OUTSOURCING AUTHENTICITY? DELEGATED PERFORMANCE IN CONTEMPORARY ART
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1. INTRODUCTION

Performances produced by visual artists have shifted significantly in the last decade. Instead of artists using their own bodies as the medium and material, with a corresponding emphasis on physical and psychological authenticity and oppositional transgression, as was the case in the 1960s and '70s, today's artists do not necessarily privilege the live moment or their own body. Rather, they engage in strategies of mediation that include delegation, re-enactment, and collaboration. One only has to think of recent works by Tino Sehgal, Elmgreen and Dragset, Artur Żmijewski, Tania Bruguera, Phil Collins, Roman Ondak, Johanna Billing, Jeremy Deller, and Dora García, to name only a few, in order to appreciate the distinctiveness of this shift. In the works of these artists, performance is delegated—or, to use more managerial language, 'outsourced'—to other performers. These people may be specialists or nonprofessionals, paid or unpaid, but they undertake the job of being present and performing at a particular time in a particular place on behalf of the artist, and following their instructions. Although the use of actors and performers has a long history in traditional theatre and classical music, what distinguishes this trend in visual art is the frequency with which performance is delegated to non-professional people who are asked to *perform themselves.*[1] In tandem with post-structuralist critiques of presence, delegated performance also differs from its '70s-era forbears in its modes of distribution: it can be mediated through video or exist in the gallery for the duration of an exhibition —both strategies that reduce the intensity of a one-off performance. This shift raises a number of questions about the present-day status of performance art, authorship, and, inevitably, the ethics of representation: when an artist uses other people's bodies as the medium of his or her work, the results can often prompt accusations of exploitation or manipulation. This essay aims to explore this tendency more closely, and to reflect on some of the issues it raises around authorship and authenticity, and to provide a broader historical and cultural framework for understanding its development.

2. THE 1990S

To recap: I would like to assert that artists of the late '60s and early '70s—for example, Marina Abramovic, Chris Burden, Vito Acconci, and Gina Pane—turned to their own bodies as the privileged site of artistic action. Authorship and authenticity were bound together in the irreducible singularity of the individual performer. The artists' bodies are indices of authorship, even while they also carry a broader symbolic or metaphorical meaning as icons of gender and ethnicity and (in the case of some artists) the constructed, fragile, or performative nature of this identity.[2] Today their bodies also function art historically, as signs of an artistic practice that consciously placed itself at one remove from the market: in Western Europe and North America, performance and body art of the late '60s and early '70s frequently stood as a refusal of the portable object and the circulation of commodities.[3] This trajectory of performance and body art could be reductively summarised —both through the artists' own accounts and its critical reception—as grounded in the phenomenological immediacy of the live body, its singular authenticity, and its aim to chafe against the institutional frameworks through which the commodity object circulates. The presence of documentary photography and video does nothing to reduce the overall stakes of this authentic, indexical relation between the artist and their work of art.[4] This convergence between visual art and performance in the '70s began to drift apart in the '80s: in the work of Adrian Piper, Coco Fusco, Orlan, and the early efforts of Andrea Fraser, the artists remain the central performers, but they make a point of discursively embodying multiple and/or fictional identities.[5] By the late '90s, the idea of an authentic artist-performer seems to be an anachronism, associated with figures like Stelarc and Franko B,[6] and much of what is known in the UK as 'live art'.[7]

At the same time, in the early '90s, particularly in Europe, there began to be a shift away from this paradigm. Artists started to pay or persuade other people to undertake their performances. Authenticity was relocated from the *singular* body of the artist to the *collective* authenticity of the social body, particularly when those performers constituted an economic, gendered or racialised Other. This change can be seen, for example, in the

Maurizio Cattelan
AC Forniture Sud (Southern Suppliers FC), 1991
Collage

Pawel Althamer
Observator, 1992
Performance

Pawel Althamer
Untitled, 1994
Installation view at *Germinations 8*, Zachęta Gallery, 1994

early works of Maurizio Cattelan and Paweł Althamer. Cattelan's *Southern Suppliers FC* (1991) marks a significant change of tone from identity-based works of the '80s: the artist assembled a football team of North African immigrants to play local football matches (all of which they lost), in shirts emblazoned with the name of a fictional sponsor Rauss (the German word for 'get out', as in the phrase *ausländer raus*, or 'foreigners out'). The title alludes to immigrant labour, but also to the trend, then debated in the Italian press, of hiring foreign footballers to play in Italian teams. Cattelan's gesture draws a contrast between two types of foreign labour at different ends of the economic spectrum—star footballers are rarely perceived in the same terms as working-class immigrants—but without any discernable shred of Marxist rhetoric: through this work, Cattelan fulfills the megalomaniac male dream of owning a football club, and apparently insults the players by dressing them in shirts emblazoned Rauss. At the same time, he nevertheless produces a confusing image: the word *Rauss*, when combined with the startling photograph of an all-black Italian football team, has an ambiguous, provocative potency, especially when it circulates in the media, since it seems to actualise the unspoken fear of being deluged by immigrants from outside 'fortress Europe'. *Southern Suppliers FC* is therefore social sculpture as cynical performance, inserted into the real-time social system of a football league.[8] As such, Francesco Bonami seems to put too worthy a spin on the work when he claims that Cattelan aimed "for a democratic new way to play the artist, whilst remaining central to the work as the coach and manager of the teams."[9] At a push, *Southern Suppliers FC* could be said to share the performance limelight, but from all other perspectives it is highly manipulative and far from straightforward in its political message.

Paweł Althamer, by contrast, demonstrates a different approach to delegation: more minimal and discreet, and—in a manner that is perhaps typical of artists from ex-Socialist countries—less interested in the mass media as a site for intervention. *Observator* (1992) is a series of photographs that document a performance with homeless people in Warsaw, each of whom was asked to wear a sticker bearing word *observer*. Although the homeless men were labelled (like works of art) and did not undertake any actions other than their usual activities—gestures that would not usually be considered to constitute a performance, such as sitting on a bench—they inverted the

Annika Eriksson
Copenhagen Postmen's Orchestra, 1996
Video still
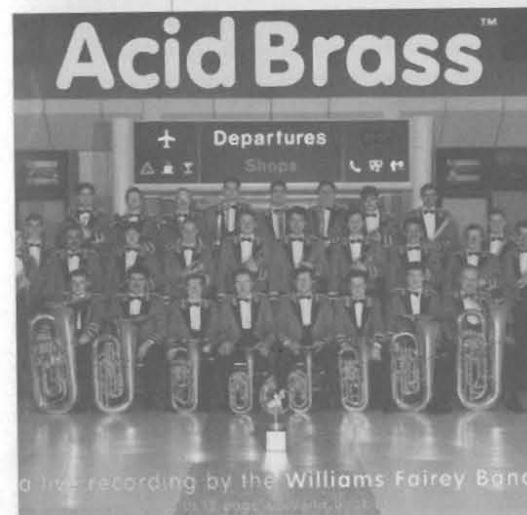
Jeremy Deller / Williams Fairey Band
Acid Brass, 1997

