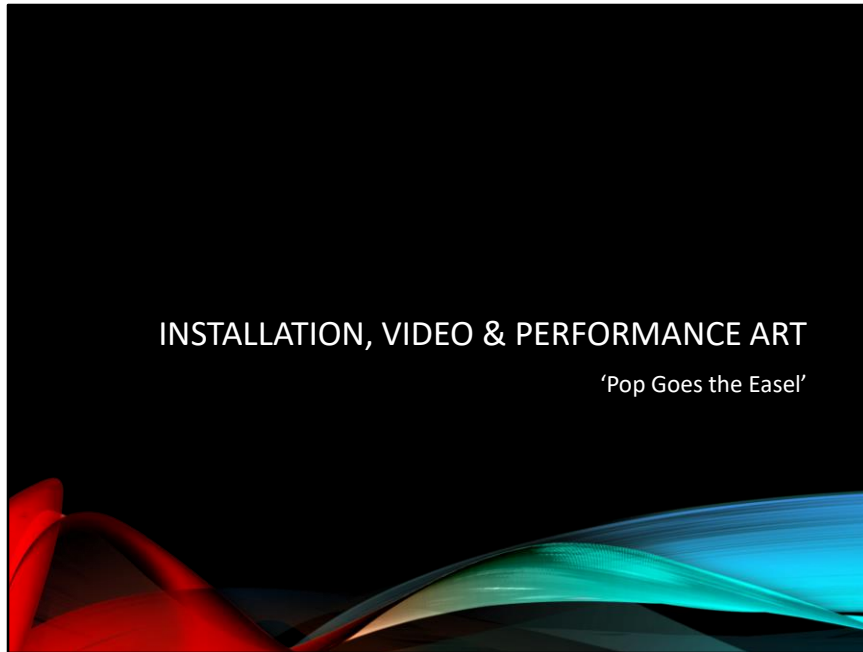




BRITISH ART SINCE 1950

1. British Art Since 1950
2. Pop Art
3. Figurative Art since 1950
4. David Hockney
5. Feminist Art
6. Conceptual Art & Minimalism
7. The Young British Artists
- 8. Installation, Video & Performance Art**
9. Outsider Art & Grayson Perry
10. Summary

- Today we shall cover another fundamental break with tradition. First, art that does away with the art object that can be hung on a wall or put on a plinth. The complete room or a major part of it becomes the art object. The viewer becomes part of the installation. Secondly, we look at a tiny part of video art and finally performance art, perhaps the most ephemeral and revolutionary of all art forms.



Ken Russell made a BBC *Monitor* programme called 'Pop Goes the Easel' (1962). Although the programme concerned Pop Art the title suggest the end of easel art which is relevant to today's talk which is about land art, installation art, performance art, computer art and multimedia.

- **Installation Art** is a mixed-media constructions or assemblages usually designed for a specific place and for a temporary period of time. Tracy Emin's bed is installation art. It developed from complete 'environments' created in a house or gallery, such as **Kurt Schwitters's** *Merzbau* 1933, Allan Kaprow 1957. Other examples are **Magdalena Abakanowicz**, *Embryology* (1978-80), **Cildo Meireles** *Babel* (2001), **Olafur Eliasson** *The Weather Project* (2003).
- <http://www.tate.org.uk/learn/online-resources/glossary/i/installation-art>
- **Video art** involves the use of video and /or audio data and relies on moving pictures. The introduction of video in the 1960s radically altered the progress of art. It enabled artists to record and document their performances easily and cheaply. One of the early pioneers of video art was **Bruce Nauman** and a later master of video art is **Bill Viola**.
- <http://www.tate.org.uk/learn/online-resources/glossary/v/video-art>

- **Performance Art** is art for which the artist uses their own body as the medium and performs an action or series of actions which become the artwork. Performance art has origins in Futurism and Dada, but became a major phenomenon in the 1960s and 1970s and can be seen as a branch of conceptual art. Performance art can use time-based media, video art, live art, art intervention, happenings, body art and interactive art which relies on the spectator. An early influential performance artist was **Joseph Beuys**. Some forms of **Happenings** in the 1960s which were performed by groups that gathered to disrupt the status quo and the hold of the establishment are seen as an early example of performance art. More recent artists include Rebecca Horn, *Unicorn* (1970-72) and *Finger Gloves* (1972), Ellie Harrison (b. 1979), British artist who collects data, David Hoyle (b. 1962) an English cabaret artist, actor and film director focused on LGBT themes, Gilbert & George (b. 1943 and 42) first performed *The Singing Sculpture* in 1970, Marek McGowan (b. 1964), controversial performance artist who has performed in the streets since 2001.
- <http://www.tate.org.uk/learn/online-resources/glossary/p/performance-art>

Related Groups

- **Digital art** is a term used to describe art that is made or presented using digital technology. The first use of the term digital art was in the early 1980s when computer engineers devised a paint program which was used by the pioneering digital artist Harold Cohen. An artist that has used digital art is **Nam June Paik**. <http://www.tate.org.uk/learn/online-resources/glossary/d/digital-art>
- **Social media art** (**Amalia Ulman** b. 1989, Argentinian born Spanish artist fabricated a fictional personality online). Amalia Ulman, *Excellences & Perfections* (Instagram Update, 8th July 2014), (#itsjustdifferent) 2015.
- **Gutai** was a group of Japanese artists, formed in 1954, that created a series of works that anticipated later happenings and performance and conceptual art.
- **Neo-Dada** describes the work of artists working in America in the 1950s and 1960s which was reminiscent of the art of the early twentieth century Dada movement. The term is applied to the work of artists such as Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns because of their use of collage, assemblage and found materials and their apparently anti-aesthetic agenda.
- **Fluxus** is an international avant-garde collective or network of artists and composers founded in the 1960s but still continuing today. Founded in 1960 by the Lithuanian/American artist George Maciunas (pronounced 'match-oon-us'), Fluxus began as a small but international network of artists and composers including John Cage, Joseph Beuys, Yoko Ono and Nam June Paik (pronounce 'pake' like 'make').
- **Action painting** was applied to artists working from the 1940s until the early 1960s whose approach to painting emphasized the physical act of painting as an essential part of the finished work. Such artists included Arshile (pronounced 'arsh-

ill') Gorky, Franz Kline, Willem de Kooning, and Jackson Pollock.

- **Actionism** is the English version of the general German term for performance art, specifically used for Vienna-based group Wiener Aktionismus founded in 1962 whose actions were deliberately shocking, often including self-torture. In America Dennis Oppenheim, and in Britain Stuart Brisley, performed actions in a spirit that can be related to Wiener Aktionismus.



- **Land Art, Installation Art, Conceptual Art and Performance Art** emerged as **alternative propositions** aligned in spirit to social movements such as the equal rights movement and anti-war movements that **rejected 'the establishment'**. A generation of **antiauthoritarian and anti-establishment artists** in the late 1960s and early 1970s **rejected art that could become traded as part of our consumer society** and **museums and galleries** that institutionalised such objects **and that represented the establishment**. These artists wanted to change society not create objects that would become tradeable commodities **bought by the rich as investment opportunities**. Because they wanted to change society they dealt with many taboo topics such as sex, death, violence and war. In this lecture series I have avoided showing work that is too extreme as the talks take place in a semi-public community centre. If you wish to explore further the works I have selected are a good starting point for further research.
- **Installation art** is an artistic genre of **three-dimensional works** that often are **site-specific** and designed to **transform the perception of a space**. Generally, the term is applied to **interior spaces**, whereas **exterior** interventions are often called **public art**, land art or intervention art; however, the boundaries between these terms overlap.

- Installation art can be either temporary or permanent. Installation artworks have been constructed in exhibition spaces such as museums and galleries, as well as public and private spaces. The genre incorporates a broad range of everyday and natural materials, which are often chosen for their "evocative" qualities, as well as new media such as video, sound, performance, immersive virtual reality and the internet.
- We have already seen **British installation art** such as Tracey Emin's *My Bed* (1998), Cornelia Parker's *Cold Dark Matter: An Exploded View* (1991) and Rachel Whiteread's *EMBANKMENT* (2005). Today I want to give a **broader view** of the development of installation art around the world.



Kurt Schwitters's *Merzbau* 1933, Waldhausenstrasse 5, Hanover

- Alongside his collages, Schwitters also dramatically altered the interiors of a number of spaces throughout his life. The most famous was the ***Merzbau***, the transformation of six (or possibly more) rooms of the family house in **Hanover, Waldhausenstrasse 5**. This took place very gradually; work started in about 1923, the first room was finished in 1933, and Schwitters subsequently extended the *Merzbau* to other areas of the house until he **fled to Norway in early 1937**. The **second *Merzbau*** was built in Norway but it **burnt down** in 1951 and no photos survive. The **last *Merzbau***, in Elterwater, **Cumbria**, England, remained incomplete on Schwitters' death in January 1948.
- Based on these photographs, the stage designer **Peter Bissegger reconstructed the *Merzbau* between 1981 and 1983**, assisted by the artist's son Ernst Schwitters. After the exhibition tour the reconstruction was bought and permanently installed in the Sprengel Museum Hannover. A second copy was made by Bissegger for the exhibition *Dada and Constructivism* in 1988–9. This travelling version has been **mounted and dismantled twenty-three times** all over the world. Currently, it is on view in the Pinacoteca in São Paulo.



Robert Rauschenberg (1925–2008), *Bed*, 1955, oil and pencil on pillow, quilt, and sheet on wood supports, 191.1 x 80 x 20.3 cm, Museum of Modern Art, New York

- '*Bed* is one of Rauschenberg's first '**combines**', the artist's term for his technique of **attaching found objects**, such as tyres or old furniture, to a traditional canvas support. In this work, he took a well-worn pillow, sheet, and quilt, scribbled on them with pencil, and splashed them with paint in a style similar to that of Abstract Expressionist 'drip' painter **Jackson Pollock**.
- Legend has it that these are Rauschenberg's own pillow and blanket, which he used when he **could not afford to buy a new canvas**. Hung on the wall like a traditional painting, his bed, still made, becomes a sort of intimate self-portrait consistent with Rauschenberg's assertion that "**painting relates to both art and life...[and] I try to act in that gap between the two.**" (MoMA)
- Rauschenberg said, "**I think a picture is more like the real world when it's made out of the real world.**"
- Some have interpreted *Bed* as representing an act of violence but others see it as merging the activities of the day, at night we sleep in the day we work (painting) to collapse the circadian round into a single symbol. Others see it as addressing contradictions, a bed is horizontal not vertical, a bed is private not public and a bed

is (generally) clean not soiled.

