

# An Encyclopaedia of Performance Art

WAGNER-FEIGL-FORSCHUNG/RESEARCH

The ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF PERFORMANCE ART is not another History of Performance Art. Its empirical and utterly materialist approach aims towards a complete and systematic overview of the materials and practices of performance art, as well as action and its special qualities within performance art.

The analytical approach on a 'molecular' level – emphasizing each singular material/action being used – is developed into a systematic catalogue that shows the singular element in its relationships with every other element in the catalogue. Besides the complete list and mere overview on material and action, THE ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF PERFORMANCE ART aims towards a three-dimensional map that offers a deeper understanding of the ever-increasing complexity of a singular material and/or action within the field of performance arts. The fact that potentially every material, tool, 'thing' one could imagine, and the different ways of behaviour and uses of it, will (at least possibly) appear in the Encyclopaedia shows the wide horizon of the project: it will be no more or less than a catalogue of the world, its use and possibilities.

(Manifesto by Wagner-Feigl-Forschung/Research © 2001)

## THE MATERIALS AND PRACTICES OF PERFORMANCE ART

Somebody is standing in an empty space, holding a tomato in their right hand. The person starts squeezing the tomato. Tomato juice drips through their fingers onto the floor. Finally the performer drops the leftovers of the squashed tomato onto the floor. What kind of tomato was it that was squeezed and turned into tomato juice and pulped tomato? Let's say it was a plum tomato. A plum tomato is different from a vine tomato but is still a tomato. Tomatoes belong to the family of nightshades (*solanaceae*), which includes both poisonous plants and edible plants or vegetables such as eggplants, peppers

and potatoes. Tomatoes are vegetables among other families of vegetables, such as leaf vegetables (*brassica*). Vegetables can be considered as a single group summarized under the heading of solid vegetable products including cereals, fruits and nuts, which differ for example from fluid vegetable products like juices and oils, or milled vegetable products like flours or spices. All these vegetable products are differentiated from, for example, animal products. But all together they are again part of a possible grouping under the category 'food', which is grouped together with, for example, living organisms, a sub-section of organic natural materials. This again can be grouped

together with non-organic materials such as stone, water, air, which are part of a larger section of natural materials. The line leads up to the category 'materials' - materials of performance art.

The example of the tomato, chosen from an immense range of possible materials of performance art, shows that a singular material can be seen as a product of a very complex process of possible differentiation. But even with the suggested systematic description of our example, we are still far from an in-depth understanding of the tomato in performance art. For sure it was not the first and only tomato to be used in performance art. Imagine a complete list of tomatoes being used in performances. One of the results of the described performance is the tomato juice, which is produced when the tomato is squeezed. Imagine a complete collection of tomato juices being used in performances - hand-made ones in the process of a performance as described above or industrially produced juices out of a can or a cardboard box, spiced, salted, natural and all the different brands. Imagine tomato products in performances, like cans of chopped tomatoes or tomatoes in chunks, ketchup, Bolognese sauce, tuna fish in tomato sauce and pizzas. Imagine tomato-shaped egg timers and hexagonal glass receptacles with tomato-shaped plastic twist-off-lids being used in performances. Going still another step further, imagine a complete list of 'tomato and . . .' in performance art: tomato and hammer, . . . and hamster, . . . and keys, . . . and knives. So far we are still on the level of the tomato and tomato-related material. Let's make a shift: what about the different possible uses of tomatoes in performance? In order to produce a still broader understanding of tomato and tomato-related materials in performance art, we should take a closer look at the possible ways of using tomatoes and tomato-related materials.

The performer in the described performance squeezed the tomato. But tomatoes in performances have been thrown, stepped on, cut into pieces, cooked, drunk as part of a Bloody

Mary or been eaten as part of a hamburger with tomato ketchup, used to set time frames as tomato-shaped egg-timers or contained needles as hexagonal glass-receptacles with tomato-shaped plastic twist-off-lids. And all the implied situations, activities and practices stand in cross- and counter-reference to a massive number of possible other materials and practices which by themselves as well might be thought of within a systematic organization as described above. From many points of view such attempts at classification might seem either manic or a bit naïve: a tomato is a tomato and this one is squeezed. So what?