Elmgreen and Dragset
TRY, 1996
Three men on rugs, ghettoblaster, walkman, stereo headphones, books, magazines and music selected by the performers, fridge with beer cans
Installation view at *Between You and Me*, Overgaden, Copenhagen

conventional relationship between actor and audience. Warsaw continued its activities oblivious to the fact that it was being watched as a real-time film played out for the benefit of this disenfranchised audience. Althamer's untitled project for the 1994 exhibition *Germinations* at Zachęta Gallery in Warsaw pursued this line of investigation on an indoor stage: one of the gallery's female invigilators was invited to bring to her workplace a series of objects that would make her environment more comfortable and relaxing. The resulting tableau staged the invigilator as a minimal performer in the gallery. Rather than being the unnoticed observer of visitors to an exhibition, she became the focus of their attention as a live portrait or living sculpture. Althamer's subsequent works are frequently based on identification with so-called marginal subjects, such as children (including his own), the homeless, and a group of adults with physical and mental disabilities called The Nowolipie Group. Althamer treads ambiguously between coercion and collaboration, and has coined the phrase 'directed reality' to describe an approach in which the artist's predetermined premise or structure unfolds with the unpredictable agency of his participants.[10]

This tendency to 'delegate' performance gathers pace in the mid '90s, most spectacularly in the work of Vanessa Beecroft (1993–), but also with Annika Eriksson's *Copenhagen Postmen's Orchestra* (1996) and Jeremy Deller's *Acid Brass* (1997), two projects that invite workers' bands to perform recent pop music in their own idiom. (The Copenhagen Postmen's Orchestra played a song by the British trip-hop group Portishead, while the Williams Fairey Brass Band interpreted a selection of acid house tracks.) Eriksson's event resulted in a five-minute video, while Deller's has become numerous live performances, a CD, and a diagram elaborately connecting these two forms of regional working-class music. Beyond the aesthetic frisson of mixing two types of popular music, part of the appeal of both projects lies in the fact that the artists employ real bands. They are not professionals or actors hired to play electronic music on brass instruments, but apparently authentic working-class collaborators who have agreed to participate in an artistic experiment—a rather formal one in the case of Eriksson (the camera remains static throughout the video), more research-led in the case of Deller.[11] The bands perform their public persona (determined by their employment) and come to exemplify a collectively shared passion (in this case, performing music), which has been a recurrent theme in both artists' work. Throughout the '90s one finds

Santiago Sierra
GROUP OF PEOPLE FACING THE WALL AND PERSON FACING INTO A CORNER, Lisson Gallery, London, October 2002

examples of artists bringing a live presence to the gallery through the use of other people, such as Elmgreen and Dragset's *Try* (1997), in which three casually dressed young men lounge on rugs in the gallery, listening to headphones and reading. The men seem to be sculptural objects of desire, perhaps surrogates for the artists themselves, who were a couple at the time. A hallmark of all the works made at this time is the light and humorous way in which the delegated performers come to signify class, race, age, or gender. These bodies seem to be a metonymic shorthand for politicised identity, but the fact that it is not the artists' own bodies being staged means that this politics is pursued with a cool irony and distance.

A rupture with this mood arrived in 1999 with the work of Spanish artist Santiago Sierra. Prior to 1999, Sierra's work derived from a forceful combination of minimalism and urban intervention; over the course of that year his work shifted from installations produced by low-paid workers to displays of the workers themselves, foregrounding the economic transactions on which these installations depend.[12] Many of these early performances involve finding people who were willing to undertake banal or humiliating tasks for the minimum wage. Since these projects frequently take place in countries already at the thin end of globalisation, most notably in Latin America, Sierra's works are stripped of the light humour that accompanies many of the projects mentioned above. Since 2000, Sierra has produced variations on this model: paying people to stand in a line, to have their hair dyed blond, to receive a tattoo, or to sit inside a box or behind a wall for days on end. As such, he has been heavily criticised for merely repeating the inequities of capitalism, and more specifically of globalisation, in which rich countries 'outsource' or

'offshore' labour to low-paid workers in developing countries. My concern here is not to question the ethical validity of Sierra's gestures, but to draw attention to the *economic* operation through which they are realised: performance is outsourced via a financial transaction that places the artist at arm's length from the viewer's phenomenological confrontation with the performer. Sierra seems at pains to make the details of each payment part of the work's identity, turning economics into one of his primary mediums.[13]

In recent years, this financial arrangement has become increasingly essential to the realisation of delegated performance: Elmgreen and Dragset paid twelve unemployed men and women to dress as invigilators and guard an empty gallery (*Reg[u]arding the Guards* [2005]), Tino Sehgal paid children to describe his back catalogue of works at the Frieze Art Fair (*This is Right* [2003]), Tania Bruguera paid blind people to wear military uniforms and stand in front of the Palace of Culture in Warsaw (*Consummated Revolution* [2008]). This brings us to one of the most important differences between performance and body art circa 1970 and present-day delegated performance. If performance in the '60s and '70s was produced quickly and inexpensively, since the artist's own body was the cheapest form of material,[14] delegated performance, by contrast, is a luxury game.[15] It is telling that it takes place primarily in the West, and that art fairs and biennials are the primary sites of its consumption. Whereas once performance art sought to break with the art market by dematerialising the work of art into ephemeral events, today certain strands of delegated performance could be argued to recapitulate the artwork's commodification by taking advantage of this genre's ability—due precisely to its liveness—to excite media attention, which in turn heightens the value of the event. As Philip Auslander has argued, "Despite the claim... that performance's evanescence allows it to escape commodification, it is performance's very evanescence that gives it value in terms of cultural prestige."[16] We have arrived at a complex scenario in which mediation and immediacy frequently seem inextricable.[17]

3. HISTORICAL PRECURSORS: LIVE INSTALLATIONS VS CONSTRUCTED SITUATIONS

I have drawn two lines here: one between art of the late '60s and that of the present decade, and a second between art of the West and (implicitly) its peripheries. Although I would like to argue that delegated performance is a new phenomenon,

its historical precursors can be found in the '60s, and predominantly in cities outside the western centres of art production. We can see it in the tendency for making collective clothing, as in Hélio Oiticica's *Parangolés* (1965), Lygia Pape's *Divisor* (1968), or Lygia Clark's *Collective Body* (1968).[18] And yet, with the exception of Oiticica, none of these works directly emphasise the *social* specificity of the people who perform. Oiticica's *Parangolés* —strangely weighted capes made of poor materials that encouraged exaggerated movements when dancing—were produced in collaboration with samba dancers from the Manguiera *favela*. Oiticica invited these dancers to produce situations of disruption: for example, for the opening of an exhibition at Museu de Arte Moderna in Rio de Janeiro in 1965, the dancers appeared in *Parangolés* and danced through the galleries.[19] However, none of these precursors involve the financial transaction so essential to today's outsourced performance. In this regard, the most direct precursors for the contemporary use of people as an art material are to be found not in Brazil in the '60s but in Argentina. Although participatory art in the form of Happenings and Actions occurs throughout Europe and North America in this decade, it differs from the self-reflexive and almost brutal tenor of delegated performance in Argentina, where working- and lower middle-class people were hired directly to be material for works of art.

Oscar Bony's *La Familia Obrera (The Worker's Family)* (1968) is an important example.[20] The work comprises a family—an Argentinian man, woman, and child—sitting on a platform, and was first shown at the exhibition *Experiencias 68* at the Instituto di Tella in Buenos Aires. The family responded to a job advertisement in the local newspaper, and were paid to sit on a plinth throughout the opening hours of the exhibition. They were accompanied by a recording of everyday sounds made in the home of the same family, and an information label explaining that "Luis Ricardo Rodríguez, a professional die-caster, is earning twice his usual wages just for staying on show with his wife and son". In photographic documentation of the project, the Rodríguez family are shown self-absorbed, reading books to pass the time of day while visitors examine them. The reality was less static: the family was constantly shifting position in the middle of the Hall—eating, smoking, reading, and talking amid the audience's largely adverse response; the child in particular found it hard to stay put on the plinth and often ran around the exhibition.[21] The work clearly plays on the

conventions of figurative art in a socialist realist tradition, as well as ideas of monumental statuary: elevating an everyday family to the dignity of exemplary representation or ideal.[22] However, the use of a real family as models for this task complicates such a reading: although the family is literally and symbolically elevated via the plinth, there is a class discrepancy between the performers and viewers, since the former were subject to the scrutiny of a primarily middle-class audience who came to inspect them.