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Edward Kienholz (1927-1994), *Back Seat Dodge '38*, 1964, Los Angeles County Museum of Art

Edward Kienholz (1927-1994), *Back Seat Dodge '38*, 1964, Los Angeles County Museum of Art

- Art critic Brian Sewell called Edward Kienholz "**the least known, most neglected and forgotten American artist of Jack Kerouac's Beat Generation of the 1950s, a contemporary of the writers Allen Ginsberg, William Burroughs and Norman Mailer, his visual imagery at least as grim, gritty, sordid and depressing as their literary vocabulary**".
- ***Back Seat Dodge***. Much of Kienholz's work was controversial. A 1966 show at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) drew considerable controversy over his assemblage, *Back Seat Dodge '38* (1964). The **Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors** called it "**revolting, pornographic and blasphemous**" and threatened to withhold financing for the museum unless the tableau was removed from view. A compromise was reached under which the sculpture's car door would remain closed and guarded, to be opened only on the request of a museum patron who was over 18, and only if no children were present in the gallery. The uproar led to more than 200 people lining up to see the work the day the show opened. Ever since, *Back Seat Dodge '38* has drawn crowds.

Notes

- Kienholz grew up on a farm where he learnt carpentry and other mechanical skills. He had a strict father and a religious fundamentalist mother but as a rebellious son he longed to escape. After college he worked in a psychiatric hospital, managed a dance band, worked as a used car salesman, caterer, decorator and vacuum cleaner salesman. He settled in Los Angeles where he became involved in the art scene. He made collages and opened a gallery. His first installation was in 1961 and was called *Roxy's*. It was a room-sized recreation of a Nevada brothel set in 1943.
- He was interested in found materials, he said, "Regarding found materials he said, in 1977, "I really begin to understand any society by going through its junk stores and flea markets. It is a form of education and historical orientation for me. I can see the results of ideas in what is thrown away by a culture."
- Kienholz's work commented savagely on racism, aging, mental illness, sexual stereotypes, poverty, greed, corruption, imperialism, patriotism, religion, alienation, and most of all, moral hypocrisy. He was an atheist and despised feigned religiosity.
- In 1981 he declared that all his work from 1972 onwards should be understood as co-authored with his fifth wife Nancy Reddin and referred to as the work of 'Kienholz'.



Edward Kienholz (1927–1994), Interior view of *The Beanery*, 1965, restored 2012; Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, 2013 photo

Edward Kienholz (1927–1994), Interior view of *The Beanery*, 1965, restored 2012; Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, 2013 photo

- ***The Beanery*** is a life-size, **walk-in artwork** created in 1965 by the American artist **Edward Kienholz**; it has been referred to as his greatest work, and "**one of the most memorable works of late 20th-century art**". It features the **smells and sounds of the bar**, and models of customers, all of whom have clocks for faces with the time set at 10:10. Only the model of Barney, the owner, has a real face. Kienholz is quoted as saying "The entire work symbolizes the switch from real time (symbolized by a newspaper) to the surrealist time inside the bar, **where people waste time, kill time, forget time, and ignore time.**"
- Edward Kienholz (1927–1994) was an American installation artist and assemblage sculptor whose work was **highly critical of aspects of modern life**. From 1972 onwards, he assembled much of his artwork in close collaboration with his artistic partner and fifth wife, Nancy Reddin Kienholz. Throughout much of their career, the work of the Kienholzes was more appreciated in Europe than in their native United States, though American museums have featured their art more prominently since the 1990s.
- Kienholz once said, "A bar is a sad place, a place full of strangers who are killing

time, postponing the idea that they're going to die."

- When asked by a journalist to characterise its aesthetic virtues he replied, "I don't know if it's art, but I don't give a damn."
- **I saw the work at the Stedelijk in 1978 and it haunted my mind until the present day.**

Notes

- A 'beanery' is a cheap restaurant.
- Stedelijk Museum "It may happen that you are somewhere in the middle of the Museum when suddenly enters a pub called 'The Original Beanery' appears. There is music, glass shattering and murmur of voices. Inside hang people at a bar, a girl with long blond hair and a striped sweater and a man. Are they people? They do have regular clothes on, but in place of their face is a clock.
- Kienholz based this work on an existing pub in Los Angeles called 'The Original Beanery'. Inside *The Beanery* by Kienholz there are a few pictures of the real Beanery which was located in a neighbourhood of Los Angeles where there were many galleries. It was the haunt of artists. From 1953 Kienholz, who then lived near there, visited it regularly. After a few years he decided he wanted to recreate this bar. He wanted to use as many authentic items as possible. The Original Barney supplied several objects such as an old phone, the nameplate, the swing doors, the canopy, the scratched tables and more. Kienholz's Beanery was reduced to 2/3 of its original size.
- Newspapers lie at the entrance in a vending machine. Inside is a bartender reads a newspaper. This figure is a portrait of Barney, the then owner of the pub. He is the only one with a plain face, all the other figures have their faces replaced by clocks. A clear reference to the time. The hands show that everybody is at ten minutes after ten or perhaps the hands are their eyebrows? The brown colour of the cafe suggest old age or something that is in decline. Time is Kienholz theme, it is something that everyone has until we die. He once said about the Beanery, "*The whole thing symbolizes the course of real time (symbolized by a newspaper) to the surreal time at the bar where people waste their time, forget the time to kill the time and ignore the time.*"
- The **figures are based on live models**. Each human model was rubbed with liquid paraffin (a refined mineral oil) and covered with gauze which had been saturated with gypsum plaster. Because a very thin layer was applied the body shape remains clearly visible. When the plaster hardened he carefully cut it loose and added a frame and padding. The same technique is used in the manufacture of a death mask.
- The sound that can be heard is based on the sounds of the original Beanery.
- The air contains an odour that is spread by a fan from a liquid based on a special recipe Kienholz created.



Magdalena Abakanowicz (b. 1930), *Embryology*, 1978-80, Tate

- **The work.** This is *Embryology* by Magdalena Abakanowicz. It consists of hundreds of stuffed hessian [burlap in America and Canada] sacks that were made between 1978 and 1980 by hand. Their bolder-like forms vary in size and form groups. They appear as something between soft bags and hard rocks. They look like cocoons which is also suggested by the title *Embryology* [the study of embryos and their development].
- **Background.** In the 1960s Abakanowicz began the earliest versions of these forms that she called *Abakans* (a derivation of her family name and the Khaka's word for 'bear's blood'). The artist's poverty meant she was reduced to creating art from sacks using threads made from discarded rope. During the 1970s she discussed the development of the animal nervous system and regeneration with scientists and this work reflects on those ideas. Abakanowicz describes the work as '**monumental, strong, soft and erotic**'.
- **The artist.** Abakanowicz is one of the most revered Polish sculptors living today and since the 1960s she has worked primarily textiles and organic forms. A recurring theme in her work is the human body but in this work, we see a landscape of organic forms. The bags also suggest storage trading.

- **Meaning.** The work is concerned with change and metamorphosis through the endless multiplication and disintegration of forms both large and small. We are in a landscape which may consist of hard boulders without life but which on closer examination evolves into organic forms growing and dividing. Her work also relates to her childhood memories, for example, of sacks of potatoes.
- I would like to end with something Abakanowicz said, "**Art will remain the most astonishing activity of mankind born out of struggle between wisdom and madness, between dream and reality in our mind.**"

Notes

- Magdalena Abakanowicz was born near Warsaw in Poland and suffered from the political upheavals and events of the Second World War. Her work is bound up with these hard times although she has said she wants her work to 'touch universal problems'. In the early 1950s the Soviet leadership insisted on all art conforming with the dictates of 'Socialist Realism'. Since 1965 has taught at the Academy of Fine Arts in Poland and is now a professor and visiting professor of the University of California, Los Angeles. She has seven honorary doctorates and numerous awards. She was a descendant of Polish nobility and began work as an independent artist in 1956 and currently lives in Warsaw.
- Her early work in the 1960s was based on woven structures known as **Abakans**, a derivation of her family name. These works arose from her limited materials and trying conditions and she said, 'I could build three-dimensional reality; soft, full of secrets, protecting me, being a shield to me, and at the same time being my own creation, an integral part of myself'. The Abakans were an unnerving break from the pop art and conceptual art of the period but were admired by critics and delighted audiences and they launched her international reputation. Although she mostly worked with textiles she also produced paintings and drawings. Her later work generally contains hard surfaces, generally repeating forms and sometimes of the human body, or animals or trees. Much of her later work is in bronze, stone or concrete. She has appeared in over 100 group and solo exhibitions and her work is in museums around the world. She wrote, 'Soft, they contain an infinite number of possible shapes of which only one can be selected by myself as the right, meaningful one. I create space for them in exhibition rooms where they radiate the energy I have given them. They exist with me, they depend on me, I depend on them ... Without me they make no sense, like discarded body parts separated from the torso.'
- *Embryology* is made from burlap (jute or sisal), cotton gauze, hemp rope, nylon and sisal. They look like something between hard rock boulders and soft embryos or giant monster eggs.
- The Khakas, or Khakass, are a Turkic people, who live in Russia, in the republic of Khakassia in southern Siberia. They speak the Khakas language
- "My work comes from the experience of crowds, injustice, and aggression...I try to

bewitch the crowd.”

- "Art will remain the most astonishing activity of mankind born out of struggle between wisdom and madness, between dream and reality in our mind."

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Cildo Meireles (b. 1948), *Babel*, 2001, Tate

- This is a **tower of hundreds of radios**, each just audible and **tuned to stations of different languages**. It was produced by a **Brazilian artist called Cildo Meireles** and it suggests the Tower of Babel in the Bible. In the Bible story, everyone spoke the same language until they built a tower to reach heaven. As punishment God destroyed the tower, scattered everyone across the Earth and created all the different languages so they could no longer communicate.
- Meireles' tower of radios suggests that the pursuit of a common world society is futile. He is a conceptual artist, installation artist and sculptor. He is noted especially for his installations, many of which express resistance to political oppression in Brazil.
- He was born in Rio de Janeiro and showed a keen interest in drawing from a young age. His father travelled round Brazil in the Indian Protection Service and Meireles visited many tribes. There are about 180 languages spoken in Brazil and the diversity of mutually incomprehensible languages must have influenced him. Other events had a strong influence on his artistic career. When he was seven or eight he saw a native Indian in the forest who had disappeared the following day leaving a small but perfectly formed hut which he described this as the 'the most decisive

thing' for the path he followed in life.

- The radios have another significance, Meireles cites Orson Welles' 1938 radio broadcast War of the Worlds as one of the greatest works of art of the 20th century because it "**seamlessly dissolved the border between art and life, fiction and reality.**" Recreating the same total audience involvement was an important artistic goal of Meireles that is seen throughout his body of work.
- In the late 1960s, Meireles discovered other Brazilian artists concerned with blurring the boundary between what is art and what is life, and responding to current political situations within their pieces. Meireles has stated that drawing was his main artistic medium until 1968, when he altogether abandoned expressionistic drawing in favour of designing things that he wanted to physically construct.
- It has been pointed out [by the author Paul Herkenhoff] that the tower of radios has autobiographical meaning for Meireles, as radio was a common method of widespread communication in Brazil during the artist's youth.
- The work also relates to globalization. Meireles parallels the unity of humanity before the fall of the Tower of Babel with the present-day unity which has resulted from globalization despite numerous language barriers.