Wagner-Feigl-Forschung/ Research argues that this approach might be seen as a possible description of artistic processes as we know them from our own practice and through exchange with other performance artists. It demonstrates how a singular material potentially contains the world:

a can of tuna in tomato sauce of course implies deep sea fishing, fishing laws, death of dolphins, ecological destruction as well as family values - for example a grandmother's special tuna sauce. From our point of view it might be described as one of the genuine values of performance art to have opened up a means of understanding the rich implications of materials and their possible uses. To catch up in practice and research with such a complex and highly differentiated artistic approach, specific tools and practices need to be developed. 'The Encyclopaedia of Performance Art' can be seen a unique tool for such an in-depth understanding of performance art.

In the following paragraphs an overview will be given of how 'The Encyclopaedia of Performance Art' is structured and how it works. Along with a description of the different sections of it - the centre-pieces 'Materials' and 'Practices', and the supplements called 'Expansion', 'Dimension', 'Context' and 'Recreations' - some rather general questions concerning our approach as artists and researchers will be sketched out and the actual

state of the research of Wagner-Feigl-Forschung/Research will be described.

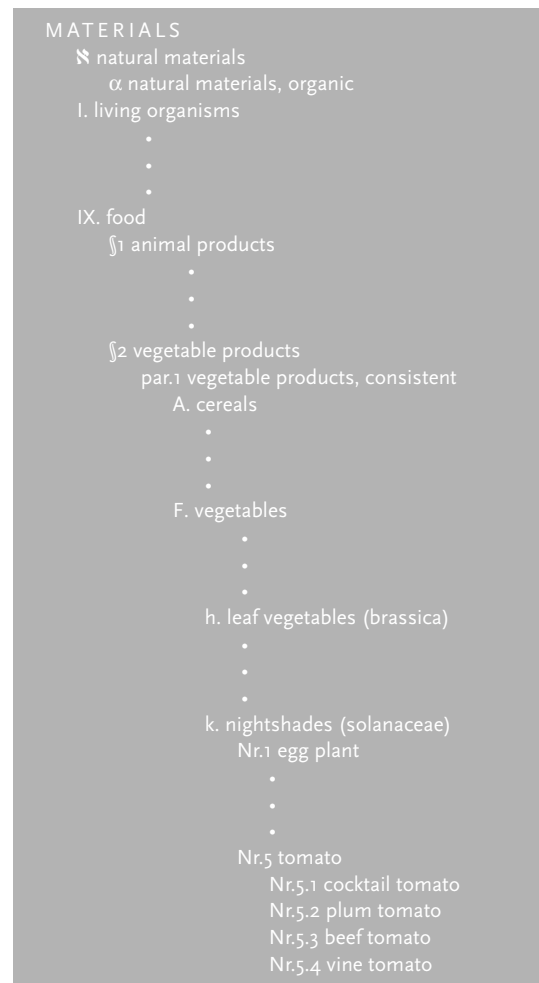
#### THE 'ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF PERFORMANCE ART'

When deciding how to organize a systematic overview of the material of performance art, a wide variety of possible approaches offer themselves. We could have decided to organize the material alphabetically, or according to its physical states or according to its colour. As performance artists we decided to choose a practical approach in close correspondence to our own artistic practices when dealing with such questions. We conduct case studies, sum up results in monographs about single materials, write essays about broader relations between different materials. Conducting our research from within the practice of performance art, led to a mix of different systems of possible organization. Indeed the insight keeps growing that when dealing with a hybrid and border-crossing art form any systematic organization demands the unification of various systems of organization. The knowledge that the tomato stands, botanically speaking, closer to the eggplant and potato than to the peach is important. But the analogy between tomato and peach in their physical state and possible use in a performance as well should be acknowledged. The interdependencies between different ways of systematic organization and possible results keep growing with the ongoing process of research. As the most promising and accessible approach for describing the state of our research, we chose a general systematic organization that follows the rules of scientific research from different fields, and rules of common sense. (Though 'common sense' is a very problematic term - just take the grasshopper as a material of performance art: should it be listed as an insect or as food?)