Several complaints were brought against the show, including the accusation that Bony's *La Familia Obrera* would have been more effective if shown within a labour union; for this critic, exhibiting the work in a gallery showed a refusal to communicate with a non-specialist public.[23] But Bony preferred to address this relationship dialectically. Instead of taking art to the masses, Bony brought a fragment of the masses ('the real') into the exhibition—a gesture comparable to Robert Smithson's 'non-sites' of the same year, in which fragments of the unbound natural environment (stones, slate, etc.) are removed from their original habitat and displayed in the gallery in geometrical containers. Bony's other concern was dematerialisation—the predominent theme of *Experiencias 68* as a whole, influenced by Oscar Masotta's lecture *After Pop, We Dematerialise*, presented at the Instituto di Tella in 1967.[24] In this lecture, Masotta proposed that the materials of traditional painting and sculpture should be replaced by the 'dematerialised' realm of mass communications media (radio, television, newspapers, magazines, posters, etc). Paradoxically, then, Bony's living family is both a dematerialised event (ephemeral, time-based, circulating in the media) and yet also irrefutably material, since the Rodriguez family were present on the plinth throughout the exhibition. This conjunction of indexical presence and media circulation arguably forms a blueprint for contemporary delegated performance, particularly 'art fair art' that consorts with, indeed encourages, media attention.[25]

When interviewed in 1998, at the time of restaging *La Familia Obrera*, Bony confessed that he still didn't know how to describe the work, since it existed as both an idea and a concrete realisation: he referred to it as a 'conceptual proposition' since a group of people can't be the material of the work.... It wasn't a performance, because it hasn't got a script; it isn't body art; there's no clear category for this work, and I really like, the fact that not even I can find a precise categorisation. I find

Oscar Bony
La Familia Obrera, 1968, and audience during *Experiencias '68*, Instituto
Torcuato Di Tella, Buenos Aires

the fact that there is a certain feeling of *being on
the limit* extremely important.[26]

To me, this feeling of "being on the limit" refers
not only to the collapse of reality and representa-
tion in this work, but also to the ethical unease
produced by the class antagonism that character-
ised its conditions of reception. It imposed upon
liberal viewers a sense of shame; as one critic wrote
in a review of Bony's work, "the shared humiliation
of looking at these people who have been paid
in order to let themselves be seen".[27] This complex
dynamic was certainly present in Bony's mind
when he referred to his role in this piece as a
'torturer'—for him, *La Familia Obrera* was based
less on politics than on the production of moral
unease: "it is obvious that the work was based
on ethics, for exposing them [the workers] to ridicule
made me feel uncomfortable".[28]

The closest referent for Bony's work—and one
that was not lost on the art press at that time—
was Masotta's 1966 happening in which twenty
elderly, lower middle class people were paid to stand
in a storage room, in front of an audience, and be
subjected to fire-extinguishers, a high-pitched deaf-
ening sound, and blinding white light. Masotta's
title— *To Conjure the Spirit of an Image*—borrowed
its name from Jean-Jacques Lebel's happening
To Conjure the Spirit of Catastrophe (1962), but its
content was more indebted to a work by La Monte
Young that the Argentinian artist had experienced
in New York earlier that year.[29] Masotta encouraged
the participants to dress as poor people, because
he felt that the process of acting would enable them
to be more than merely passive objects.[30] In other
words, he invited non-professional actors to dress
and act as the social class beneath them. Masotta's
article *I Committed a Happening* (1967) begins
by explaining his choice of title: the artist had been
criticised for 'concocting' a Happening when the
correct Leftist position would have been to abstain
from Happenings altogether (since they were
synonymous with media attention) and instead to
address real political problems (such as hunger).[31]
This false option of "either Happenings or Left
politics" (p. 191) made Masotta feel unsettled, so the
title of his essay— *I Committed a Happening* —
performs an ironic confession of guilt. The rest of
the article narrates the work's realisation, but
his presentation of a false alternative—art or real
politics—is one frequently levelled at artists
today, particularly if their work is based on collabo-
ration with 'underprivileged' constituencies
but does not appear demonstrably ameliorative.

Oscar Masotta
To Conjure the Spirit of an Image, 1966

As in Bony's *La Familia Obrera*, Masotta's
To Conjure the Spirit of an Image also foregrounded
the economic circuit in which the work was
implicated. At the beginning of the event the artist
announced to the audience members—who
had each paid 200 Pesos to attend—that he would
be paying his elderly participants 600 Pesos each.
Describing the participants, he noted that they paid
him much more attention after he increased
their fee to 600 Pesos from the 400 Pesos originally
offered: "I felt a bit cynical", he wrote, "but neither
did I wish to have too many illusions. I didn't
want to demonise myself for this social act of
manipulation which in real society happens every
day" (p. 199). Masotta's cycle of payment and
spectatorship, then, is deliberately positioned in
relation to a larger, more pervasive context of
exploitation. The artist describes turning the glar-
ing spotlights onto the elderly participants in
a manner that foregrounds everyone's consent:

Against the white wall, their spirit shamed and
flattened out by the white light, next to each
other in a line, the old people were rigid, ready
to *let themselves be looked at* for an hour.
The electronic sound lent greater immobility to
the scene. I looked toward the audience: they
too, in stillness, *looked at* the old people. (p. 200)

Masotta's anxiety seems to concern precisely the

uncomfortable power dynamic of the spectatorial
relation induced by the fact of payment: the elderly
participants allow themselves to be objectified,
and the audience members allow the event to pro-
ceed by remaining in their places.[32] The conclusion
to Masotta's text is revealing. He describes how
the happening peturbed his friends on the left,
who wished to know what it meant. Masotta's
answer was succinct: "an act of social sadism made
explicit" (p. 200).[33]

It is significant that the coercive approach
to performance proposed by Bony is predominantly
sculptural: one might say that it is a *tableau* rather
than a situation. Masotta, by contrast, describes
his happening as an event passing out of his control:
handing out earplugs to the performers, he
noticed the audience streaming in: "Something had
begun, and I felt as though something had slipped
loose without my consent, a mechanism had
gone into motion" (p. 200). If sculptural stasis is a
hallmark of some of the more notorious forms
of delegated performance today (think of Santiago
Sierra, or Elmgreen and Dragset), for many
critics this is also a source of such performances'
moral ambiguity. Rather than presenting people
in a manner over which they have some degree of
agency, subjects are directed by the artist to fulfill
primarily formal requirements: standing in a line,

Graciela Carnevale
Action for the *Ciclo de Arte Experimental*, Rosario, October 1968

wearing certain clothes, behaving in a particular way. A further unease, which is far harder to define, comes from a sense that the participants are being requested to *perform themselves*: they are asked to signify a larger socio-economic demographic, for which they stand as an authentic metonymic fragment. It is telling that the most radical performance works created in Argentina after those of Bony and Masotta operated, by contrast, on the *audience* as the privileged material of artistic action. The *Ciclo de Arte Experimental*, a series of ten performance-based events organised by artists in Rosario from May to October 1968, shows a clear development from *live installations* (in which people are placed on display within a gallery) to *constructed situations* in which a more open-ended scenario unfolds without the artist's direct or total control.[34]