Notes

- Cildo Meireles (b. 1948, pronounced 'sildo mer-ellis') showed a keen interest in drawing from an early age and this was encouraged by his father. In the late 1960s, Meireles discovered the work of Hélio Oiticica and Lygia Clark, thereby introducing him to the Brazilian Neo-Concrete movement. He is now one of the leading Brazilian conceptual artists.
- Paul Herkenhoff points out that Babel has an autobiographical meaning for Meireles, as radio was a common method of widespread communication in Brazil during the artist's youth. The work also speaks to globalization. Meireles parallels the unity of humanity before the fall of the Tower of Babel with the present-day unity which has resulted from globalization despite numerous language barriers.
- The Tower of Babel is from Jewish mythology, Genesis 11:1-9. It explains the origin of different languages. Following the Great Flood everyone spoke the same language. They migrated east until they reached a land where they decided to build a tower tall enough to reach heaven. God regarded this as disrespectful and as punishment made them speak different languages and scattered them across the Earth.
- He had a team collecting and repairing secondhand radios and he then mounted each one on a steel column and tuned it to a different station to create a cacophony of sound. Old valve radios from the 1920s make up the lower layers and small mass-produced electronic radios are at the top. There are about 1,000 radios altogether. Meireles said, 'Radio allows you to dream ... when I was a kid I listened to a radio in a dark room ... so a radio is a kind of magic object'. He is against any

kind of a nationalism, he said, 'an artist should have no country'. The noise produced by *Babel* is constant but the precise voices and music are always changing so no two experiences are ever the same. 'Radios are interesting because they are physically similar and at the same time each radio is unique.'

- Meireles has two other works on display, *Insertions into Ideological Circuits*, *Coca-Cola Project* and the *Banknote Project*. They explore the notion of circulation and exchange of goods, wealth and information as manifestations of the dominant ideology. For the *Coca-Cola Project* Meireles removed Coca-Cola bottles from normal circulation and modified them by adding critical political statements, such as 'Yankees Go Home', or instructions for turning the bottle into a Molotov cocktail, before returning them to the circuit of exchange.

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Olafur Eliasson (b. 1967), *The Weather Project*, 2003

- *The Weather Project* was installed at the London's **Tate Modern in 2003** as part of the popular Unilever series. The installation filled the open space of the gallery's Turbine Hall.
- Olafur used humidifiers to create a **fine mist** in the air via a mixture of sugar and water, as well as a circular disc made up of hundreds of monochromatic lamps which radiated yellow light. The ceiling of the hall was covered with a huge mirror, in which visitors could see themselves as tiny black shadows against a mass of orange light. Many visitors responded to this exhibition by lying on their backs and waving their hands and legs. Open for six months, the work reportedly attracted **two million visitors**, many of whom were repeat visitors. Eliasson created different lighting conditions to investigate the effects of weather on a city.
- The **subject of the weather** has long shaped the content of everyday conversation. The eighteenth-century writer **Samuel Johnson** famously remarked '**It is commonly observed, that when two Englishmen meet, their first talk is of the weather; they are in haste to tell each other, what each must already know, that it is hot or cold, bright or cloudy, windy or calm.**' In *The Weather Project*, the fourth in the annual Unilever Series of commissions for the Turbine Hall, Olafur

Eliasson takes this ubiquitous subject in his installation as the basis for exploring ideas about experience, mediation and representation.

- Eliasson is interested in the way that viewer's expectations of a work of art are set by publicity material, posters and what they read. He wanted the viewer to be as untainted by these influences as possible before seeing the work so he conducted a survey of museum staff about the weather. This information and simple statements about the weather were used in the publicity material not a description of the work.
- In the Romantic tradition a work of art evokes a spiritual and emotional attachment to nature but Eliasson wanted to disrupt this. He did this by allowing the viewer to see the mechanism behind the 'sun', including the electrical wiring the machines that distribute the mist.

Notes

- Eliasson is a **Danish-Icelandic artist** born in Copenhagen and whose family emigrated to Iceland in 1966. His parents separated when he was 8 and he had his first solo show when he was 15. He was a break-dancer and formed a group that won the Scandinavian championships. He studied at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts and was awarded a travel budget to go to New York. He moved to Cologne in 1993 and then Berlin where he still has a studio. He worked with an architect and they created *8900054* a 9.1m wide stainless-steel dome that appears to be growing from the ground.

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Inhotim, Brazil, July 2008

Chris Burden (1946-2015), *Samson*, 1985, Inhotim

- “**Samson consists of a 100 ton jack connected to a gear box and a turnstile.** The jack pushes **two large timbers** against the walls of the gallery. Each visitor to the exhibition must pass through the turnstile and **each input on the turnstile** ever so slightly **expands the jack**, and ultimately, if enough people visit the exhibition, Samson could, theoretically, **destroy the building.**” (Inhotim)
- “Chris Burden is a central figure to a generation of **antiauthoritarian artists** who in the late 1960s and early 1970s saw **museums as institutions representing "the establishment."** In this respect, **Land Art, Conceptual Art and Performance Art emerged as alternative propositions** aligned in spirit to social movements such as the equal rights movement and anti-war student rebellions that challenged the status quo. The institutional critique in Samson is brutal and subtle simultaneously: by forcing spectators to pass through the turnstile in order to satisfy their curiosity, Burden assigns them equal culpability in the potential destruction of the gallery space.” (Inhotim)
- Burden’s work cuts through the proliferation of images we see ever day of war and suffering by portraying the reality of pain. Can art be more than a refined aesthetic

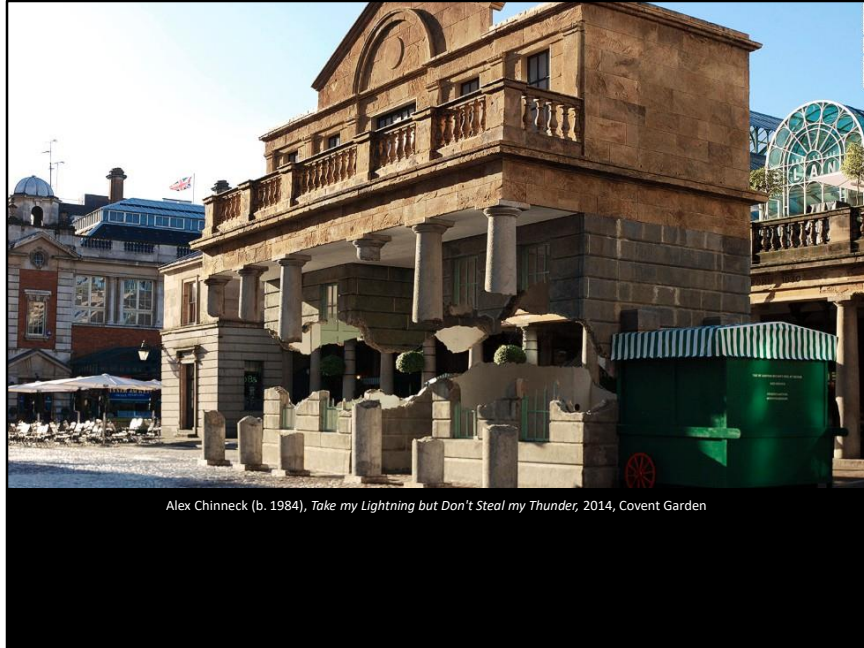
experience for the elite? How far can the artist go in **forcing viewers to think and respond to the suffering in the world?**

Notes

- Burden grew up in Cambridge, Massachusetts, France and Italy. His father was an engineer and his mother a biologist and he received his MFA in California. He began as a **performance artist** where the idea of **personal danger as artistic expression** was central. His most well-known act from that time is perhaps the 1971 performance piece *Shoot*, in which he was **shot in his left arm** by an assistant from a distance of about 16 feet (5 m) with a .22 rifle. One of Burden's most reproduced and cited pieces, *Trans-Fixed* took place on April 23, 1974 at Speedway Avenue in Venice, California. For this performance, Burden lay face up on a Volkswagen **Beetle and had nails hammered into both of his hands**, as if he were being crucified on the car. The car was pushed out of the garage and the engine revved for two minutes before being pushed back into the garage. By the end of the 1970s, Burden turned instead to vast engineered sculptural installations. *A Tale of Two Cities* (1981) was inspired by the artist's fascination with war toys, bullets, model buildings, antique soldiers, and a fantasy about the twenty-fifth century—a time when he imagines the world will have returned to a system of feudal states. The room-filling miniature reconstruction of two such city-states, poised for war, incorporates 5,000 war toys from the United States, Japan, and Europe.

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Alex Chinneck (b. 1984), *Take my Lightning but Don't Steal my Thunder*, 2014, Covent Garden

- Finally, returning to a British artist and a work created in the last few years.
- **Alex Chinneck** created ***Take my Lightning but Don't Steal my Thunder*** (2014), a building located in **Covent Garden**, which was designed to appear as if it floated in the air.
- The pieces are difficult to execute, **simple to enjoy** and, he insists, **free of any particular meaning or concept**. The priority is public enjoyment. "I don't understand at what point the experience needed this intellectual justification to be an important and valuable one," he says. "I'm often criticized for this lack of conceptual content. But what we lose in conceptual content we make up for in structural and **sculptural complexity**. For example, "The floating house **took eight months** to realize, and had over **100 people** involved from design to construction. It took three months to make and involved **500 hours of painting**. The stonework and other material looks genuine even close up and the work does not involve mirrors. The secret is that it is made from light polystyrene foam and there is a rigid steel frame supporting it. The steel frame is connected to the green counterweight on the right which has been painted to look like a vending stall.

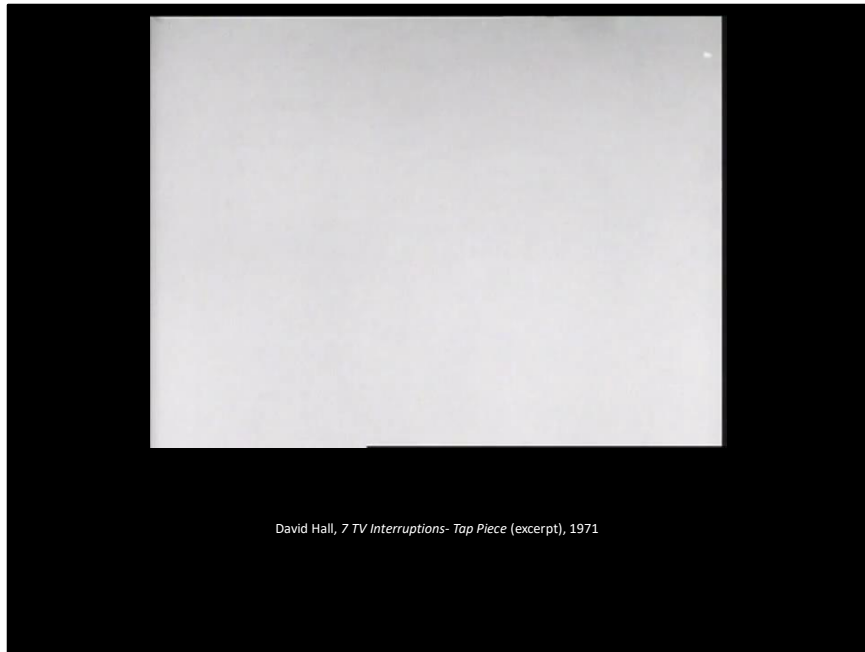
- One of his works in Margate looks as if the entire front of a house has slid into the front garden (*From the Knees of my Nose to the Belly of my Toes*, 2013). Another in Southwark is a house made of paraffin wax bricks that are slowly melted *A Pound of Flesh for 50p* (2014). *The Guardian* called Chinneck a "**master of architectural illusion**".