For a better understanding of the following descriptions, it should be mentioned here that

the Encyclopaedia of Performance Art is published in the form of both print and/or supplementary digital media. The means of publication is inevitably determined by the vast amount of systematically organized data that the Encyclopaedia contains. We use the general term 'volumes' to refer to both print and digital media. This in no way precludes other media solutions that may offer a more concise and suitable means of publication in the future.

But let's return to the tomato. The tomato would be represented in our general systematic organization as follows:



This way of representing a singular material of performance art has various advantages. It shows how each object is already embedded in the immense context of the material world and implies very complex processes of differentiation. Thus it identifies the special qualities (it is a tomato and not an orange) and dynamics (the tomato can be squeezed, thus producing tomato juice - in opposition to squeezing a stone, for example) inherent in each singular object or material. On the other hand this method of organization in no way precludes the other necessary tool of a true encyclopaedia: the Alphabetical Index (which will be contained in a different set of volumes from the systematic contents). As each level of differentiation bears in front a different character, sign or number, the tomato can be represented as well as the material with the cipher: **Ⓝ α IX. §2 par.1 F. k. Nr.5. (1.-4.)**. (The numbers in brackets show how many types of tomatoes are listed. Thus to represent the plum tomato, a plain Arabic numeral 3 refers to the specified type of tomato is used). As each character, sign or number stands for another step in the process of differentiation, the representation of materials as cipher codes creates an immediate awareness, when looking them up in the Alphabetical Index, of the highly complex relationships inherent in a specific material. Besides the obvious possibility of locating a singular material in the systematic overview, it allows the experienced user to get a quick overview of related materials as well.

In the separate Alphabetical Index volumes (see right) the different graphic representations in bold print (referring to the location in the list of material) and light print (referring to further material involving the special aspect of the looked-up material) allow the experienced user to detect through the cipher code that another listed material implies a special aspect but differs on significant levels. Taking the tomato-shaped egg-timer for example (see cipher: **Ⓝ λ XI. §4 par.17 C. e. Nr.5.1.9**) one learns through the very first cipher: **Ⓝ** - Hebraic *Beth*, the most

#### ALPHABETICAL INDEX MATERIAL (SCHEMATIC EXCERPT)

(. . .)	token	tool
tobacco	(. . .)	(. . .)
(. . .)	tomahawk	tool bag
toboggan	(. . .)	(. . .)
(. . .)	<b>tomato</b>	toolbox
toffee	<b>Ⓝ α IX. §2 par.1</b>	(. . .)
(. . .)	<b>F. k. Nr.5.(1.-4.)</b>	toothbrush
toga	(. . .)	(. . .)
(. . .)	Ⓝ λ XI. §4 par.17	toothpaste
toggle	C. e/ Nr.5.1.9.	(. . .)
(. . .)	Ⓝ λ VII. §3 par.2	top
toggle switch	E. b. Nr.8.11.	(. . .)
(. . .)	(. . .)	top boot
toilet	Ⓝ λ XVIII. §3	(. . .)
(. . .)	par 5. B. Nr.4.1.	topcoat
toilet bag	(. . .)	(. . .)
(. . .)	tombstone	topi
toilet paper	(. . .)	(. . .)
(. . .)	tome	top kick knot
toilet powder	(. . .)	(. . .)
(. . .)	tommy	torch
toilet soap	(. . .)	(. . .)
(. . .)	tommy gun	tortilla
toilet table	(. . .)	(. . .)
(. . .)	tom-tom	
	(. . .)	
	tongs	
	(. . .)	