Many of these events appropriated social forms, behaviours, and relations and, as Ana Longoni has argued, most were based on a common idea: "working on the audience as the privileged material of artistic action."[35] The eighth action, conceived by Edouardo Favario, played with the authoritative conventions of the gallery: he shut down the exhibition space and put up a notice instructing visitors how to find the work, in another part of the

city. The most striking of these events took place at the end of the cycle on 7 October 1968, and was devised by Graciela Carnevale.[36] The artist describes the work as follows:

> The work consists of first preparing a totally empty room, with totally empty walls; one of the walls, which was made of glass, had to be covered in order to achieve a suitably neutral space for the work to take place. In this room the participating audience, which has come together by chance for the opening, has been locked in. I have taken prisoners. The point is to allow people to enter and to prevent them from leaving. (...) There is no possibility of escape, in fact the spectators have no choice; they are obliged, violently, to participate. Their positive or negative reaction is always a form of participation. *The end of the work, as unpredictable for the viewer as it is for me, is nevertheless intentioned*: will the spectator tolerate the situation passively? Will an unexpected event — help from the outside — rescue him from being locked in? Or will he proceed violently to break the glass?[37]

After an hour, the visitors trapped inside the gallery removed the posters that had been placed on the windows to prevent communication with those outside. Excitement — and the sense that this was all a joke — inevitably turned to frustration, but, contrary to Carnevale's hopes, no one inside the gallery took action. Eventually it was a person on the exterior who smashed a window open, and the private view attendees emerged to freedom through the ragged glass orifice. Some of the people present nevertheless believed that the rescuer had ruined a work and began hitting him over the head with an umbrella. The police arrived and — making a connection between the event and the first anniversary of Che Guevara's arrest — closed down the event and with it the rest of the *Cycle of Experimental Art*.

Although Carnevale's action does not delegate performance to others, I have chosen to mention it here because it is paradigmatic for any discussion about authorial control, risk, and unpredictability. Carnevale's lack of control within an apparently tightly structured framework is the source of her action's aesthetic and political efficacy: on a formal level, it replicated an existing situation of political oppression whose extremity necessitated an equally bold response. Like Masotta and Bony, Carnevale did not have any ethical reservations about her intervention: producing an equation between the micro-oppression of the action and the macro-oppression of Argentinian

society under the dictatorship of General Onganía, her situation enacted the same antagonistic division of the social as the latter, but in order to thematise oppression while also leaving open a space for unpredictable irruptions of agency.[38]

4. OUTSOURCING AUTHENTICITY

Since the events of the *Ciclo de Arte Experimental* operate upon the audience as privileged material, rather than hiring specific people to be seen by others, I am reluctant to refer to them as 'delegated' or 'outsourced' performances. Instead, I would suggest that this phrase be reserved for contemporary iterations of the tendency to hire other people as performers, particularly in art since the early '90s. That these developments have taken place in parallel with managerial changes in the economy at large is not irrelevant. 'Outsourcing', which refers to the logical evolution of businesses 'subcontracting' certain activities to other companies, became a buzzword in the early '90s.[39] Outsourcing is the wholesale divesting of important but non-core activities to other businesses, from customer service call-centres to financial analysis and research.[40] With the growth of economic globalisation during the past fifteen years, 'offshore outsourcing' refers — with not altogether positive connotations — to the use of hired labour and 'virtual companies' in developing countries.[41] For business theorists, outsourcing is presented as a tool for maximising profits, but, curiously, all guides to this subject emphasise the importance of trust: companies give responsibility for some aspect of their production to another company, with all the risks and benefits that this shared responsibility entails. For those more sceptical of globalisation, outsourcing is little more than a legal loophole that allows national and multi-national companies to absolve themselves of the legal responsibility for labour conditions in geographically remote contexts.[42] In the light of the present discussion, it is telling that all the textbooks on outsourcing agree that its primary aim is to 'improve performance'.[43]

But if outsourcing is one of the most significant tropes of economic globalisation, just as delegated performance is among the most characteristic modes of today's visual art performance, then it is also necessary to ask what the differences might be between these concurrent tendencies. Repeatedly in the literature on economic outsourcing we find the same message: delegating business involves relinquishing some (but not total) control, yet the stakes — increased profits — are always dependent

Phil Collins
dünya dinlemiyor, 2005
Still from one of three channels of a colour video installation with sound
(*the world won't listen*, 2004–07)

on *minimising risk*. I would argue that outsourced performance in an artistic context is at its best when, conversely, it *exacerbates* this risk, when the relationship between artist, performer, and viewer is ever more improvisatory and contingent. This is not to say that the resulting work will be more wholesomely collaborative or co-authored, although this may be a result. This leads me to a provisional definition of the difference between live installation and constructed situations. The former will follow, more or less accurately, the effect anticipated by the artist: the actions of participants are to a large extent circumscribed in advance, the emphasis is on form, and unpredictability is minimised — as with actors performing a play. The constructed situation, by contrast, knowingly courts the risk of failure: its form and procedure are dependent upon actions that unravel within a set of partially supplied co-ordinates, and which may not even materialise.[44] Despite this distinction, I would be reluctant to formalise such an opposition between the supposedly authentic 'situation' and the compromised 'live installation', as well as to endorse an ethical value system that privileges the active over the passive performer/participant. The aesthetic and political advantages of delegation are more important than the complex question of what constitutes ethical superiority vis-à-vis the performing subject's agency and degree of self-representation.

As an extension of this argument, I would propose that there is no compelling distinction today between live work and its presentation as documentation, since the latter presupposes and includes the former. The best video works continue to testify to the relentlessly idiosyncratic presence of the singular human being in ways

Artur Żmijewski
Singing Lesson 1, 2001
Video still

that are just as awkward, painful, and exhilarating as encountering a live performer in the gallery, but they complicate this by suggesting the formative role of mediation in the construction of this authentic subject.[45] Some of the most compelling examples of outsourced performance are those that permit 'authenticity' (subjects that are engaged, passionate, fragile, complex) to emerge within situations of intense artificiality. Phil Collins's *the world won't listen* (2005–2007), a video trilogy produced in Bogotá, Istanbul, and Indonesia that depicts young fans of The Smiths passionately singing karaoke to a soundtrack of this British band, is an instance of contemporary delegated performance in which the artist (a long-time fan of The Smiths) finds a community of alter-egos by tracking the global reach of his favourite group from the '80s. The videos take the form of a still camera trained on each performer, who is positioned against a kitsch backdrop (a sunset beach or an alpine view), fantasy vistas that parallel the escapism of karaoke itself. The results are profoundly affecting, particularly the video filmed in Istanbul, where a young woman with glittery eye shadow sings an emotionally devastating version of 'Rubber Ring'. Since the video exploits

the seductiveness of popular music, it inevitably invites comparisons with MTV and reality shows such as *Pop Idol*, but the simplicity of Collins's documentation is stark and uncontrived when contrasted with televised performance. No one is competing for a prize, and there are no judges to reinforce normative standards of success. Indeed, by any conventional musical standards, most of the performances are failures.

