearance of the performance, the documentation re-asserts the act of disappearance again and again.⁹⁴ The photograph – especially the isolated image – conveys a 'frozen' captured moment out of the time continuum, negotiated by the interpretative perspective of the photographer. Photos with an iconic character, especially, which capture a specific photogenic moment, often do not correlate with the highpoint of the performance, since they are produced with a view to getting 'the best picture' and not capturing the event's process. In view of this, the picture series is a valuable alternative, not only because the temporal structure and the process-

⁹² Jones, Amelia, „'Presence' in Absentia: Experiencing Performance as Documentation“ in: *Art Journal*, Vol. 56, No. 4 (Winter 1997), *Performance Art: (Some) Theory and (Selected) Practice at the End of This Century*, pp. 11–18.

⁹³ Auslander, Philip, "On the Performativity of Performance Documentation", in: Barbara Clausen / Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien (eds.), *After the Act. The (Re)Presentation of Performance Art*, Verlag für moderne Kunst, Nuremberg 2006.

⁹⁴ Clausen, Barbara, *After the Act – The (Re)Presentation of Performance Art*, in Clausen (ed.), op. cit.

based nature of the performance can be inferred from it, but also because the role of the photographer is less prominent.

The photographer of our picture series directed her attention exclusively at the performer and, in order not to miss anything, took photographs rhythmically at regular intervals. The recording practice of taking a steady stream of photographs throughout an event is recognisable and founded in the practice and discourse of Babette Mangolte, an experimental filmmaker and photographer, who documented many (dance) performances of the 1970s. Describing her photographic practice, Mangolte stresses that the photographs she took were not supposed to represent her or her taste but show what she had seen. She believed a strategy of selflessness to be important when taking photographs which were to function later as documents. To achieve objectivity, Mangolte combined concepts of automatism and chance and used increased shutter speed. In this way, she aimed to convey the particular style of each work as far as possible. She proposed that the photograph does not capture the action from the point of view of a spectator but represents the act of seeing, whereas the moving image always presupposes the position of a spectator.⁹⁵

The audio-visual experience of Weismann as a live-acting sound-processing body – that is, a kind of fusion of physicality and technology generating a sound collage – is part of the specificity of this work. In this respect, Weismann's work can be viewed in the tradition of Fluxus and acoustic art. In the 1970s, mediatised radio features changed the public's listening habits and the emergence of various technological audio-media gave rise to listening situations which challenged people's perception. Since then, acoustic montages of noises and musical and non-musical sounds with spatial and physical factors have often been used as a creative medium for performance practice.⁹⁶ Doris Kolesch and Sibylle Kraemer suggest that the reasons for the 'late-coming' of audio-technologies and the relatively recent interest in acoustic phenomena and the voice lie in the hitherto predominant reliance on optical and movement apparatus. The now common practice in contemporary art of freeing the voice from its function in the service of language and reason and using it as material for sounds and noises, often woven into a complex structure of sound, did not begin until the modern age. Communication and dialogue are no longer central. The

⁹⁵ Mangolte, Babette, 'Balancing act between instinct and reason or how to organize volumes on a flat surface in shooting photographs, films, and videos of performance', in Barbara Clausen, (ed.), *After the Act: The (Re)Presentation of Performance Art*, op.cit. pp. 35–41.

⁹⁶ Schöning, Klaus, „Ars Acustica – Ars performativa“, in: Petra Maris Heyer (ed.), *Performance im medialen Wandel*, Wilhelm Fink, Munich 2006, pp. 155–162.

production and reproduction of voices has made the technologically processed voice ubiquitous.⁹⁷

In the audio recording on hand, live speech can be clearly distinguished from pre-recorded voices relayed in the live situation. This calls to mind the liveness discourse which – as Philip Auslander has proposed in disagreement with Peggy Phelan – is generated by the media. According to Auslander, ‘liveness’ is an effect of mediatisation. With the first live recordings of performances on the radio in about 1934 and the emergence of live broadcasts of major events in the 1970s, the category of liveness became relevant. Since then, a clear distinction has grown between the two categories ‘live’ and ‘mediatised’.⁹⁸ For Auslander, however, ‘performance’ always denotes the co-existence of the live event with its medial reproduction – and not, as Phelan believes, just the one ‘authentic’ event.⁹⁹ These phenomena are explored in Weismann’s work *LapStrap*.