basic differentiation, that it must be something very different from the tomato that was originally looked up, yet still related by a characteristic tomato-like aspect. On looking up the tomato-shaped egg timer in the systematic overview, the researcher is led to the group of egg timers being used in performance art, which of course have an entry of their own in the Alphabetical Index. Among the egg timers the cipher 'tomato-shaped egg timer' would appear in bold print as it is one object among others bearing the main aspect and the first-level qualities being looked up. But the Alphabetical Index offers still one more level of interrelationships being represented: the italicized notation shows the location of an image that refers to the looked-up material. Already within the systematic entries, images of selected material appear wherever space allows. Full documentation is supplied in the section 'Expansion', which will be described below. The practices of performance art bring up a number of specific questions of principle. Some of them will be described in the following paragraph to give an insight into their possible systematic organization.

In considering practices of performance art, Wagner-Feigl-Forschung/ Research chose an anthropocentric point of view: every practice being carried out and/or being received by a performer in a performance will be considered. This implies that at least on the basic level of research we do not differentiate between actively conducting or passively receiving an action. When becoming more specific, though, we definitely should draw this distinction. This illustrates a quite basic problem when starting to think about the systematic organization of the practices of performance art: the correct terminology. Using the term 'action' connotes an activity within a performance. This might be misleading, as, for example, 'receiving a slap in the face' seems to contradict the description as an activity. How should we name and thus mark a specific quality of something that is done or received in a performance? To avoid false

exclusiveness and reach an overarching approach, we decided to use the term 'practice of performance art' as a very general description. Choosing an anthropocentric approach of course means excluding a whole range of work which for very good reasons might well be considered part of performance art: puppet and machine performance, video and internet performances just to mention a few. Such examples of performance art will be represented in the 'Essays' section described below.

Another major differentiation that can be drawn when organizing practices of performance art is to consider if a material, object or tool is involved. A whole set of practices such as to cut, to hammer, to write, imply that a knife, a hammer, a pen is involved. These sorts of practice are described most exactly by the specific description of the material or tool being used. This approach illustrates the strong interrelationship between the systematic organization of practice and the material. Another important aspect is interpretation. Wagner-Feigl-Forschung/ Research try to apply at all times empirical and materialist strategies of research and analysis. Interpretation should be as much as possible up to the user of the Encyclopaedia. Yet some interpretative paradigms of description seem to be inherent in the practices of performance art. Regarding duration and qualities of time 'to have a nap' for example implies a relatively short duration in comparison to 'to sleep', which implies another dimension of time. Another intriguing field of study is to examine whether the use of categories such as 'operative', 'iconic' or 'absolute' would be helpful in order to describe the special quality of a specific practice.

#### THE SUPPLEMENTS

In order to support and complete the systematic organization of the materials and practices contained in the 'The Encyclopaedia of Performance Art', there are volumes especially dedicated to Time and Space as explicit

categories of performance art. In addition there is a collection of Essays, which describe inter- and intra-relationships of performance art to a) the other arts, b) the *Lebenswelt* (everyday life) and c) the documentation of remakes that have been carried out during the process of research for the Encyclopaedia.

An extensive section of documentation entitled 'Expansion' contains still and moving images, text and sound. It is again divided into 'material' and 'practice' and follows the adopted systematic organization. Regarding the highly complex structure of most performances, one item of documentation usually serves as an example for several entries. As far as possible the main aspects of a specific performance documentation are extracted for specific entries. Nevertheless it is mentioned with all appearing aspects as well. A solution for this is, again, different graphic representations in the Alphabetical Index of 'Expansion'. Also important is the reference to the full-length documentation that is supplied separately.

Special volumes entitled 'Dimension' are dedicated to time and space as explicit categories of performance art. The implicit qualities of time and space, as for example in 'running' being relatively fast in comparison to 'crawling' or the implicit space of a singular practice being constituted between two performers hitting each other are already covered by the systematic organization of practices. But there are explicit categories of time and space in performance art that need to be examined more closely. The specific structure of time as an explicit quality is a major aspect in performances such as the 12-hour lecture performances by Otmar Wagner,<sup>1</sup> the 24-hour performances by Black Market<sup>2</sup> or the one-year performances by Tehching Hsieh and other durational performances.<sup>3</sup> Space has to be considered as an explicit category of performance art within the whole range of performances in public space, all sorts of site-specific works as well as in non-localizable works such as Internet performances.