Notes

- Chinneck was educated at Bedford Modern School, where his father taught PE. He had ambitions to become a cricketer, having captained his school team at county level, before his interest in art at the age of 16. He studied painting at Chelsea College of Arts, graduating with a Bachelor of Arts, and became a member of the Royal British Society of Sculptors.



- Video art is an art form which relies on moving pictures in a visual and audio medium. Video art came into existence during the late 1960s and early 1970s as new consumer video technology became available outside corporate broadcasting. Video art can take many forms: recordings that are broadcast; installations viewed in galleries or museums; works streamed online, distributed as video tapes, or DVDs; and performances which may incorporate one or more television sets, video monitors, and projections, displaying 'live' or recorded images and sounds.
- How does video art differ from conventional cinema? Typically, it does not obey the same conventions, may not use actors, may not have dialogue and may have no plot.
- Nam June Paik, a Korean-American artist who studied in Germany, is widely regarded as a pioneer in video art. He experimented with distorting video in 1963 but video art is sometimes said to have begun when Paik used his new Sony Portapak to shoot footage of Pope Paul VI's procession through New York City in the autumn of 1965. Later that same day, across town in a Greenwich Village cafe, Paik played the tapes and video art was born.

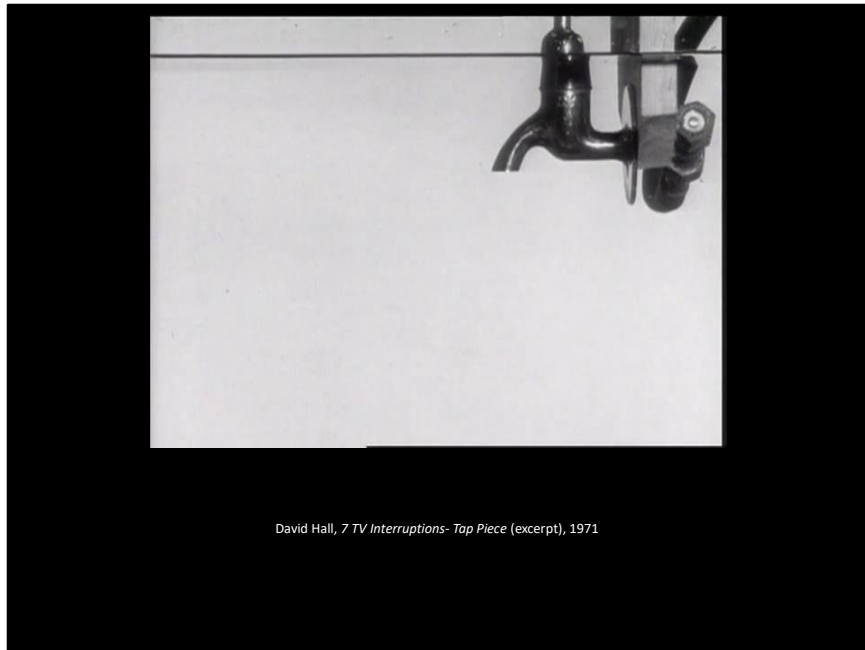


David Hall (1937-2014), *7 TV Interruptions- Tap Piece* (excerpt), 1971

- One of the earliest British artist to use video art and the first to broadcast on TV.
- David Hall studied at Leicester College of Art and the Royal College of Art. During the 1960s he worked as a sculptor and showed his work internationally. He won first prize at the Biennale de Paris in 1965. At the beginning of the 1970s he started to use video as an art medium.
- In 1971 he made ten "Interruptions" broadcast intentionally unannounced and uncredited on Scottish Television. Seven of these works were later distributed on video as *TV Interruptions (7 TV Pieces)*, and are acknowledged as the first artist interventions on British television and as an equally formative moment in British video art.

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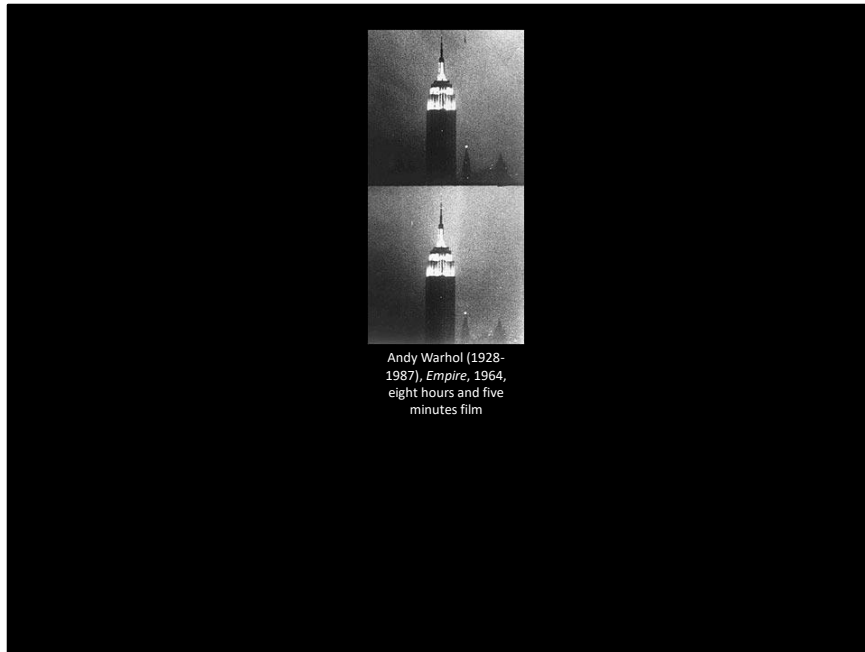
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Hall_\(video_artist\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Hall_(video_artist))



David Hall, *7 TV Interruptions- Tap Piece* (excerpt), 1971

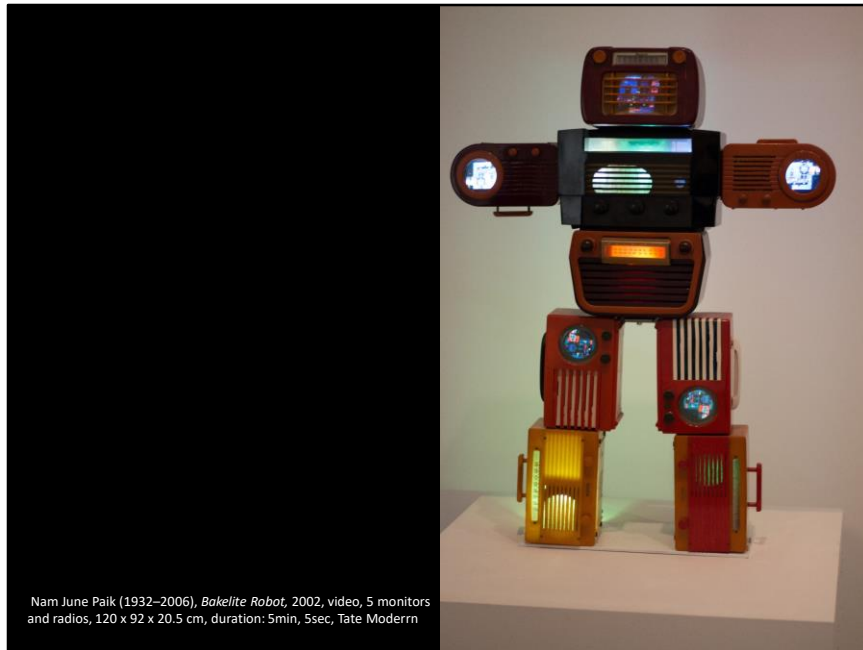
David Hall, *7 TV Interruptions- Tap Piece* (excerpt), 1971

The earliest artist to use video art and the first to broadcast on TV.



Andy Warhol (1928-1987), *Empire*, 1964, eight hours and five minutes film

- In 1964 Andy Warhol made a black and white silent film consisting of **eight hours and five minutes** of continuous slow motion footage of the Empire State Building in New York City. Abridged showings of the film were never allowed, and supposedly the unwatchability of the film was an important part of the reason the film was created.
- The film begins with a totally white screen and as the sun sets, the image of the Empire State Building emerges. The floodlights on its exterior come on, the building's lights flicker on and off for the next 6½ hours, then the floodlights go off again in the next to the last reel so that the remainder of the film takes place in nearly total darkness.
- The entire film was projected onto the wall of the national Theatre, London in 2005.
- Wikipedia lists 147 films made by Andy Warhol all made between 1963 and 1977. Fifty of the films have been preserved by the Museum of Modern Art.



Nam June Paik (1932–2006), *Bakelite Robot*, 2002, video, 5 monitors and radios, 120 x 92 x 20.5 cm, duration: 5min, 5sec, Tate Modern

- Nam June Paik (pronounced 'Nahm June PAKE') is a Korean artist with a major display at Tate Modern. Paik used television as an artistic medium from the early 1960s and developed a unique style of video art based on technological innovation and creative experimentation. Although art and technology were often seen as opposites, Paik paved a way to integrate them.