I would like to come back to two points which characterise this performative transcription. Because Weismann’s performance addresses the many voices and forms of collective authorship inherent in the archive, which take effect in performance art through iteration (i.e. the performative repetition of precedents), the performance itself can be read as an artistic transcription of the model archive and the contents it negotiates. By the same token, the audio-recording – received in isolation – transcribes the live event as a kind of modern radio play.

Steffi Weismann’s work oscillates between an audio experience and a physically interactive experience between herself as an active sound-processing body and the audience, so that its specificity cannot be fully conveyed by means of either a picture series or an audio recording alone. This kind of interactive and audio-visual performance practice needs to be audio-visually recorded if the material is to be used for historical documentation and/or further research. Artistic works, on the other hand, may be prompted by transcriptions of a fragmentary nature. Recording machinery being switched on too late or not at all occurs typically when opening and closing situations are not talked through with the artist. It is up to the artist to make the necessary arrangements concerning what is to be documented and what not, i.e. how the performance is to be mediated retrospectively, and to clarify this with the documenters and organisers prior to the performance.

Pascale Grau, May 2012

⁹⁷ Kolesch, Doris, „Audiovisionen“, in: Kolesch / Sybille Krämer (eds.), *Stimme*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main 2006, p. 49.

⁹⁸ Auslander, Philip, *Liveness – Performance in a mediatized culture*, Routledge, New York/London 1999, p. 65 ff.

⁹⁹ Schumacher, Eckhard, „Passepartout zu Performativität, Performance, Präsenz“, in: *Texte zur Kunst*, no. 37 (March 2000), p. 101.

Part 4 Conclusions and recommendations

4.1. Collection / archive conception

4.1.1. Terminology

When we started work on the research project, we used the concept of ‘keeping alive’ (*Lebendighalten*) the documents of performances. During the course of our work, however, our focus shifted towards transmitting and transcribing them, or interpreting them further. In our opinion, artefacts should not be considered for the sole purpose of ‘reconstructing’ performances as faithfully and realistically as possible but for trying out and analysing various theoretical and artistic methods and strategies of transmitting, or re-interpreting, performance art. By transcriptions, we understand re-enactments, re-performances and other artistic strategies of appropriation, which are also methods of transmitting, as well as the production of artefacts/documents. These methods generate different forms and intensity levels of transmission: from historical faithfulness to the ‘original’ in re-enactment via interpretative translation in re-performance to re-formulation, or transformation, in an artistic work. By the term ‘re-inscribing’ we mean the obvious eclipsing of a specific, intentional aspect of a work. This means that (one or more of) the formerly constituent elements of a performance – for example, a concept with a concrete reference to a historical context – are no longer recognisable or readable in an artefact or transcription. In the course of the project, we agreed on certain categories of performance genre which are strongly oriented towards the idea and form of performance. The terms defining these play an important role for the structured utilisation of those artefacts which were entered into the media archive of the ZHdK. At the same time, exemplary performance database entries are in this way made available to other users of the archive.

4.1.2. The performance archive as a site of transmission and transcription

Archives explicitly for performance are rare; in Switzerland there are none. Nevertheless, a number of collections or accumulations of artefacts can be found. These archives can be seen to fall into two groups, distinguished by their arrangement and institutional affiliation and the consistency with which they pursue archival concepts. The first group consists of personal collections of artefacts, characterised by a broad range of artefact types and idiosyncratic selections and focuses. The second group comprises festival or institutional archives where the storage of artefacts is determined by notions of self-legitimation and a sense of a historical responsibility. Despite these initiatives, broad access to performance artefacts remains to be provided, and this is reflected in gaps in research. As long as artefact archives remain in obscurity, their financial (and administrative) situation will not