The section 'Context' consists of articles and essays about 'Performance Art and the other Arts', for example performance and photography or performance and architecture. In the second part, essays about 'Performance Art and *Lebenswelt*' with its social, political, economical, ecological aspects can be found; for example performance and protest, performance and advertisement, performance and recycling. A third section of 'Context' is dedicated to essays that focus, through explicit use of the Encyclopaedia and its systematic schemes, on more general topics of performance art. Under the heading of 'Material: Characteristics, Signs, Symbols' one can find essays like 'The Scents of Performance Art - Rotten Materials and their Implications' or under the heading of 'Space and Time', for example, an essay like 'Rotting, Rusting, Vaporizing - more than a life span: Performance Art beyond the Here and Now'.

The last volume of the Encyclopaedia is dedicated to recreations of performances. Besides the valuable results for research and analysis, there are some very practical reasons for the recreation of performances. Many performances are not documented in ways that are useful for the suggested approach. Many other performances are not documented at all and are only known through word of mouth. In other cases it appears sensible to put a stronger emphasis on specific aspects other than the original documentation would allow. On another level the recreation of performances is an important strategy for the processes of research itself. In order to get particular information about specific material and specific practices of performance art, reconstructing it has proved to be an invaluable strategy. The point is not to re-live a performance on an emotional or metaphysical level but to reconstruct the performance with the utmost possible precision regarding the originally used material and originally carried-out practices. Moreover such research in practice often allows us to make new and surprising discoveries.

<sup>1</sup> Otmar Wagner (2002) *Die lange Nacht der Performance-Geschichte*, Berlin - a 12-hour marathon lecture/performance.

<sup>2</sup> Black Market (1987) *Das Braketeaterstück*, Documenta 8, Kassel - a 24-hour-performance by Jürgen Fritz, Norbert Klassen, Boris Nieslony, Zygmunt Piotrowski and Jaques van Poppel.

<sup>3</sup> Tehching Hsieh (1978-1999) *One-Year Performances*. Between 1978 and 1999 Hsieh did five so-called 'one-year performances', one of them together with Linda Montano (1983-84) titled *Art/Life*. Artists' statement: 'We, Linda Montano and Tehching Hsieh, plan to do a one-year performance. / We will stay together for one year and never be alone. / We will be in the same room at the same time, when we are inside. / We will be tied together at the waist with an 8-foot rope. / We will never touch each other during the year. / The performance will begin on July 4, 1983 at 6 p.m., and continue until July 4, 1984, at 6 p.m.' See Tehching Hsieh (2000) *One Year Performance: Art Documents 1978-1999*, DVD.

<sup>4</sup> Chris Burden (19 November 1971) *Shoot*, F. Space, Santa Ana, California. Burden had his assistant shoot him in his arm. See *Chris Burden: Documentation Of Selected Works 1971-1974*, USA, 1975 - Videotape, 35 Min.; *Performance Anthology (1980) Source Book for a Decade of California Performance Art*, Contemporary Arts Press, San Francisco.

<sup>5</sup> Niki de Saint Phalle (early 1960s) *Tirs*. Saint Phalle shot paint bombs fixed on assemblages (plaster reliefs and figures) with a .22 calibre airgun. Niki de Saint Phalle called herself a 'terrorist of art'.

<sup>6</sup> Dick Higgins (1968-1998, unfinished) *1,000 Symphonies*. Higgins decided in 1968 to compose 1,000 symphonies, a project unfinished at his death. As a means to composition, the artist had blank musical scores machine-gunned, then treated the holes and tears as notes.

<sup>7</sup> Yayoi Kusama (1968) *Self-Obliteration Happening* and *Nixon Orgy at Kusama's Studio*, New York. During the Happenings the participants staged several *tableaux vivants* with toy machineguns for documentation photos.