The work of Polish artist Artur Żmijewski often revolves around the devising and recording of excruciating situations. In Żmijewski's video *The Singing Lesson I* (2001), a group of deaf students is filmed singing the Kyrie to Maklakiewicz's 1944 Polish Mass in a Warsaw church. The opening shot is staggeringly hard: an image of the church interior, all elegant neoclassical symmetry, is offset by the cacophonous distorted voice of a young girl, clearly uncomfortable with being centre stage as the main performer. She is surrounded by fellow students who, unable to hear her efforts, chat with one another in sign language. Although Żmijewski's editing draws constant attention to the contrast between the choir and their environment, suggesting that religious paradigms of perfection continue to inform our

ideas of beauty, his work derives its stark potency from the fact that this near unthinkable social experiment actually took place. To have presented the work live would be too extreme an experience (for both the performers and the audience); video, by contrast, allows Żmijewski to direct the viewer's attention away from the individuals in order to draw out larger points about religion, harmony, community, and communication. Like Collins's *the world won't listen*, *The Singing Lesson* asks us to devise new criteria for performance.

In these situations, the staged and the spontaneous are fused to the point where it is difficult to establish what 'unmediated' behaviour might be. Directorial control is essential to these works and yet the outcome is entirely dependent on the ability of the performers to surpass the artist's (and the viewer's) expectations.[46] This argument can also be inverted: even with Tino Sehgal, who rejects photographic documentation altogether, the almost hermetic artificiality of his staged situations performed live in the gallery serves to foreground the excruciating inauthenticity of our spontaneous behaviour. This is particularly true of works that require spoken interaction with his performers (a term Sehgal rejects in favour of 'interpreters'). In *This Progress* (2006), the viewer is led through the gallery in turn by four different performers of increasing age and engaged in discussions about the meaning of progress, development, and utopia. You hear yourself speaking in clichés, unable to break the conceptual structure that the artist has set in place. *This objective of that object* (2004) also places the viewer within a trap: as you enter the gallery, five people have their backs turned to you and encourage a discussion about subjectivity and objectivity. Their words sound depersonalised and any contribution you make to this discussion feels appallingly empty and hollow, as does the banal debate performed live in front of you.[47] Although Sehgal's work proudly declares its dematerialised performativity by renouncing photographic reproduction, it seems actively to tear apart any equation between liveness and authenticity; indeed, the very fact that the work runs continually in the space for the duration of the exhibition, by any number of interpreters, erodes any residual attachment to an original or ideal 'performance'.

This confusion, if not total collapse, of the live and recorded, spontaneous and scripted, is in part a corollary of mediation theory that emerged in the late '70s. Though formulated most comprehensively by Jean Baudrillard, it has devel-

oped more recently in the realm of performance studies through critiques of Peggy Phelan's influential argument that performance is ontologically live and impossible to mediate.[48] When surveying delegated performances of the last decade, during which time the live and spontaneous seems to hold decreasing significance for artists, this goes in two directions. The first is an amplification of *artificiality*, where artists employ actors to perform in ways that serve to generate ambiguity and complicate the boundary between fiction and reality, authentic and staged. Joe Scanlan's project to insert into the art world a young, ambitious black artist called Donelle Woolford is a good example, since it elides two types of delegation, professional (job identity) and personal (gender/race identity). The second direction is an amplification of *authenticity*, which is relocated away from the artist and onto the social group (regardless of whether these people are actually present in a space or mediated by video). Elmgreen and Dragset's *Reg(u)arding the Guards*, hiring twelve unemployed men and women, is one example of this tendency.[49] Like Bony's *La Familia Obrera*, this social group is reified as a representation of itself, and the authentic presence of the artist is displaced onto the presence of what Silvija Jestrović has referred to as a 'hyper-authentic' social group. Alluding to Baudrillard's concept of the 'hyperreal', Jestrović proposes the term 'hyper-authentic' as a descriptor for works in which the authenticity of the subject is constructed through the artist as director and through the gaze of the beholder, rather than by the subjects themselves.[50] The hyper-authentic is that which is *doubly* present, doubly authentic: both presence and representation, signifier and signified. It is this hyper-authenticity that differentiates much '60s- and '70s-era work from delegated performance of the present decade.

It will be argued that I still have not addressed the ethical question of delegated performance. In previous essays I have argued against reducing a work of art to judgements of humanist ethical criteria, in other words, against drawing an equation between a conventionally agreed 'good' model of collaboration and a resulting 'good art'. Recently, Dave Beech has argued for a distinction between participation and collaboration: participants are subject to the parameters of the artist's project, while collaboration involves co-authorship and decisions over key structural features of the work.[51] I would agree with this distinction, but not with Beech's desire to translate it into a binding set of value judgments when applied to art.

Elmgreen and Dragset
Reg(u)arding the Guards, 2005
Installation view, Bergen Kunsthall, 2005

Manipulation and coercion do not invalidate a work if it exists in critical dialogue with a larger social and political context, as can be seen in some of the works discussed in this essay. In this respect, it is worth noting the frequency with which delegating artists adopt strategies of mimicry or over-identification that are not subject to the false binary of critical/complicit.[52] For example, it can be argued that Collins and Żmijewski appropriate the rules of reality television, but they redirect it to entirely different ends: despite their artistic control, their representations are aimed at revealing an authentically creative subject: one that exists outside conventional criteria, and is constructed through mediation, despite post-structuralist critiques of the authentic self. Looking at their works through a reductively humanist framework of reification ensures that the greater import of their work is misunderstood.[53]

In the most compelling examples of 'delegated performance', then, a series of paradoxical operations is at work. Authorship is put into question through an emphatically authored event: the artist delegates control of the work to his or her performers, who act with more or less agency in a highly constructed yet high-risk situation. Power is both derailed and reclaimed through this gesture of delegation, since the artist temporarily loses control over the event, before returning

to select and circulate its representation through a documentary photograph or edited video. Finally, and most complicatedly, authenticity is deferred and yet amplified by the indexical presence of a particular social group (regardless of whether this is live or mediated); their presence collapses presentation and representation, and relocates authenticity away from the singular artist (who masturbates, is shot, is naked, etc.) and onto the collective otherness of the performers who represent an authentic socio-political issue (homelessness, immigration, disability, etc). But this authenticity is not deployed in a straightforward manner: although the works take their significance from the fact that the performers met-onymically signify an 'issue', artists often use this authenticity to question subjectivity and assert its imbrication in constructedness, fiction, even alienation.[54] The performing subjects are reified (decontextualised, and laden with other attributes) precisely in order to thematise contemporary reification, authenticity, and (in some cases) ethics itself. In this light, the risk of superficiality that accompanies the reductive branding or packaging of social identities ('the unemployed', 'the blind', 'children', 'brass band players') should always be set against the dominant modes of mediatic representation against which these works so frequently battle.[55] The criteria for judging this work should

not be its exploitation of the performers, but rather its resistant stance towards the society in which it finds itself and the modes of subjectivity produced therein. This, for me, is the dividing line between the facile gestures of so much 'art fair art' and those more troubling works that struggle to articulate difficult material through the use of conventionally unexposed constituencies. At their best, delegated performances produce disruptive events that testify to a shared reality between viewers and performers, and that throw into question agreed ways of thinking about subjectivity, ethics, and economics. At their worst they produce the mere spectacle of participation: staged reality designed *for* the media, rather than paradoxically mediated presence.