Notes

- Paik was a Korean American artist who is considered the founder of video art. He was born to a wealthy industrialist in South Korea and was brought up as a **classical pianist**. Paik and his family had to **flee Korea** during the Korean War. They first moved to **Hong Kong** and then **Japan** and he graduated from the University of Tokyo where he wrote a thesis on Arnold Schoenberg. He studied music in Germany and participated in the Neo-Dada art movement **Fluxus** which was **inspired by John Cage**. He worked with **Karlheinz Stockhausen** and **Joseph Beuys**. He came to prominence in 1963 with a video work that used magnets to distort the picture on multiple televisions. In 1964 he moved to New York and started to

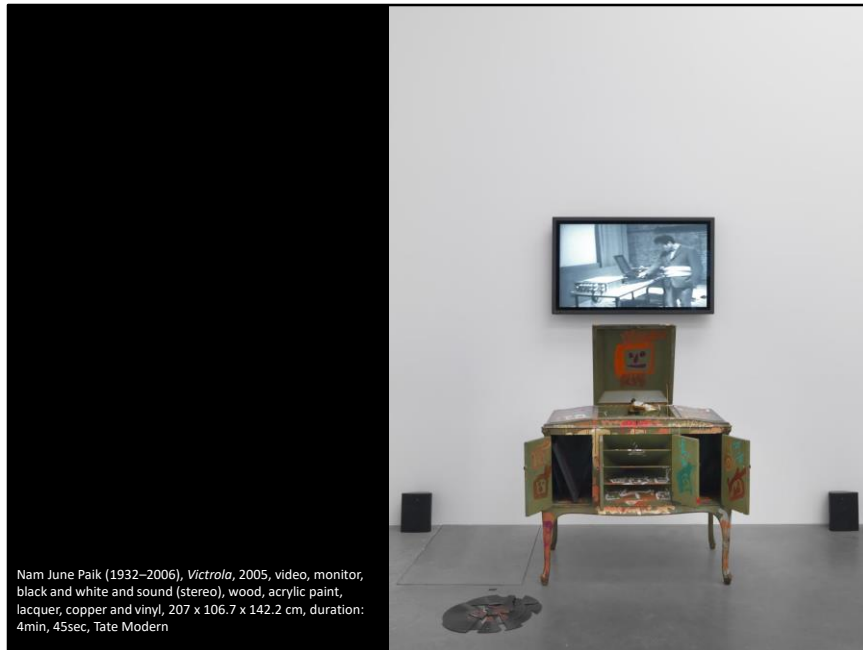
work with video, music and performance. In 1965, Sony released the first portable video and audio recorder that inspired Paik and led to his international fame.

- He is credited with first using the term 'electronic superhighway' which became the 'information superhighway'. From the 1970s he participated in numerous exhibitions around the world and his work is held by many galleries. Paik was a lifelong Buddhist who never smoked or drank alcoholic beverages, and never drove a car. In 1996, Paik had a stroke, which paralyzed his left side. He used a wheelchair the last decade of his life.

References

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nam_June_Paik

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/paik-bakelite-robot-t14340/text-summary>



Nam June Paik (1932–2006), *Victrola*, 2005, video, monitor, black and white and sound (stereo), wood, acrylic paint, lacquer, copper and vinyl, 207 x 106.7 x 142.2 cm, duration: 4min, 45sec, Tate Modern

- “*Victrola* is a sculptural installation consisting of a Victrola – a wooden cabinet with an integrated gramophone – placed beneath a large plasma screen that is fixed to the wall. A small pile of broken vinyl records by a range of musical artists lies on the floor in front of the cabinet. The Victrola is displayed with its cupboard doors open, revealing an interior painted with abstract and figurative shapes in bright red, orange, green and white paint. These painted shapes also appear on the exterior of the cabinet. The plasma monitor is wired to the mains via a series of electric cables, and screens archive footage of an early performance by Nam June Paik in which he breaks a vinyl record.
- First disseminated in 1906 by The Victor Talking Machine Company – the leading producer of photographs and vinyl records in early twentieth-century America – the Victrola was a domestic record player with its turntable and amplifying horn housed discreetly within a large exterior wooden casing. Following its introduction to the market, the machine quickly became the most popular brand of gramophone for the home and sold in vast numbers. However, although it

represented the height of technological innovation in the early 1900s, the Victrola soon fell out of favour as a result of the increasing popularity of newer forms of home entertainment, such as radio and television.” (Tate)

- This is an old phonograph or record player. It is called a Victrola, which is the name of the piece, and the device was first launched in 1906 to replace the old photographs with the gigantic horns. It was therefore, in its day, a state of the art device and a radical improvement in the technology. The Victrola continued to be sold until the 1920s and the name was used until the late 1960s.
- The old Victrola machine is beneath a modern plasma screen showing an early [1980s] performance of Nam June Paik breaking a vinyl record. A small pile of broken vinyl records by a variety of artists is spread on the floor. The doors of the cabinet are open revealing a few brightly coloured abstract patterns and figurative shapes painted inside. The patterns also appear on the outside.
- Paik has always wanted to humanise technology and the video of Paik breaking the old vinyl records shows the relationship between old technology and the new and the changing relationship between the technology and human need.
- The Victrola was introduced in 1906 and became very popular with a range of models available. This is one of the more expensive models yet the graffiti shows it has been neglected and the plasma screen shows how rapidly technology changes. The broken records signify the end of one form of technology which in a few years has become useless.
- This transition also mirrors Paik’s career. He was born in South Korea and was trained as a classical pianist. He graduated in Japan and moved to Germany where he orchestrated musical compositions between 1958 and 1963. During this period, he worked with many knowledgeable engineers and the latest electronic equipment and this inspired him to ‘start a new life’. He put his library into storage and only read and practised electronics. His work started to make use of televisions and other electronic equipment.

Notes

- Victrola, The Victor Talking Machine Company trademark for a brand of wind-up phonograph introduced in September 1906. It was the first to hide the horn inside a cabinet. This was done to improve the appearance and make it look like furniture rather than electrical equipment. These internal homes machines were trademarked Victrola and were an instant hit. They sold well until the end of the 1920s and the tradename was used until the late 1960s.

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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victor_Talking_Machine_Company#Victrola
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Mark Wallinger, *Angel*, or *In the Beginning*, Tate

Goldsmith's lecturer who trained the YBA.

- "*Angel* is a seven and a half minute video. The video is played continuously on a loop and can be displayed on a monitor or projected so that the image fills the gallery wall. *Angel* should be seen in a room on its own, but it also forms the first part of *Talking in Tongues* Wallinger's trilogy that includes *Hymn* 1997 and *Prometheus* 1999. Each video explores the theme of religion and features Wallinger playing Blind Faith, his sightless alter ego. He is seen in a different situation in each one, singing or reciting a text drawn from classical or popular literature.
- In *Angel* Wallinger wears dark glasses and taps the ground with a blind person's white stick. He is seen walking on the spot at the foot of a moving escalator in the Angel underground station, London. In this awkward position he delivers a monologue, repeatedly reciting the first five verses of *St. John's Gospel* from the King James version (1611) of the Bible:
 - *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by*

him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.'

- The words are oddly indistinct and Wallinger's voice has a garbled quality that could be said to evoke the speech of the deaf. This is because the artist **recorded himself saying the words backwards** while attempting to maintain the original speech patterns and emphases of the correctly spoken piece. The **tape was then inverted** during editing so the words would make sense when played. As a result, the rest of **the film is seen in reverse**, the end of the film being the beginning and the people on the escalators appearing to walk up and down backwards. *Angel* finishes as Wallinger stops walking and talking and, in a mock ascension, he rises slowly up the escalator, carried away to the triumphal sounds of *Zadok the Priest* (1727), Handel's (1685-1759) anthem for George II's coronation (1727) in Westminster Abbey.
- *Angel* was shot in one long continuous take and was not cut during editing. The work's name comes from the Angel underground station where it was filmed. In his earlier work Wallinger was frequently the protagonist. For instance, in *Self Portrait as Emily Davison* 1993 (Anthony Reynolds Gallery) Wallinger photographed himself in drag, impersonating a female jockey. In *Angel* he plays his alter ego, Blind Faith. In both works Wallinger is performing, playing a character other than himself. In an interview with the curator Theodora Vischer he described himself as a 'cipher .an actor, a puppet, a hollow man' who 'pretends different roles' and never speaks 'anything that has not already been written.' (Quoted in Vischer, p.26.) Yet despite the performative approach, *Angel* and the other videos in the *Talking in Tongues* trilogy differ from Wallinger's works of the early 1990s. In the Emily Davison photograph Wallinger explored issues of gender, national identity and sport, whereas *Angel* reflects his growing preoccupation with religious belief. This interest is most obvious in his choice of texts for the *Talking in Tongues* trilogy. He has noted that they relate to religious themes and 'suggest the possibility of transformation or redemption.' (Quoted in Vischer, p.26.) Wallinger also sees the works as evoking the longing of 'anyone who ever desired faith, innocence and eternal life.' (Quoted in Vischer, p.26.)
- In *Angel* Wallinger presents the spectator with a series of paradoxes: time and speech appear to run forwards while in fact playing backwards, going up is going down and moving is staying still. As a result viewers are unable to believe their eyes and the supposed truth of the documentary medium appears to be undermined. Appearances are inverted and Wallinger's contradictions reflect those which he perceives as inherent in Christianity, where God is man or bread is seen as flesh. The work's visual ambiguity is also echoed by the paradoxical nature of *St. John's Gospel* recited by Wallinger and the spectator is asked to consider religious belief in a realm beyond the visible. *Angel* thus relates to much of the work

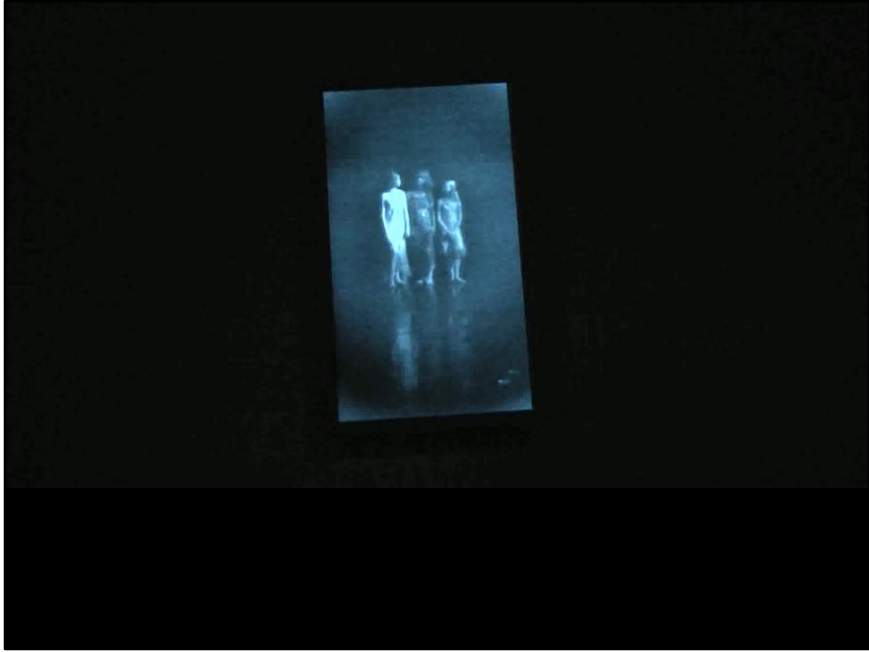
Wallerstein was producing at the time. In *Seeing is Believing* 1997 (Anthony Reynolds Gallery) he created a false optician's eye test. Between a red and a green light box, Wallerstein printed not the normal selection of random letters but the first sentence of *St. John's Gospel* in letters of decreasing size. The work contrasts religious belief with the quest for empirical certitude symbolised by the optician's eye chart. It suggests that, as in *Angel*, seeing is not necessarily to be equated with believing.” (Tate)



Bill Viola, *l'exposition* (français / english), YouTube

Used in introduction

- Video Art, Computer Art and other media. Video art may not employ the use of actors, may contain no dialogue, may have no discernible narrative or plot, or adhere to any of the other conventions that generally define motion pictures as entertainment. It now includes augmented reality (AR).