<sup>8</sup> Valie Export (1969) *Genitalpanik*, Munich. Wearing a black shirt and black trousers, which showed her vagina, Export entered a porn cinema in Munich. She had a machine gun hanging from her shoulder. She announced to the audience that now there were real genitals to see. I walked slowly through the rows of seats. The gun was aiming at the heads of the people seated in the row behind me. I was

## CONCLUSION

Before giving a resumé of the value of 'The Encyclopaedia of Performance-Art', there are some further points in need of clarification. One frequently asked question concerns the advantages of the use of cipher codes, which are at first sight complicated or even mysterious. Wagner-Feigl-Forschung/Research argue that a purely alphabetical organization would tear materials out of their context (the plum tomato would stand close to the plate but far from tomato juice or canned tomatoes). But still one could imagine the same systematic organization using only numbers instead of signs and characters from different alphabets. A simple number, or maybe a bar-code system, would allow researchers to use the Encyclopaedia very practically like a catalogue, which might be of use for international correspondence: for example if a Dutch artist is invited to do a performance in Japan or Paraguay, one doesn't have to bother with translations of the material the artist wants to use. Misunderstandings can be avoided as everybody can refer to the exact material an artist is using, or what exactly an artist plans to do [See for example the model used by the OISTAT *New Theatre Words: Central Europe*, Sttt (1998) Ed.] But we decided differently. The use of the cipher code shows at first sight, that each and every material, each and every practice already has a wide background and stands within a complex context. While a simple number or bar code system would encourage a rather simplistic approach, it misses the broader aims of the Encyclopaedia and, above all, the implicit qualities of artistic processes within the practice of performance art. We want to point out that the naïve approach, or a decision to use something just because of a superficial sympathy or its splendid features, ignores the implicit logic and aesthetic qualities of a specific material or specific practice.

Though it might seem contradictory, the Encyclopaedia's systematic organization is an expression of a massively contextualizing

approach towards performance art.

Contradictory, because in the first step we go through minute processes of differentiation, which only then - on the molecular level - unveil the complex intra- and inter-relationships so far researched in the field of, and by and through performance art. These relationships we understand, as well in the historical dimension, as threads of traditions, which specific materials and practices developed within the performance art. This means very concretely that if one decides to use a tomato in a performance, one has to acknowledge that tomatoes have already been used in any number and modes of performances, which would mean surveying quite a number of contemporary works that apparently attempt to reinvent the world. We want the Encyclopaedia to encourage a careful approach to research where the exact individual intention, motivation and contexts of, for example, tomato-use in performance can be made clear. We are in no way trying to suggest that performances which utilize certain materials or practices cannot be reproduced because they have been done already.

On the contrary we believe strongly in performance art as a practice that continually needs to (re)contextualize its materials and practices and thus extend their specific contemporary meanings and possibilities. Moreover we want to encourage an approach that relieves certain iconographic performances from their historical determination. Taking for example the performance 'Shoot' by Chris Burden where Burden was shot in the arm by an assistant (19 November 1971, F. Space, Santa Ana, California).<sup>4</sup> The performance is widely known. Focusing on the extraordinary radicalism of its time and its very singular qualities, it has been a subject of many publications and it has become an icon of performance art. By focusing on formal aspects as well as emphasizing its history and contexts as a specific performative practice, 'Shoot' can be revived again and fed back into the circulations of a contemporary performance art

practice. The achievement of the 'The Encyclopaedia of Performance Art' is to re-contextualize 'Shoot' through formal as well as aesthetic aspects (material: automatic weapon; performative practice: to shoot) within a wide field of performances with similar approaches: Nikki de Saint Phalle,<sup>5</sup> Dick Higgins,<sup>6</sup> Yayoi Kusama,<sup>7</sup> Valie Export,<sup>8</sup> Dieter Maier,<sup>9</sup> Marina Abramovic,<sup>10</sup> Timm Ulrichs,<sup>11</sup> Ene-Liis Semper,<sup>12</sup> Steven Cohen,<sup>13</sup> Francis Alys,<sup>14</sup> Roman Signer,<sup>15</sup> Daniel Aschwanden<sup>16</sup> - just to mention a few artists from the past forty years who were shooting with guns in performances. And who dares to say that not every single one of them added at least some very specific detail to a deeper understanding of automatic weapons and the practice of shooting within performance art and beyond?