1   This will be the main focus of this essay. However, there are examples of artists outsourcing performance to experts (such as opera singers in *Sediments Sentiments (Figures of Speech)* [2007] by Allora and Calzadilla or sprinters in *Work no. 850* [2008] by Martin Creed). In this essay I will not be focusing on such a use of professionals or experts, nor will I be accounting for the use of actors in works of art, as found (for example) in the videos of James Coleman or Gerard Byrne. Nor will I discuss the rise of re-enacted performance as a historical and artistic problem, although this tendency — like that of delegation — is partly a corollary of performance art's institutionalisation, as recent exhibitions have indicated. Take, for example, *A Little Bit of History Repeated* (Kunst-Werke, Berlin, 2001), *A Short History of Performance* (Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, 2001–2006), *Life, Once More* (Witte de With, Rotterdam, 2005), *Again for Tomorrow* (Royal College of Art, London, 2006), *History Will Repeat Itself: Strategies of Re-enactment in Contemporary Art* (Kunst-Werke, 2007), *Re-enactments* (DHC/ART Foundation, Montreal, 2008), and, of course, Marina Abramović's series of re-enactments *Seven Easy Pieces* (Guggenheim New York, 2006).
2   Vito Acconci's *Conversions* (1971) or Ana Mendieta's *Facial Hair Transplant* (1972) would be good examples. Judith Butler's theory of gender as assumed and 'performative' has had numerous applications to body art; see, for example, Amelia Jones, *Body Art/Performing the Subject*, Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1998.
3   As such, it was an artistic form particularly appealing to female artists who had nothing to lose by asserting an independent practice outside the male-dominated circuits of the market and museum system. As Vito Acconci has observed, "performance in the 70s was inherently feminist art" (Acconci, in Richard Prince, 'Vito Acconci', *Bomb Magazine*, Summer 1991, p. 53). RoseLee Goldberg adds: "Unconcerned about the established art world, where they had little clout anyway, many women gravitated towards performance because it was a medium ungoverned by conventional art world protocol; the studio visit, the gallery show, the critical review, the curatorial nod." (Goldberg, *Performance! Live Art Since 1960*, New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1998, p. 129.) A quick survey of performance and body art from this period reveals that the majority of works by female artists took place in alternative spaces or public space, while male artists (Acconci and Burden included) tended to perform within commercial galleries.
4   Abramović described how she re-recorded the video documentation of several works, such as *Art Must Be Beautiful/Artist Must Be Beautiful* (1975), in order to improve their appearance. Marina Abramović, 'Seven Easy Pieces, or How to Perform', Frieze Art Fair, 13 October 2006.
5   With these particular artists in mind, it is worth noting Jon McKenzie's argument that in the '80s, "critical theory gradually took on the efficacy that artists, activists, and scholars had long attributed to the body". McKenzie, *Perform or Else: From Discipline to Performance*, London: Routledge, 2001, p. 40.
6   However, Amelia Jones has argued that Stelarc represents a dissolution of the body in new technologies and thus a 'posthuman' condition. I would contest that this represents a significant shift in performance from the '70s paradigm, as attention is still focused upon the singular and authentically suffering artist, despite being the subject of technological dispersal. See Jones, 'Dispersed Subjects and the Demise of the "Individual": 1990s bodies in/as art', chapter five of *Body Art/Performing the Subject*.
7   The phrase 'live art' arose in the UK to describe the separation of experimental performance from visual art. This division is derived as much from separate sources of funding (i.e., different panels within Arts Council England) and separate points of dissemination (through festivals rather than galleries) as it does from any common characteristics in the work itself; indeed one could argue that live art's position is not defined positively (e.g., by shared attributes) but negatively in relation to mainstream 'high' culture. On its website, the Live Art Development Agency, founded in London in 1999, maintains that "The term Live Art is not a description of an artform or discipline, but a cultural strategy to include experimental processes and experiential practices that might otherwise be excluded from established curatorial, cultural and critical frameworks. Live Art is a framing device for a catalogue of approaches to the possibilities of liveness by artists who chose to work across, in between, and at the edges of more traditional artistic forms." http://www.thisisliveart.co.uk/about_us/what_is_live_art.html (last accessed 17 October 2008).
8   Cattelan's other works of the '90s also play with a displacement of the artist's identity: *Super Noi* (1992) comprises fifty drawings of the artist based on descriptions given by his friends and acquaintances and drawn by police composite portrait sketchers. Here the act of description and production is delegated to the kind of artist whose skills are not typically valued in the contemporary art world.
9   Francesco Bonami, in *Maurizio Cattelan*, London: Phaidon, revised edition, 2003, p. 58. Bonami makes excessive claims for this work's political potential: the artist certainly redefines his centrality, but to

speak of this as having democratic ambitions seems to misread the tenor of Cattelan's provocative output.

10   See Paweł Althamer, '1000 Words', *Artforum*, May 2006, pp. 268–69.

11   Significantly, Deller's collaboration has now become part of the Fairey Band's repertoire and features on their website. See http://www.faireyband.com/acidbrass.html (last accessed 17 October 2008)

12   The development of Sierra's work follows a clear path through 1999, from *24 blocks of concrete constantly moved during a day's work by paid workers* (Los Angeles, July), in which the workers are not seen but their presence and payment is made known to us, to *People Paid to Remain inside Cardboard Boxes* (G&T Building, Guatemala City, August), in which the minimalist logic of embodied perception is literalised in the concealed presence of low-paid workers, a metaphor for their 'invisibility' in society. The first work in which the participants are rendered visible is *450 Paid People* (Museo Rufino Tamayo, Mexico City, October), and culminates in a work that continues to be inflammatory: *250cm line tattooed on 6 paid people* (Espacio Aglutinador, Havana, December). Sierra's projects have a relentless, aggressive quality that has been sharply criticised across the political spectrum.

13   In each of Sierra's publications, works are documented in black-and-white photographs, the artwork title, a brief caption that explains where and when the performance took place, and information about how much the participants were paid. See, for example, "*Person paid to remain inside the trunk of a car*, Limerick City Art Gallery, Limerick, Ireland, March 2000. This piece was produced during the inauguration of the fourth EV+A Biennial, at the entrance to its main site. A vehicle was parked at the gallery's entrance and a person was put into its trunk. The person was paid 30 Irish pounds, about 40 dollars. Nobody noticed his presence, since he was put into the trunk before the public's arrival at the opening." *Santiago Sierra, Works 2002–1990*, Birmingham, UK: Ikon Gallery, 2002, p. 84.

14   Performance was "a democratic mode, where young artists who did not have access to art galleries or enough money to produce studio art for exhibition could show their work quickly to other artists in the community." Dan Graham, 'Performance: End of the 60s', in *Two-Way Mirror Power*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999, p. 143.

15   Tino Sehgal has contrasted the cost of his works to the cost of exhibiting a steel sculpture by Richard Serra: if the Serra is initially expensive to install, that cost does not increase during the course of the exhibition; conversely, the costs of Sehgal's art mount every day. (Tino Sehgal, discussion at the ICA, London, 19 November 2004.) The comparison to Serra is telling: Sehgal resists the term performance and instead conceives of his work as sculpture, since it is present in the gallery space for the entire duration of the exhibition. The largest drains on the budget for *Double Agent* were the ongoing performances by Joe Scanlan (*Donelle Woolford*) and Dora Garcia (*Instant Narrative [IN]*). The concept of duration in performance has shifted from a solitary, quasi-existential test for the singular artist to an economic gesture inextricable from contractual employment.

16   Philip Auslander, *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatised Culture*, London and New York: Routledge, 1999, p. 58. He continues: "Even within our hyper-mediatized culture, far more symbolic capital is attached to live events than to mediatized ones".

17   The work of Tino Seghal is exemplary here: despite the fact that he refuses photographic documentation, Sehgal's work benefits from a different sort of publicity, word-of-mouth hype.

