



# ENGLISH SUMMARIES

## Performance and Repetition – Foreword

The themed section „Performance and repetition” is devoted to contemporary changes in performative practices and critical revisions of the prevalent theory of performance art. According to this theory, the specific feature of performance art is its “unrepeatability”. The impossibility of repetition is perceived in four different ways. Firstly, performance art is not a reproduction but a live creation – not a repetition of a readymade script but the surging forth of a creative process during the event itself. Secondly, a performance, as an improvised live action, and cannot as such be repeated. Thirdly, the documentation of a performance, in other words a form of repetition that remains once the performance has past, should not – if one were to stick to the rule of the ephemeral – exist at all; when it comes into being, it is only as a relic which is not capable of representing what once took place and became irreversibly lodged in the past. Finally, performance art should not repeat itself in its essence and definition, in subsequent performances: each performance should be an individual transgression and a new self-definition of performance art.

The texts that are gathered here aim not only to depart from this traditional theory of performance but also to reflect on the fact that more and more strategies of repetition have been widening the field of performative practices. Tomasz Załuski outlines a changing approach to the problem of repetition in performance art since the sixties and seventies until the present day, as well as highlights “the critical discourse on performance art” that is developing as a result of the changes. He comments upon the concepts, interpretation strategies and themes of the discourse that have the greatest analytical, critical and cultural potential. Ewa Wójtowicz presents the contemporary forms of performance art in existence in the networked culture. She analyses some ways of reusing the documentation of ephemeral actions, the new relationships between performance and documentation, and practices that are specific to the networked culture, such as a “code performance” or the creating of one’s identity in the world of Second Life and social networking websites. In this way, performance becomes one of the post-production re-practices that becomes inscribed into contemporary remix culture. Katarzyna Bojarska applies the psychoanalytical theory of repetition and the subject of traumatic memory to *A Memoir of the Warsaw Uprising* by Miron Białoszewski. This work is interpreted as having an element of memory performance: as a multifaceted process, continually replayed anew whilst working-through the author’s memories of the uprising. The literary work becomes a documentation of this memory performance.

Editor of the section Tomasz Załuski

## Repetition and the Critical Discourse on Performance Art

Tomasz Załuski

In the heroic decades of the sixties and seventies of twentieth century, performance art was defined as a form of anti-repetition art. Later, in the eighties and nineties, there was a move away from this anti-repetition ideology towards an ever-growing interest in documentation, re-performances and re-enactments. A configuration of factors: historical, cultural, artistic, technological, institutional, economical, socio-political and educational played a decisive part in this process. Together with it came a change in the theory and historical narration of performance art: since the late nineties there has been developing what the author of the article terms „the critical discourse on performance art”. Its aim is to re-examine the conditions, the possibility of existence and the functioning of performance in cultural and social spaces. The key is to rethink the relationship between performance art and repetition, most importantly in the form of documentation and re-enactment. The article presents some major themes that appear in the texts of various proponents of this discourse. It analyses, at times also in a critical fashion, the new approaches to performance art offered, indicates their possible

applications but also their internal tensions and limitations. It is an attempt to focus on the shape of the arising discourse on performance art and repetition as well as to find among its concepts, the ones that seem to carry the greatest potential for research and critical interpretation.

## **Re-practices in Performance Art – Documentation, Remediation and Networked Distribution**

Ewa Wójtowicz

Performance art does not operate in isolation from the broader circulation of the networked culture. Just like any other media, the documentation of performance can be dispersed throughout the network: to be remixed or recontextualised or become the component of a mashup. The documentation of performance events in the reality of the contemporary network culture does not play a subordinate role to the event as such, since the distributive network not only disseminates information about the event, but also generates a discourse. Analysed examples include the forms of creative activity such as re-enactment, looping online video performance or intervention in the real-time documentation. There are also the new possibilities of artistic expression that come with the persona of a “code performer”. The examples of artists’ approaches include: Constant Dullaart, Ryan Trecartin, and Gazira Babeli and duos, as Eva and Franco Mattes or MTAA. The theoretical framework is based on the theory remix by Eduardo Navas, and the notion of “culture as a screenplay” introduced by Nicolas Bourriaud. It is important to apply it not only to a remediated performance understood as a work of art. Also, the continuous creation of an online identity – both in the world of the Second Life, as well as through social networking platforms – is an ongoing performance in front of potentially global audience. Re-practices within contemporary art rely on the appropriation of historical events and their continuation, which allows for the creation of a third reality of some sort. This third reality becomes a common one, within which – paradoxically – constant change is a sign of the need for preservation. As a result, the documentation material is open, being part of a game with an ever-changing system of references.