What we demand for artistic practice has certain parallels in scientific and analytical methods. But common analytical approaches often produce a selective and isolating focus on the item of their research, which makes it practically impossible to gain an understanding of performance art in all its complexity. Theoretical analysis often relates itself to certain aspects or focuses on a few selected performances that are either extensively documented or personally witnessed by the scholars. This is for various reasons: often performances are reviewed and analysed, because a) they are well documented, and/or b) they are supported by aggressive strategies of marketing and publicity (for example the spectacular self-marketing of singular artists and/or the investments of art producers with a sense of trends), and/or c) they are benefiting from artist/scientist alliances, which grow out of friendship networks, and/or d) theoreticians and scientists are referring to their own system of references, which means that they are copying each other. Another aspect of this repetitive reference towards the same selected performances is the exclusiveness of theory and analysis. This principle of exclusiveness shows off on three different levels: a) exclusive self-

limitation on few mediated performances (for art-historical reasons or because of certain trends), b) exclusive discussion of exclusively seen performances, and c) exclusive mediation (secret sciences for the initiated). In opposition to such approaches, 'The Encyclopaedia of Performance Art' aims at a complete collection of all performances ever performed.

'The Encyclopaedia of Performance Art' is not judgmental in the sense of creating simple values or hierarchies. All events from the field of performance art are annotated and documented. And through an empirical approach these events stand - beyond their rights as singular performances - in context and relationship with all other events, which are part of performance history, its present and future. At the same time it is this field of structurally (and on the level of the aesthetics of materials and practices) interwoven performances itself that, on the one hand, produces the Encyclopaedia and, on the other, creates ever new contexts and ever more relationships, which undermine a simplistic coordination and hierarchy of differences. Thus it undermines processes that intend - consciously or unconsciously - nothing less than to control performance art on the levels of economy, politics and ideology. Processes, which cripple performance art, make for deadening events and deny the creative forces of discovery, the onset of innovation and the creative potentials of conflict inherent in each and every material and practice of performance art.

Thus the Encyclopaedia has to be understood as an attempt to return to performance art its own unique and creative language. 'The Encyclopaedia of Performance Art' with its description of the materials and practices of performance art and, as such, of the material world itself, allows the gathered and systematically organized data to reverberate and thus makes the material world the real, ever-expanding Encyclopaedia. Through the ongoing activity of the performance artist, engaged in the materials and practices of performance art, further potential meanings, contexts and

scared and had no idea how people would react. When I walked through the rows, people were getting up one after the other and leaving the cinema. (Valie Export)

<sup>9</sup> Dieter Maier (23 February 1971) *This Man Will Not Shoot*, New York Cultural Center.

Maier stood in front of the New York Cultural Center with a gun in his hand. On the floor in front of him there was a sign saying 'This Man Will Not Shoot'.

<sup>10</sup> Marina Abramovic (1974) *Rhythm O*, Naples. Abramovic invited her audience to do whatever they wanted to her, using any of the 72 items she provided: blue colour, comb, bell, whip, lipstick, penknife, fork, perfume, spoon, cotton, flowers, matches, rose, candle, water, scarf, mirror, glass, Polaroid camera, leather, chains, nails, needle, safety pin, hair, pin, brush, bandage, red colour, white colour, scissors, pen, book, hat, handkerchief, white paper, kitchen knife, hammer, saw, a piece of wood, axe, stick, lamb bones, newspaper, bread, wine, honey, salt, sugar, soap, cake, metal pipe, scalpel, metal spike, blade, bowl, plaster, alcohol, medal, coat, shoes, chair, leather strings, thread, cable, phosphorus, grape, olive oil, rosemary twig, loaded pistol.