18   *Parangolé* is a neologism (like many of Oiticica's titles), a slang term loosely translatable as "an animated situation and sudden confusion and/or agitation between people".

19   The artist Rubens Gerchman recalled that "This was the first time that the common people entered the Museu de Arte Moderna of Rio de Janeiro... He entered the museum with the members of Mangueira Hill and everybody followed him. They tried to expel him but Oiticica started screaming that if black people could not enter the museum, that this was racism." Gerchman, cited in Claudia Calirman, 'Naked Man: Flaming Chickens: A Brief History of Brazilian Performance Art', in Deborah Cullen, ed., *Arte ff Vida: Actions by Artists of the Americas 1960–2000*, New York: El Museo del Barrio, 2008, p. 102.

20   Bony's *La Familia Obrera* is one that — in line with the current trend for the historical recovery of precursors of relational art — has recently been restaged in *Instituto Di Tella Experiencias 68* (Fundacion Proa, Buenos Aires, 1998); *Worthless (Invaluable)* (Museum of Modern Art, Ljubljana, 2000); and *Inverted Utopias* (Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 2004). Other examples of this historical recovery include the multiple restagings across Europe and the US of Martha Rosler's *Garage Sale* (1977), Ian Wilson's 'Discussions' and the Wrong Gallery's restaging of Gino de Domenici's *Second Possibility of Mortality (The Universe is Motionless)* (1972). The latter work, in which a person affected by Down's Syndrome, seated on a chair, gazes at a beach ball and a rock placed on the ground before him/her, was restaged at the Frieze Art Fair in 2006.

21   Source: Email conversation with Roberto Jacoby, 17 January 2006.

22   At the time, however, it was framed within contemporary discussions around Pop art. The critic from *Revista Primera Plana* thought that *La Familia Obrera* "brought the destiny of pop art to a close". See *Instituto Di Tella Experiencias 68*, p. 78 (my translation).

23   Verbitsky, *Arte y Politica*, cited in *Instituto Di Tella Experiencias 68*, p. 78

24   It is worth noting that Lucy Lippard visited Argentina in 1968, but she does not credit Masotta for the term 'dematerialisation', which became the key thesis of her 1973 publication *Six Years: The Dematerialisation of the Art Object 1966–1972*.

25   Jack Bankowsky has coined the term 'art fair art' to designate a mode of performance in which the spectacular and economic context of the art fair is integral to the work's meaning, but against which the artist's gestures provide a mild point of friction. Bankowsky defines 'art fair art' as post-Pop performance that trades equally on conceptual dematerialisation and public relations. Warholian in inspiration, art fair art suggests that critique cannot stand at a pure distance from the "point-of-purchase universe", and makes "the fair — its mechanisms and machinations — the subject, if not the central plotline, of its play." In other words, art fair art concerns a self-reflexive approach to art's circulation and consumption in a commercial environment. Bankowsky, 'Tent Community', *Artforum*, October 2005, pp. 228–232. Typical examples of 'art fair art' from the Frieze Art Fair in London (one of the leading forums for this tendency) might include Elmgreen and Dragset's doubling of the booth of their Berlin gallery Klosterfelde, complete with identical works of art and a lookalike dealer (2005); Richard Prince's *Untitled (Original)* (2007), a yellow sports car attended by a busty female model; and numerous performances staged by the Wrong Gallery, such as Paola Pivi's *100 Chinese* (1998–2005), one hundred identically dressed Chinese people standing in the gallery's booth.

26   Bony, cited in *Instituto Di Tella Experiencias 68*, p. 79. My translation and emphasis.

27   *Revista Análisis*, cited in *Instituto Di Tella Experiencias 68*, p. 76.

28   Bony interviewed in *La Maga* magazine, Buenos Aires, June 16, 1993, p. 11; cited in Ana Longoni and Mariano Mestman, *Avant-Garde and Politics in Argentine '68: The Itinerary Towards Tucuman Arde*, PhD thesis, p. 80.

29   La Monte Young's work involved a continuous indecipherable noise: its "exasperating electronic endlessness" induced Masotta to a higher awareness of vision and consciousness. Masotta, 'I committed a happening', in Katzenstein (ed), *Listen, Here, Now!: Argentine Art of the 1960s: Writings of the Avant-garde*, New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2004, p. 195.

30   "I told them that they should dress as poor people, but they shouldn't use make-up. They didn't all obey me completely; the only way not to totally be objects, totally passive, I thought, was for them to do something related to the profession of an actor." Masotta, 'I Committed a Happening', in Katzenstein (ed), *Listen, Here, Now!*, p. 200.

31   Oscar Masotta, 'I Committed a Happening', in Katzenstein (ed), *Listen, Here, Now!* pp.191–201.

32   This sense of being transfixed by a spectacle recently came to my mind when a friend recounted how she and only three others walked out of Vanessa Beecroft's 2006 performance *VB59* at the National Gallery, London. For this performance, approximately thirty black models were draped on a table, half naked or clothed in fruit and flowers, at which the fashion company Louis Vuitton held a dinner for 100 guests.

33   It is important to note that Masotta was responsible for introducing the work of Jacques Lacan to the Argentinian psychoanalytic community in the early '60s and was the most influential figure in psychoanalysis in that country. He was also a key point of contact between psychoanalysis and contemporary art at the Instituto Di Tella: "The Di Tella was one of the bridges between psychoanalysis and cultural modernisation. They shared the same public, the expanded middle class with its fascination with modernity. Most people who went to the Di Tella's exhibits were readers of *Primera Plana*, a magazine that played an important role in diffusing psychoanalysis and promoting modern culture in general. Well-known psychoanalysts attended the Di Tella's exhibits and some of them bought artworks they saw there. Moreover, analysts as highly visible as Enrique Pichon Riviere participated in some of the Institute's most controversial functions. Pichon was featured in the media providing psychoanalytic interpretations of 'happenings' and other artistic experiences. People who developed a theoretical interest in psychoanalysis, such as Oscar Masotta [...] also developed close links to the Institute. For the intellectually progressive middle class, the Instituto Di Tella and psychoanalysis were part of the same complex enterprise of cultural modernisation." Mariano Ben Plotkin. *Freud in the Pampas: The Emergence and Development of a Psychoanalytic Culture in Argentina*, Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001, p. 80.

34   I have chosen the phrase 'constructed situations' in direct reference to the Situationist International's aim to produce alternatives to the

portable and commodifiable work of art. The constructed situation was a participatory event that aimed to transform everyday life into a "higher, passionate nature", for example through non-competitive games or through *dérives* (meandering through the city while paying attention to its changing environments). A key difference between Debord's conception of the constructed situation and the works I am discussing is the attachment of the latter to the institution of art. Debord, by contrast, wanted art to be overcome by reality in order to render everyday life less alienated. See Guy Debord, 'Towards a Situationist International', 1957, in Claire Bishop, ed., *Participation*, London and Cambridge, MA: Whitechapel and MIT Press, 2006, pp. 96–101.

35   Longoni, *Avant-Garde and Politics in Argentine '68*, p. 109. She then argues that the central ideas concerned "a withdrawal from institutional spaces, the search for a new language and for new audiences, spectators' integration in the material aspects of the work and, above all, ideas to merge art with the praxis of life" (p. 113).