Bill Viola, *Three Women*, 2008, performed by Anika Ballent, Cornelia Ballent and Helena Ballent

- We slowly become aware of three women walking towards us. They each walk through a curtain of water, perhaps signifying birth or a transition from a spiritual to an earthly world, and when all three are through to the physical world they slowly turn and return. The youngest hesitates before returning signifying hope or interest but she then returns to her family.
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PERFORMANCE ART





Frank Skinner talking about Performance Art, Tate

Used in introduction

“At the heart of performance art is a strong social critique. It asks important questions about how we perceive the world around us and our place within it.”

Frank Skinner

An important influence on the emergence of performance were the photographs taken by the photographer Hans Namuth in 1950 of the abstract expressionist painter Jackson Pollock making his so-called action paintings.

The German artist **Joseph Beuys** was a hugely influential pioneer of performance art, making a wide impact with his ‘actions’ from 1963 on. These were powerful expressions of the pain of human existence, and explored complex social and political issues through a focus on man’s relationship to nature. In Britain the artist duo **Gilbert & George** made highly original performance works from 1969.

A major problem for early performance artists was the ephemeral nature of the medium. Right from the start performance pieces were recorded in photography, film and video, and these eventually became the primary means by which performance reached a wide public.



King Mob's flyer for the Big 'Roar'

Photo of the event near Newcastle University, 27 June 1967, Tate Archive

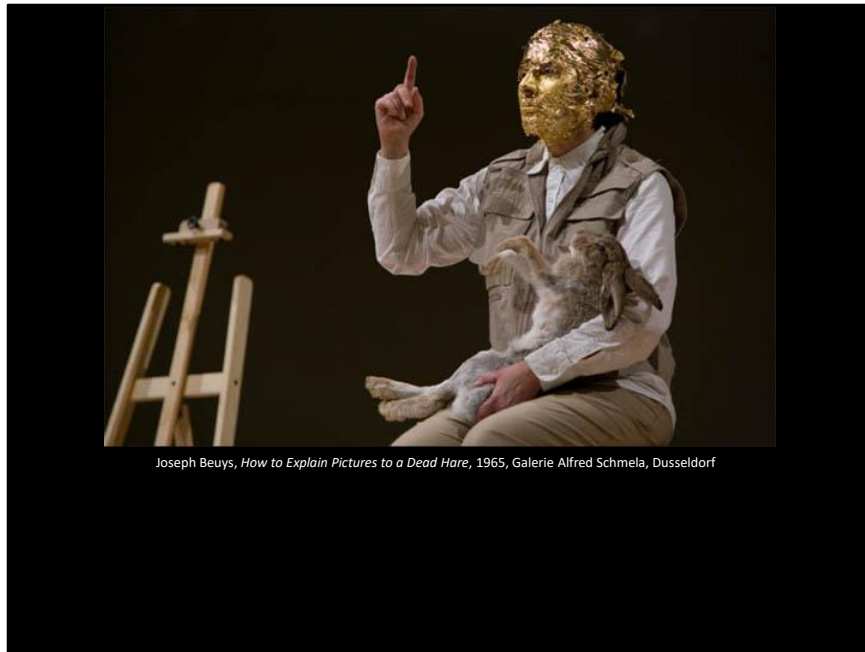
- **Happenings**
- A happening is a performance, event, or situation meant to be considered art, usually as performance art.
- Researching archive documents puts a demand on the items to speak to us, to make them communicate. This little flyer, in among a collection of loud agitprop and anti-art manifestos, suddenly put the demand on me. Not just to speak, but to roar. On the one hand it is promotional ephemera, on the other it's a disquieting call to arms. This small piece of paper seeks to provoke something much larger than itself. Setting a time and a place, it challenges the addressee to take part in a demonstration of radical statement. Now, as an archive document, it challenges the researcher to imagine that moment. Did 3,000 people assemble in the street and roar?
- The event is framed as a kind of happening rather than specific protest that takes on a line of politics. In other words, the intention of the Big 'Roar' seems to be weirdly to radicalise public space, using confrontational but absurd tactics. As inspired by Tristan Tzara (1896-1963), one of the founders of the Dada movement,

the roar itself is meaningless, non-signifying sound. We might see the voices behind it as likewise anonymous, the lumpenproletariat that the authors of the flyer spoke as and for.

- King Mob, as the anti-art activist group was called, was the English section of the Situationist International formed in the late 1960s, having taken its name from Newgate Prison wall graffiti at the 18th-century Gordon riots. The oxymoronic name incidentally, combining sovereign and furious crowd, again evokes the regicidal roar proposed in this item.
- Kaprow was a student of John Cage, who had experimented with "musical happenings" at Black Mountain College as early as 1952. The term 'Happening' has been used to describe many performances and events, organized by Allan Kaprow and others during the 1950s and 1960s.
- Modern Happenings
 - Flash mob, a group of people who assemble suddenly in a public place, perform an unusual and seemingly pointless act for a brief time, then quickly disperse, often for the purposes of entertainment, satire, and artistic expression. Coined in 2003
 - Performance Art may be either scripted or unscripted, random or carefully orchestrated; spontaneous or otherwise carefully planned with or without audience participation. The performance can be live or via media; the performer can be present or absent. It can be any situation that involves four basic elements: time, space, the performer's body, or presence in a medium, and a relationship between performer and audience.
 - Zombie Walk is an organized public gathering of people who dress up in zombie costumes.
 - Pillow Fight Days, a flash mob meeting organised over the Internet and involving pillow fights.
 - Silent Disco is an event where people dance to music listened to on wireless headphones. Those without the headphones hear no music, giving the effect of a room full of people dancing to nothing. Started before 2005.
- Hunt & Dorton Café is a café that is a live art installation that serves roast dinner sandwiches
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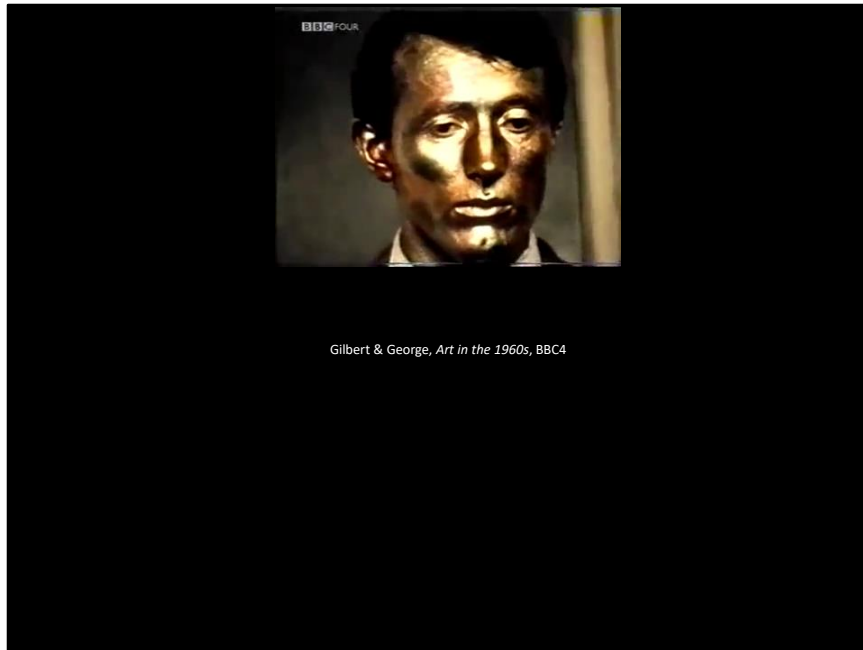


Joseph Beuys, *How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare*, 1965, Galerie Alfred Schmela, Dusseldorf

- Beuys's first solo exhibition in a private gallery opened on 26 November 1965 with one of the artist's most famous and compelling performances: *How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare*.
- His face was covered in honey and gold leaf, an iron slab was attached to his boot. In his arms he cradled a dead hare, into whose ear he mumbled muffled noises as well as explanations of the drawings that lined the walls. Such materials and actions had specific symbolic value for Beuys. For example, honey is the product of bees, and for Beuys (following Rudolf Steiner), bees represented an ideal society of warmth and brotherhood. Gold had its importance within alchemical enquiry, and iron, the metal of Mars, stood for a masculine principle of strength and connection to the earth. A photograph from the performance, in which Beuys is sitting with the hare, has been described "by some critics as a new Mona Lisa of the 20th century," though Beuys disagreed with the description.
- Beuys explained his performance thus: "In putting honey on my head I am clearly doing something that has to do with thinking. Human ability is not to produce honey, but to think, to produce ideas. In this way the deathlike character of

thinking becomes lifelike again. For honey is undoubtedly a living substance. Human thinking can be lively too. But it can also be intellectualized to a deadly degree, and remain dead, and express its deadliness in, say, the political or pedagogic fields. “Gold and honey indicate a transformation of the head, and therefore, naturally and logically, the brain and our understanding of thought, consciousness and all the other levels necessary to explain pictures to a hare: the warm stool insulated with felt...and the iron sole with the magnet. I had to walk on this sole when I carried the hare round from picture to picture, so along with the strange limp came the clank of iron on the hard stone floor—that was all that broke the silence, since my explanations were mute... “This seems to have been the action that most captured people’s imaginations. On one level this must be because everyone consciously or unconsciously recognizes the problem of explaining things, particularly where art and creative work are concerned, or anything that involves a certain mystery or question. The idea of explaining to an animal conveys a sense of the secrecy of the world and of existence that appeals to the imagination. **Then, as I said, even a dead animal preserves more powers of intuition than some human beings with their stubborn rationality.** “The problem lies in the word ‘understanding’ and its many levels which cannot be restricted to rational analysis. Imagination, inspiration, and longing all lead people to sense that these other levels also play a part in understanding. This must be the root of reactions to this action, and is why my technique has been to try and seek out the energy points in the human power field, rather than demanding specific knowledge or reactions on the part of the public. I try to bring to light the complexity of creative areas.”