## **To Live in Repetition: Performance, Memory and Trauma**

Katarzyna Bojarska

The article “To Live in Repetition: Performance, Memory and Trauma” offers a reflection on the psychoanalytical concept of repetition and its role in the understanding of the functions of traumatic memory and performance. The author offers the concept that performance can be understood not so much as a separate medium but as a very way of living through history and experiencing historical events towards the end of modernism. Thus performance seems to be most of all the means and not the aim of the artistic operation, while what is being produced (and remains), the material work itself, is not considered mere documentation. In such a context, performance emerges as a threshold genre, where the past becomes present in order to soon become past, this time however, necessarily shifted and dislocated by the very gesture of repetition and remaking. The author analyses the work of Miron Białoszewski in his war-time memories as a performance of sorts which is based on the dynamics of repetition and reenactment: the subject of the interpretation is not only the written aspect of the memoir, but also gestures towards the process preceding the writing, such as the author’s oral performances, his “talking” as well as recording and last but not least, the oral reenactment of the book in the Polish Radio studio.

## On Reference, Sense, and Indexing Grammar

Kazimierz Piotrowski

Gottlob Frege has already distinguished sense (*Sinn*) from reference (*Bedeutung*) because expressions can possess the same referent and different senses. G. Frege also argued that some words have a sense, but it is very doubtful if they have a reference. Moreover, for example, the words “the least rapidly convergent series” have sense but no referent. According to this distinction, we can notice that the expression “indexing” has many different senses, but it is hard to say if the meaning of this expression exists. We can index the Latin word *index* and list: an informer, a traitor, a spy, a demonstrative finger, a title or an inscription etc. But how to index the word “indexing”? Should we rather say perhaps an indexing **grammar**, according to Ludwig Wittgenstein’s undenotational theory of meaning as use of expression? Though in postmodernism this anti-essential impulse was strengthened (Derrida, Rorty, Welsch), however we have to cope with this – a true or false, good or oppressive – indexing game and at the same time with the game against the discipline of indexing. An indexing is proper both for the doctrines which have an absolutistic (Aristoteles) or publicly religious pronunciation (Pascal), also for relativism and contextualism or – only vestigially – (con)textualism.

## Assemblages of the 1960s in Polish Museum Collections. The Problem of Documentation

Karolina Rajna

The article undertakes the topic of the correct terminology for assemblages from the 1960s in the collections of the Polish National and Regional Museums. When analysing the situation of objects from the collections, the author tried to show that museum strategies which do not follow the creation of new terminology caused the works to be assigned to three earlier defined categories – painting, sculpture and graphics. Therefore three-dimensional post-modernist works were treated the same way as modernist, which allowed their inclusion in the collection. This situation, which is also sporadically and inconsequently used in the literature on the subject caused the term assemblage to be almost crossed out from the museum collection cards. Only in the case of Władysław Hasiór, whose art is recognisable through the use of “tacky” items of low rank, the name assemblage was accepted. Even though neither the author of the term Jean Dubuffet (who included dried butterflies in his works) nor the key exhibition which sanctioned the use of it (*The Art of Assemblage*, 1961) did not use the criterion of the item of a low rank. It was rather about the creation of a work through “setting one thing beside the other without connective”, “collecting, gathering, merging” and the formal and technological development of the formula of a flat collage. Accepting such a definition allows us to see assemblages in the works of Teresa Rudowicz (with the use of lace), Danuta Urbanowicz (in which she used a fragment of a wall), Tytus Dziedzuszycycki (in works with the use of metal and wood), Bronisław Kierzkowski (connecting metal and plaster) and others. In reference to the work of Tadeusz Kantor one may try to translate a term “combine painting” taken from Robert Rauschenberg’s works because the usage of traditional paint is so clear that it is used equally with other artistic materials.

## The Moving Image: Expanded Documentary Practice in Contemporary Art

Anna Raczynski

The shifting styles and approaches to documentary make the definition of documentary practice increasingly problematic. The term 'expanded' refers to the flexible role and evolving definition of documentary in the artistic context and digital age, in which the merging of documentary with other art forms such as video or art intervention results in an entirely new form of documentary practice. The expanding nature of documentary art, as emphasised by several scholars and practitioners, lies in the very ambiguity of the term "documentary". The boundaries between reality and fiction are often ambiguous. The abundance of ambiguities that surround the domain of documentary creates vast scope for theoretical debate and practical experimentation, and the complexities and problems that arise as a result of documentary's uncertainty serve as one of the most appealing aspects for artists. It is the interplay of these opposing elements in the genre of documentary that create innovative contributions to the field of contemporary art, and demand closer analysis.

Documentary practice has begun to be positioned entirely differently within the art context. This article makes reference to several documentary artists (namely Peter Watkins, Patrick Keiller and Phil Collins), as well as documentary discourse, referencing in particular the analysis of Hito Steyerl, who has explored extensively the role of documentary in the context of contemporary art.