<sup>11</sup> Timm Ulrichs (1978) *Das getroffene Bild, das betroffene Ich*, Bremen Performance. See Timm Ulrichs (1980) *Totalkunst* (Catalogue), Städtische Galerie Lüdenscheid.

<sup>12</sup> Ene-Liis Semper (1998) *FF/Rew (FastForward/Rewind)*, Estonia. Video performance, b/w, 17 minutes. Three times in a row, a young woman commits suicide. She



hangs herself, she shoots herself, then she hangs herself again. The video is re-wound and the woman comes to life again only to repeat her suicides.

<sup>13</sup> **Steven Cohen/Elu** (1999) *Intersection*, Johannesburg. Welcome to Kill City: motorists in Johannesburg were treated to a glimpse of art by Elu, dressed in a tyre tutu, wearing horns and with a gun stuck to his head, dancing across a road on Friday morning.

<sup>14</sup> **Francis Alys** (2001) *Re-enactment*, Mexico City. Followed by a friend with a video camera, Alys walked with a gun through the centre of Mexico City until he was arrested by the police (after 12 minutes). On the following day he re-created the performance. The policemen played themselves. See (2002-2003) 'Mexico City: Eine Ausstellung über die Wechselkurse von Körpern und Werten', Berlin: Kunst-Werke; and (2004) '*legal/illegal*': *Wenn Kunst Gesetze bricht/Art beyond Law* (Ausstellungskatalog), Berlin: NGBK and Stuttgart: Schmetterling Verlag.

<sup>15</sup> **Roman Signer** (2002) *Aktion mit 15 Fässern*, Brixen. Like in a shooting gallery at a fairground, Signer shot at fifteen blue metal barrels, filled with water. The water splashed out of the bullet holes creating a fountain.

<sup>16</sup> **Daniel Aschwanden** (2004) in *Pretty Public Privacy*, Vienna, Munich. Performance by Bilderwerfer. During the performance Aschwanden, wearing a pig-mask, pointed a toy gun to his head for about 50 minutes.

Performance Art, focusing on information and global perspectives – as it is presented in the millennium project of THE ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF PERFORMANCE ART – changes the world's outlook and values. It renders already today, by methods of intellect, the primary tools and cultural equipment with which to solve the problems of the future.

We should never forget the importance of our inherent curiosity and of our craving for knowledge: the desire to know more, to improve our understanding, to research. Performance Art is mentally fulfilling to human beings, as it is not unnatural but an expression of nature within us and through us. It extends our world of experience and thus our horizon of consciousness, which means that it gives us a new and complete self-understanding within the plan of creation.

This change of consciousness – as enabled by THE ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF PERFORMANCE ART that allows people to look at the world with an altered notion of reality and a new perception of all materials, practices and contexts – is caused by the complex concert of unique new elements of experience. In the long run the Encyclopaedia, with its ethics of adventure and exploration, will establish impulses towards a change of consciousness and of terminology. The humanist potential of this transformation alone makes it a meaningful project. The project of THE ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF PERFORMANCE ART – through its global field of operation – strengthens the self-consciousness of all performance artists so that they can form a trans-national companionship. It backs the creative forces of people through new orientation and through an onset of discovery and innovation. Its perspectives will allow us by and by to overcome the confines of isolation/individualism, collectivism, racism and nationalism and thus to enlarge the intellectual terminologies and objectives of separate people at first, then of societies and in the end of all people.

(Original text by Jesco von Puttkamer, slightly adapted by Wagner-Feigl-Forschung/ Research)

implications are added. Thus performance art can be regarded as a door to worlds beyond the world. Speaking in less utopian terms, there are at least some good reasons to see performance art as a truly universal science of the world.

For further information on 'The Encyclopaedia of Performance Art' please contact:

*Wagner-Feigl-Forschung/Research*  
e-mail: [florianfeigl@alice-dsl.de](mailto:florianfeigl@alice-dsl.de) and/or  
[otmarwagner@freenet.de](mailto:otmarwagner@freenet.de)