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- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/How_to_Explore_Pictures_to_a_Dead_Hare)



Gilbert & George, *Art in the 1960s*, BBC4

- “**Gilbert & George place themselves**, their thoughts and their feelings **at the centre of their art**, and almost all of the images they use are gathered within **walking distance of their home** in London’s East End. Yet their pictures capture a broad human experience, encompassing an astonishing range of emotions and themes, from rural idylls to gritty images of a decaying London; from fantastical brightly-coloured panoramas to raw examinations of humanity stripped bare; from sex advertisements to religious fundamentalism.
- From the beginning, they have been **anti-elitist** and have wanted to communicate beyond the narrow confines of the art world, adopting the slogan ‘**Art for All**’. As a result they have joined the very small handful of artists to become household names, and their impeccably-dressed figures are instantly recognisable to the general public. Bringing together a selection of pictures that spans their entire 40-year career, it is fitting that *Gilbert & George: Major Exhibition* is the largest retrospective of any artist to be held at Tate Modern. They refer to all their work as **sculpture**.
- **George was born in Devon** in 1942. **Gilbert was born in Italy** in 1943, in a small

village in the Dolomites. They met as students on the sculpture course at **St Martins School** of Art, London, where they exhibited together and soon began to create art together. They adopted the identity of '**living sculptures**' in both their art and their daily lives, becoming not only creators, but also the art itself.

- They established their reputation in 1969 with ***THE SINGING SCULPTURE***. Standing together on a table, they danced and sang the **Flanagan and Allen standard *Underneath the Arches*** – a song in which two tramps describe the pleasures of sleeping rough. It was a telling choice, harking back to pre-war England and traditions of vaudeville, while also identifying with the fringes of society. Gilbert & George were invited to present ***THE SINGING SCULPTURE* all over the world**, sometimes for eight hours at a stretch. Realising, however, that they could reach only a handful of people at a time, they began to create films and pictures that could extend the idea of living sculpture without requiring their physical presence.” (Tate retrospective, *Gilbert & George*, 2007)



Gilbert and George, *Existers, The Pictures*, 1984, Tate

- The pair are perhaps best known for their **large-scale photo works**, known as *The Pictures*. The early work in this style is in black and white, later with hand-painted red and yellow touches. They proceeded to use a range of bolder colours, sometimes backlit, and overlaid with black grids. Their work has addressed a wide variety of subject matter including **religion and patriotism**. The two artists also often appear in their own "pictures". They have described their "pictures" as a sort of "**visual love letter from us to the viewer**".
- Gilbert & George **claim to be an oddity** in the artistic world because of their **openly conservative political views** and their **praise for Margaret Thatcher**. George claims never to have been anti-establishment: "**you're not allowed to be Conservative in the art world, of course**", he says. "Left equals good. Art equals Left. Pop stars and artists are meant to be so original. So how come everyone has the same opinion? ... We admire Margaret Thatcher greatly. She did a lot for art. Socialism wants everyone to be equal. We want to be different." The duo are monarchists and have said of the Prince of Wales: "We're also fond of the Prince of Wales: he's a gentleman."



Gilbert and George, *Jack Freak Pictures*, 2007

- *Jack Freak Pictures* is, to date, the largest series of work created by Gilbert & George. According to Michael Bracewell "the *Jack Freak Pictures* are among the most iconic, philosophically astute and visually violent works that Gilbert & George have ever created." The Union Jack and Gilbert & George are the two dominant pictorial images – appearing contorted, abstracted, and sometimes complete. The entire series is set in the East End of London indicated by flags, maps, street signs, graffiti and other less obvious motifs such as brickwork and foliage that can be found there.
- In 2007, they were honoured with a retrospective at Tate Modern, the largest of any artist to be held at the gallery. Both now in their mid-sixties, for four decades they have lived in the same house off Brick Lane in the East End of London. We have been working every day and night for nearly two years. Our retrospective at Tate Modern contained 200 pictures. Now, we have 153 new pictures we call the Jack Freak Pictures. We spent nearly half a million pounds just getting them framed.

From *The Telegraph*, Alistair Sooke:

Gilbert: The picture was based on two medals that we had found.

AS: Antique medals feature in many of the new pictures. Why?

George: We like medals because they are never looked at or considered. Every one represents a long dead person, or an achievement.

Gilbert: They commemorate running, music, sport, even pantomime.

...

AS: So part of the title of the series refers to the Union Jack, of course. But why "Freak"?

Gilbert: Well, yesterday we took a bus – and every human being we saw had an element of freakishness. Now we always see freaks, and nothing else.

George: Generally speaking, "freak" just means "unusual" – on the news, they always refer to a "freak storm" or a "freak wave". It means extreme.

...

AS: Many of the new pictures feature images of Jesus.

George: He's having a comeback. Never have the Christians been so cross with seculars. They feel unrepresented. That's why we have done a new print: Ban Religion.

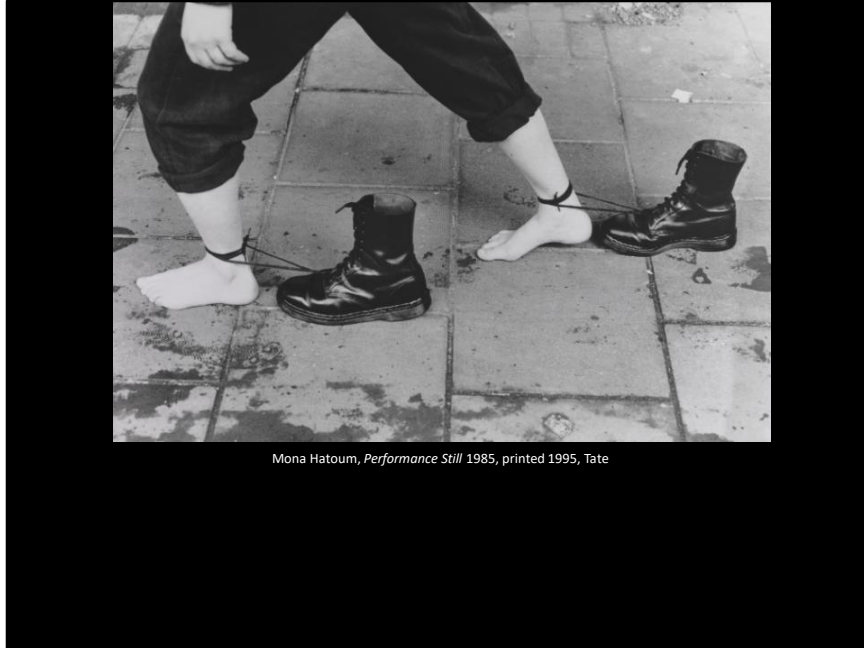
AS: Do you think that religion should be banned?

George: When we walk in the evenings, we see posters outside churches saying, "Whosoever Believeth in Me Shall Live Forever". If they can say things like that, we can say, "ban religion". For a thousand years, the vicars told the artists what to paint. So we can have a say for a change. If the church came under the same legal umbrella as us, it would be fine. But they have exemptions, don't they? We went to a funeral of a friend of ours, and the vicar said, "Andrew is not dead – he liveth." Well, a doctor isn't allowed to say that about a corpse, is he?

...

AS: If there is a sincere message to the Jack Freak Pictures, then might it be about tolerance?

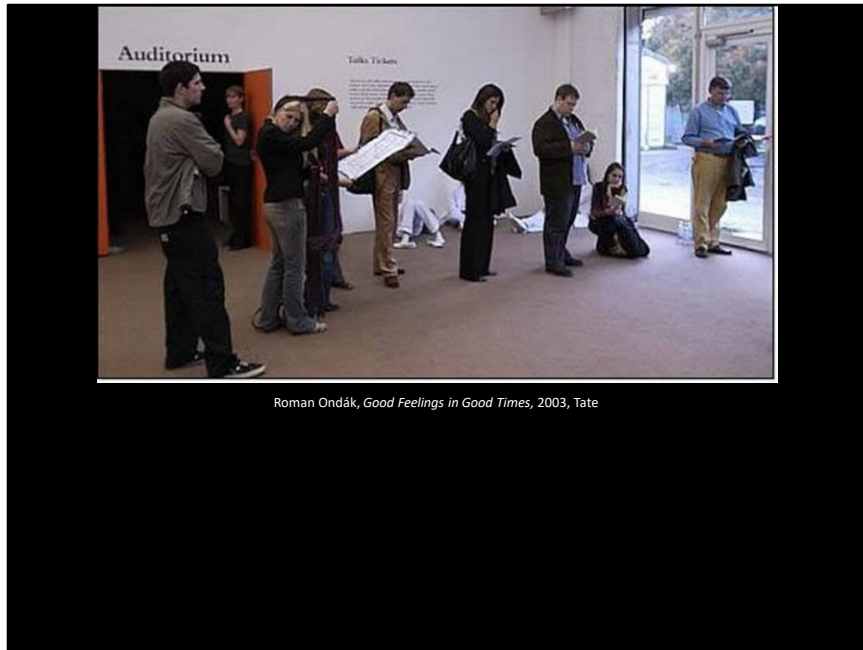
George: That's the whole idea, yes.



Mona Hatoum, *Performance Still* 1985, printed 1995, Tate

- Mona Hatoum first became known in the early 1980s for a series of performance and video pieces which used her own body as a site for exploring the fragility and strength of the human condition under duress. *Performance Still* 1985 records one of three street performances which Hatoum carried out in Brixton for the *Roadworks* exhibition organised in 1985 by the Brixton Artists Collective. The performance consisted of the artist walking barefoot through the streets of Brixton for nearly an hour, with Doc Marten boots, usually worn by both police and skinheads, attached to her ankles by their laces. *Performance Still*, printed and published ten years later turns the original documentary photograph of the performance into a work in its own right, and has therefore come to identify this aspect of Hatoum's practice.
- Mona Hatoum (b. 1952), is a Lebanese-born Palestinian video artist and installation artist who lives in London, United Kingdom. Hatoum studied graphic design at Beirut University College in Lebanon for two years and then began working at an advertising agency. Hatoum was displeased with the work she produced while working in advertising. During a visit to London in 1975, civil war

broke out in Lebanon and Hatoum was forced into exile. She stayed in London, training at both the Byam Shaw School of Art and the Slade School of Fine Art (University College, London) between the years 1975 and 1981



Roman Ondák, *Good Feelings in Good Times*, 2003, Tate

Roman Ondák, *Good Feelings in Good Times*, 2003, Tate

- This is an **artificial queue intended as a performance** inside the museum. The queue consists of 7 to 12 volunteers or actors who always queue at an exhibition and queue at a location where a queue makes sense. If questioned the members of the queue are not allowed to divulge anything and are asked to improvise. Each queue performance lasts about 40 minutes and may take place several times a day. It was inspired by Ondák's own memories of the **long lines formed outside grocery shops** in his native **Slovakia in the communist era**.
- Roman Ondák (pronounced RO-man on-DACK) said, "I became interested in the phenomenon of the queue because it is very unstable, but on the other hand it shows a very strong sense of participation ... even if you are not queuing, you are participating as you are facing your **memories of queues** in the past. There is **no description of the queue** – it is **about feelings**, about desire and your decision to be in it, and I like this ambiguity of the queue in our society. Also, on your own you think about your time – what I call 'real time' – which has its own value; but when you go in the queue, you slow down and the **time is different**." (Ondák in conversation with the author, 16 October 2004.)