36   This action has undergone considerable reassessment in recent years, and formed a central component of Documenta 12, 2007. It was presented in Roger Buergel's exhibition *The Government* in Luneberg, Rotterdam, Barcelona, and Vienna, 2003–2005; WHW's *Collective Creativity*, Fridericianum, Kassel, 2005; *Again, For Tomorrow*, Royal College of Art, London, 2006; Charles Esche and Will Bradley's *Forms of Resistance*, Van Abbe Museum, Eindhoven, 2007.

37   Carnevale, in Katzenstein, *Listen, Here, Now!*, p. 299. My emphasis.

38   The question arises as to what extent this political context is the reason why the Argentinian scene in particular gave rise to such anti-humanist forms of art. One could speculate that this type of work emerges in Argentina as a result of the country's strong history of Lacanian psychoanalysis, with an obvious figure of overlap in Masotta. Although I am wary of using psychoanalysis to describe a mechanism in artistic production, one could say that the ethical position represented by these artists is close to an anti-humanist Lacanian ethics of 'do not give ground to your desire': in other words, sustaining a fidelity to one's singular vision or desire, despite all painful consequences — including the fact that it may not conform to society's normative expectations of good or proper behaviour. Lacanian ethics advocates what is truthful and right for the individual subject, rather than acting for the eyes and expectations of the Big Other. See Lacan, *Seminar VII: The Ethics of Psychoanalysis (1959–1960)*, London: Tavistock/Routledge, 1992.

39   Subcontracting is defined as handing over specialist jobs (such as accounting or the fabrication of specialised components) to companies outside a business.

40   The first book on outsourcing in the British Library catalogue dates from 1993. "Outsourcing started to become fashionable in the late 1980s. However, it very much came of age in the 1990s, and certainly became a normal part of corporate life by the turn of the century... And now global outsourcing is on everyone's mind." Per Jenster, Henrik Stener Pedersen, Patricia Plackett, and David Hussey, *Outsourcing/Insourcing: Can vendors make money from the new relationship opportunities?* Chichester: John Wiley and Sons, Ltd., 2005, p. ix.

41   "What China has become to manufacturing, India has become to the new world of business process outsourcing (BPO) — which includes everything from payroll to billing to IT support." Steven Schifferes, 'Globalisation shakes the world', BBC News, Sunday 21 January 2007, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/6279679.stm (last accessed 23 October 2008)

42   Some of the advantages of outsourcing include: no sick leave or holiday cover; no staff training; no salaries, taxes, or pension contributions.

43   "...outsourcing is just one tool of many in the performance improvement armoury", Robert White and Barry James, *The Outsourcing Manual*, Gower Publishing/Lucidus Ltd, 1996, p. xiv. It's worth noting that there has been considerable opposition to outsourcing in the US, most notably during the 2004 presidential campaign, when the White House came under pressure to limit outsourcing in order to protect domestic business. See N. Gregory Mankiw and Phillip Swagel, *The Politics and Economics of Offshore Outsourcing*, Working Paper 12398, National Bureau of Economic Research, Inc., 2006.

44   During the production of *Double Agent*, we attempted to commission a new work from Phil Collins. His proposal, *Ghost Rider*, involved hiring a ghost writer to write a feature on ghost writers, which would appear in *The Guardian* newspaper, signed by Phil Collins. The resulting article was considered unsuitable by Collins in both its tone and content, and the feature did not go to press.

45   What surprises me always is how acutely this singular presence comes across, even when the performers' bodies are ostensibly perfect — as in the female models of a Vanessa Beecroft performance, restlessly struggling to keep balance on top of their Manolo Blahnik heels. Of course, this fascination alone is not enough to justify her work, but it complicates an easy dismissal of it.

46   Artur Żmijewski: "You can say I decide where the plot is to begin—

and life takes it from there. Only this means a loss of control, or only partial control over the course of events. Therefore the answer is that things always get out of control — I do not know what the film is going to look like, I do not work with actors that imitate reality. I have no script. My protagonists are unpredictable and their behaviour is beyond my control. So I set things in motion and the action unfolds — but at the same time I try not to run aground, so I am alert and try to correct the course a little. It is interesting because it is a voyage into the unknown. There is no plan — no script — I do not know where the trip ends." 'Terror of the Normal: Sebastian Cichocki interviews Artur Żmijewski', *Tauber Bach*, Leipzig: Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst, 2003, p. 112.

47   This is not to say that Sehgal's work is a failure; on the contrary it can be fascinating, especially when one takes into account the oral and performative procedures that the artist imposes on institutions who wish to acquire his work.

48   Phelan's argument can be summarised in these sentences: "Performance's only life is in the present. Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations of representations: once it does so, it becomes something other than performance." Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance*, London: Routledge, 1993, p. 146.

49   There is still an important distinction to be made between video and photography. All the mediated examples of delegated performance I have been referring to use video or film, a time-based medium that retains a sense of duration and performance, unlike static photo-conceptualism in which the performance was never public. This is why I am not including within this genealogy early examples such as Sophie Calle's *The Sleepers* (1979).

50   Silvija Jestrović, 'Performing Like an Asylum Seeker: Paradoxes of Hyper-Authenticity', *Research in Drama Education* Vol. 13, No. 2, June 2008, pp. 159–70, and reprinted in slightly altered form in the present volume. She takes the term from Baudrillard's concept of the hyperreal, but while Baudrillard's notion "suggests that everything is placed on the same plane, making the relationship between the signifier and the signified obsolete, the hyper-authentic still carries the tensions between presence and representation, theatricality and performativity, immediacy and mediation".

51   Dave Beech, 'Include Me Out', *Art Monthly*, April 2008, pp. 1–4: "the participant typically is not cast as an agent of critique or subversion but rather as one who is invited to accept the parameters of the art project [...] participation always involves a specific invitation and a specific formation of the participant's subjectivity, even when the artist asks them simply to be themselves. [...] Collaborators, however, are distinct from participants insofar as they share authorial rights over the artwork that permit them, among other things, to make fundamental decisions about the key structural features of the work. That is, collaborators have rights that are withheld from participants" (p. 3).

52   For a good overview of overidentification, see BAVO/Gideon Boie, Matthias Pauwels [eds], *Cultural Activism Today: The Art of Overidentification*, Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Episode Publishers, 2007.

53   In his essay 'Private Morality, Immoral World', Zygmunt Bauman has argued against this tendency to focus on 'micro-ethics' (individuals) rather than 'macro-ethics' (global politics), and this distinction can readily be applied to the widespread willingness to judge works of art on solely ethical grounds. Zygmunt Bauman, *The Individualised Society*, Cambridge, England: Polity Press, 2001, p. 194.

54   One of the earliest examples of this genre is Philippe Parreno's project *No More Reality* (1991–93), which included a children's demonstration featuring placards bearing the slogan 'No More Reality' and a four-minute video of this action (*No More Reality [Demonstration]*, 1991). Interviewed about the project, Parreno asks: "What happens when the image breaks into reality? When there is no difference between signifier and signified? [...] instead of virtual reality, real virtuality. [...] Reality is manipulable and constantly manipulated. To say 'No More Reality' is to undertake a process of re-creation, or reinvention of reality. [...] Today, I still have this idea that there is fundamental difference between the real, the image and commentary. I am looking for time-space zones where these three elements can be apprehended simultaneously. Indeed that I think is one enormous difference between our epoch and the previous one: the refusal to hierarchise the three modes of experience". See Parreno, 'Virtualité Réelle', *Art Press*, No. 208, December 1995, p. 41.

55   As Phil Collins's *Return of the Real* (2006–2007) makes so abundantly clear, reality television depends upon the merciless shoehorning of participants to fit stereotypical characters in cliched narratives whose predictability is designed to attract high viewing figures.