improve. Without the funds or staff to properly maintain and process artefacts, the study of performance art remains locked in a permanent cycle of catching up and updating, gaining recognition and being marginalised. This state of affairs has repercussions for the reception of performances of the period from the 1970s to the 1990s. Even today, canonised performances dating from previous decades are the predominant focus of research. We are concerned with facilitating the future availability and utilisation of the wealth of performative works and with challenging and changing the preconditions for writing performance history. The way we deal with archives and artefacts is shaped by our expectations and pre-conceived notions. We often forget that behind every document, and every archive, there are authors whose subjective standards and attitudes affect their selection and composition, content and form. Human perception is selective and fragmenting and so are the technological recording media of video, photography and audio. These are still attributed a certain importance, although the claim to 'realism' and complete representation associated with them are relativised. With the exhibition and mediation project *archiv performativ: a model* we opened up a space in which ways of performatively transcribing an archive and its artefacts could be explored under trial conditions. It was a central concern to us to include artistic research in the reactivation of performance art on an equal footing with theoretical practices. In the process, we were able to give examples of how the transmission and transcription of a regional and national performance scene can gain new impetus from archive material (in this case, from the Kaskadenkontor in Basel). In view of this, the project's findings are intended to support our proposal to found a Swiss performance archive.

Recommendations:

- Archives, collections and accumulations of performance artefacts must be made accessible and visible to the public, otherwise they do not perform their function.
- A (performance) archive must reflect its inherently contrived nature and make its selection procedures transparent.
- A performance archive should not be a passive collection but the result of performative procedure and actions.
- One possible strategy for keeping archives vital and visible could be to use them retrospectively and prospectively, in a project-oriented and collaborative way.

- The fragmented and disparate nature of the 'artefact pool' in archives can be viewed as a positive quality, prompting theoretical and artistic transcriptions, i.e. leading to new forms of performance history writing. Like all accounts, the transcription is also made up of omissions, facts and subjective recollection or forgetting.
- A certain combination or variety of different performance artefacts is imperative for making historical appraisals.
- Artefacts should be made available as sources for continued, inter-active, artistic, curatorial, academic and archival use.
- A comprehensive document pool containing several types of artefact which is accessible to the public forms a basis for the transcription and representation of performance art. In this way, the likelihood of a performance concept being transmitted and engendering histories is increased.
- A variety of artefacts implies a variety of voices, or views, offering a more profound approach to a performance.
- Individual artefacts or incomplete material are enough to prompt artistic transcriptions, since artists can be inspired by details.
- When dealing with subjective and artistic transcriptions in the form of textual or technologically recorded artefacts, one must be aware that effects of immediacy can be created and emotions roused by means of authentication strategies.

4.2. Dealing with artefacts

4.2.1. The medial characteristics of artefacts

The time-based video recording is the most common and generally accepted tool for documenting performances. If, however, the recording is understood as an authentic reproduction of the live moment, it becomes controversial. Different recording strategies, from the uncut complete rendering to the subjective hand-held camera recording, communicate different information and viewpoints. What they have in common is their subjective and fragmentary character, which is articulated in film effects or during post-production as an active intervention in the temporal structure of the recorded event. While the subjectively moving camera explicitly suggests different audience perspectives, even the uncut rendering is to be understood as a constructed excerpt, whose apparent objectivity is the expression of a consciously chosen stylistic device.

The audio recording conveys aspects of a performance which are often 'drowned' or less apparent in the audiovisual recording. Although auditory and visual information is

simultaneously recorded in video recordings and can also be received synchronously, acoustic information is often muffled or obscured due to the traditional dominance of the visual.

In photographs, moments within a time continuum are frozen; they reflect the interpretative view of the producer. In the case of images with an iconic character, which capture a certain photogenic moment, the photographer focuses on getting the 'best picture' and not on the course of the action. A series of several pictures prompts the observer to fill in the blanks in information surrounding them using his or her own imagination. In this way, pictures series allow the temporal structure and the process of a performance to be considered. Oral eyewitness reports are subjective and fragmentary; they often facilitate affective perceptions of a performance on account of the immediacy of their narration. The spectrum of written testimonials covers all manner of text forms, including those representing artistic and literary positions as well as reports and commentaries. The former display the authors' processes of reflection and abstraction. At the same time, they contain omissions and breaks on account of the linguistic interpretation of the experienced moments.

Materials and objects (relics) used by artists during performance fulfil various functions for transcription. They can, for example, serve as directions and provide information on the artist's intentions. Depending on their context and semantic nature, they can be affectively charged and, as 'contact relics', contribute to mysticizing the live moment.