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WHAT IS PERFORMANCE ART?

Marina Abramović: *What is Performance Art?*

- Some works
 - *Rhythm 10*, 1973, using 20 knives and two tape recorders she jab a knife between her outspread fingers very quickly until a finger was stabbed. She then picked up another knife and continued. At the end she replayed the tape and tried to recreate the original sequence. She was exploring the physical and mental limits of pain.
 - *Rhythm 5*, 1974, she lit a petrol soaked star on stage and cut her nails and air and threw the pieces in the flame. She then jumped into the centre of the star but the lack of oxygen **caused her to lose consciousness**. It took a while for the audience to realize but she was rescued. She later said, 'I was very angry because I understood there is a physical limit: when you lose consciousness you can't be present; you can't perform.'
 - *Rhythm 2*, 1974, because of the loss of consciousness she took a drug that is given to catatonic patients and it causes their muscles to contract violently. She then took another medicine given to Schizophrenic patients to calm them down. The performance ended when the drugs wore off six hours later.

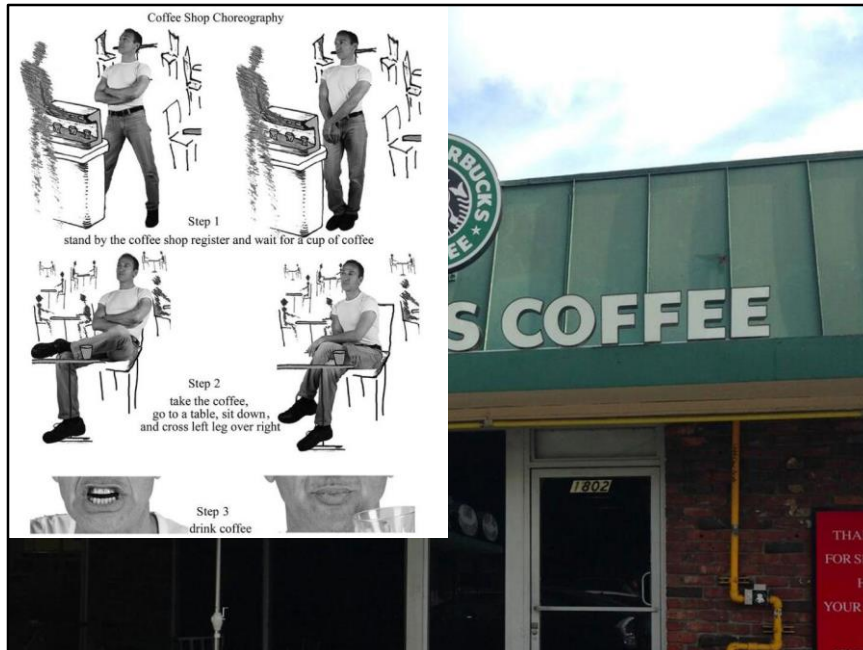
- *Rhythm 0*, 1974, she placed 72 **objects on a table** and members of the audience could chose an object to use on her, they included a rose, a feather, honey, a whip, olive oil, scissors, a scalpel, a gun and a single bullet. For six hours the audience manipulated her until someone tried to shoot her. She felt violated and abused. As she said, '**If you leave it up to the audience, they can kill you.**'
- *Cleaning the Mirror*, 1995, involved scrubbing a skeleton while being video recorded. It is based on Tibetan death rites.
- *Works with Ulay* (Uwe Laysiepen, a man), the two dressed and behaved like twins to explore identity and ego. It included both standing in a doorway naked and the public had to squeeze between them and in doing so choose which one to face.
- *Seven Easy Pieces*, 2005, she recreated performance art first performed by other artists, including masturbating under the floor and lying on a bed frame above a grid of lit candles.
- ***The Artist is Present***, March-May 2010. She sat opposite visitors who could stay as long as they wanted but there was pressure on the visitors as they longer they spent the shorter the time available to other visitors.



- Mark McGowan (b. 1964) is a British performance artist, protester and London taxi driver. He is also an occasional university speaker and arts lecturer. He is an anti-establishment, anti-war, anti-capitalist, anti-monarchist and anti-power protester. He has conducted hundreds of performances in the UK and around the world from the early 2000s. Originally he was known as 'Chunky Mark' and from about 2010 as 'Artist Taxi Driver'. He films himself in his taxi where he rants passionately and emotionally about the news and issues of the day. He has 30,000 subscribers and his most popular video has been viewed 220,000 times.
- In April 2013 McGowan launched a new piece of performance art protest entitled *Where's Daddy's Pig* in which he would give a letter written by him and his two children to David Cameron. On 24 April 2013 he pushed a "daddy Cameron pig" oinking pig toy on wheels along the pavement with his nose from Kings College Hospital (where his cancer had been diagnosed) to 10 Downing Street and the Bank of England. He launched a "2nd leg" of the *Where's Daddy's Pig?* protests, in which he would take his protest to the city bankers. McGowan announced that he would push his pig toy with his nose on his hands and knees from 10 Downing Street to the Bank of England against greed and the "controlled demolition" of the economy, with a letter addressed to Governor. McGowan did this on 22 May, starting at 8am at 10 Downing Street with a crowd of supporters

- He was born in Clapham and grew up in Peckham on the North Peckham Estate where he still lives. He claims to have been involved with football hooliganism and to have known many London gangsters but he has now rejected both. He supported himself through higher education through numerous jobs. In 2003, at age 33, McGowan earned a B.A. degree in Fine Art from Camberwell College of Arts, where he still occasionally lectures as a second year elective performance art tutor. McGowan also occasionally lectures to MA students at Chelsea College of Art where he is an associate, and he also occasionally speaks at Goldsmiths University of London, a public research university. McGowan has a second degree in the History of Art from the latter institution. In the past McGowan has worked with the Scottish Arts Council, the University of Central England in Birmingham, and spoken on the issues of public art and how it can relate to protest at the Royal Academy of Arts.
- He said, "I feel that the 2D image of a painting is limited, whereas today performance art can widely communicate its message to the public. My art is all about the narrative."
- He has engaged in hundreds of protests such as:
 - Standing in a dunce hat for eight hours in protest against the stifling of originality and creativity in the modern art world.
 - Standing dressed as a snake to protest against political corruption in Glasgow City Council.
 - Pretending to be a beggar to test people's reactions.
 - Rolling four and a half miles wearing yellow Marigold gloves to "get people to be kind and polite to cleaners for Christmas."
 - McGowan stayed buried up to the neck in sand on Margate beach for 30 hours to encourage people to take holidays in Britain.
 - Sitting in a bath of cold baked beans for a fortnight to celebrate the great English breakfast after a foreign friend criticised our national fare.
 - McGowan smeared himself with peanut butter and rode a tricycle around Parliament Square for a whole day. The message was to highlight hunger issues in the third world.
- He has also threatened or cancelled many protests such as:
 - Sailing 400 miles in a shopping cart to protest against the hanging of William Wallace in the 14th century.
 - He threatened to drown kittens as a protest against the Tate selling key fobs with bits of felt as part of its Joseph Bueys promotion.
 - He planned to leave the engine of his Audi running for a year in protest for cleaner air.
 - He was stopped by the police from setting fire to himself in Parliament Square in protest against the Iraq War.
- There have been many controversial events and legal challenges.

- McGowan dressed as a police officer and invited members of the public to beat him in Clapham Art Gallery. He was chased from the gallery by a frenzied mob with sticks.
- He admitted to 'keying' 47 cars but the controversy got out of control and he said it had all been a hoax.
- He left a tap running in a gallery to protest against water waste. It increased traffic to the gallery and raised awareness and was switched off by protesters.
- He was convicted of a crime after reading out the names of soldiers who died in Iraq at the Cenotaph War Memorial as it is within half a mile of Parliament and so needs police consent.
- His *Dead Soldier 2006* involved lying down in New Street, Birmingham, for a week to impersonate a dead soldier. He was moved on after a day and is was described as a 'disgrace' in the press. He said, "It's a protest act, to ask for peace throughout the world for Christmas; I just want the world to stop fighting."
- *Artist Eats Swan 2007* was a protest against royalty when he ate a cooked swan he claimed he found dead after reading that the Queen is the only person allowed to eat a swan. It was hard for McGowan as he is a vegetarian.
- *Eating The Queen's Dogs* involved eating a corgi that had died of natural causes at a dog breeding farm in protest against the failure of the RSPCA to prosecute Prince Philip for 'stamping and beating a fox' with a 'flagpole'.
- He has performed in the USA, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Spain, Portugal and Croatia.
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Dumb Starbucks's Coffee

Coffee shop choreography, from Jack Migdalek, *The Embodied Performance of Gender* (2014)

- Comedian Nathan Fielder first announced he was the one responsible for the sudden appearance of a store named Dumb Starbucks in a Los Feliz mini-mall.
- Under US law the word 'dumb' means the coffee shop is a parody and therefore is allowed to use Starbucks's trademarks under the law of 'fair use'. The coffee shop said, "By adding the word 'dumb' we are technically 'making fun' of Starbucks, which allows us to use their trademarks under a law known as 'fair use'." Dumb Starbucks none the less said the café needed to be "categorized as a work of parody art" for legal reasons only, and that they actually "look up to [Starbucks] as role models". The staff were hired to sell coffee and know nothing of the parody. It is therefore a fully functioning coffee shop.
- Is the coffee shop a work of art? If you are told it is does that change the way you interact with it? As a work of art should the staff and the buyers be 'performing' aesthetically or perfectly in some way. Should all their actions be considered and idealised? What does that mean. Joseph Beuys said 'we are all artists'. The way we choose to conduct our lives, the decisions we make carve out a work of art

through space-time. Should all coffee shops be considered works of art or do some fall below the standard you might have for a work of art? Consider this example of coffee shop choreography which shows how we conform to certain body 'models' and forms of behaviour. This compares the masculine and feminine styles of buying coffee but are their styles for a builder compared to an academic or a teenager compared to a retired person. When we chose how to perform we create a living work of art, we are all performance artists.

Notes

- The "Dumb Starbucks" episode itself shares similarities with a Banksy: 2010's *Exit Through the Gift Shop*, a documentary directed by Banksy that is possibly a mockumentary about the art world, depending on who you ask. In *Gift Shop*, Banksy either orchestrates or enables an artist (or "artist") named Mr. Brainwash (née Thierry Guetta) to demonstrate the idiocy of the art market. Mr. Brainwash makes terrible street art that rips off Banksy, but without any of Banksy's skill or wit. Using the publicity techniques Banksy used for his own show "Barely Legal," Mr. Brainwash stages an art show that is also blatantly a spectacle, focusing more on promotion than anything else. Guetta allegedly sells more than a million dollars worth of work. Mr. Brainwash, to his credit, still exists. At the time of the film's release, Banksy's spokesman said, "I think the joke is on ... I don't know who the joke is on, really. I don't even know if there is a joke."

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