Recommendations:

- Working with technologically created artefacts requires specific knowledge and skills also to be able to read and analyse them.
- For conducting research on performances, uncut video recordings (complete renderings) are especially useful because they provide the most comprehensive information on the following points: temporal dimension, movements and sequences, acoustic, 'ambient' and spatial contexts as well as audience reactions. They do not, however, constitute reproductions but produce a construct based on the recorded reality.
- Subjective video recordings should be regarded as interpretations suited to artistic transcribing. This must be arranged with the relevant performance artist(s) since it may involve completely re-inscribing a work.
- Individual photographs and picture series hold their own potential for visual transmission, despite their subjective, partial view and contrived nature, and provide important material for theoretical and artistic transcriptions in combination with other artefacts.

- Eye-witness statements generally deserve greater attention. The audio recordings of these statements can convey many details of a performance as well as specific forms of reception. Furthermore, they hold a certain physical dimension thanks to the human voice. Here, thought must be given to how consciously these recordings are used as authentication strategies.
- Written statements range from objective reports to subjectively interpretative texts. In each case the author should be identified.
- Object / material (relic) type artefacts have a fluid character. Materials or objects used in performance do not automatically constitute relics, but become them later according to the context or significance attributed to them by the relevant agents.

4.2.2. Producing artefacts

The choice of artefacts and the meaningfulness attributed to them have changed over the last decades. Today the main concern is no longer to produce authenticity in the sense of truth by means of the selected media. Instead, performances are accessed in various ways in order to communicate knowledge and information which, although fragmentary, still constitutes an understanding of the performance. Here, the contextual aspect should always be taken into account, as it determines the information content of an artefact. But the affective characteristics of a performance can also be conveyed via certain artefacts without falling into the authenticity trap; this is especially true of forms of artistic transcription and re-inscription. Since a single artefact has limited meaningfulness, efforts should be made towards establishing a range of artefacts. Every artefact is linked with several authors. This is also true of apparently objective, documentary video recordings and snapshots. Questioning the function of a future artefact helps to use the documentation media effectively.

Recommendations:

- Every performance calls for specific forms of documentation relating to the medial characteristics of the performance. For example, visually oriented performances require different documentation from acoustically oriented performances.
- Careful planning and organisation of technical recordings helps avoid misunderstandings and disappointment.
- Artists should take responsibility for later representations of their ideas or be involved in planning the documentation.
- Prior to documenting a performance, one should gain information on the dramaturgy, duration and sites involved from the artists and organisers.
- Artistic forms of documentation should also disclose the situative context.

- Artists, document-makers and theorists should be aware of their function and authorial position, contributing to the work, when they produce artefacts. For this reason, authorship should always be made transparent and arranged with the performance artists.

4.2.3. Links to institutions and projects concerned with producing, preserving and presenting artefacts:

The websites of restorers associations, research institutions and projects concerning various aspects of preserving contemporary art offer a broad range of information and advice regarding the production, preservation and maintenance of artefacts.

<http://www.tanzarchiv.ch/sammlung/videos/tipps-zum-filmen.html>

<http://www.skr.ch/de/links>

<http://www.fondation-langlois.org/html/e/page.php?NumPage=152>

<http://www.variablemedia.net/>

<http://www.inside-installations.org/home/index.php>

<http://nimk.nl/eng/preservation/>

<http://insidemovementknowledge.net/>

<http://www.aktivearchive.ch>

When compiling extensive digital artefact collections, or processing and digitalising artefacts, it is advisable to consider setting up a user-friendly database or media archive. In cooperation with the ZHdK's media archive of the arts, we have taken initial steps towards this and made the artefacts of our case studies visible in a standardised, researchable database.

<http://www.zhdk.ch/?madek>

<http://medienarchiv.zhdk.ch>

About this website:

This website presents the results of the SNF / DoRe research project *archiv performativ: a model concept for the documentation and reactivation of performance art* which has been hosted by the Institute for Cultural Studies in the Arts (ICS), Zurich University of the Arts ZHdK (duration: April 2010 until June 2012)

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Related Links:

<http://archivperformativ.wordpress.com/>

http://www.sikart.ch/archiv_performativ

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