Black Box, White Cube, Gray Zone

Dance Exhibitions and Audience Attention

Claire Bishop

As performance has become an increasingly frequent phenomenon in US and European museums, it has also come under fire from art historians and critics who see its rise as a misguided fad and a cynical marketing gesture.[1] Critic Jerry Saltz, for example, has been outspoken in his distaste for MoMA's extension plan because it "privileges live-action events, performance, entertainment, and almost anything that doesn't just sit still to be looked at. [...] The new MoMA is designed to allow for an ever-increasing number of events whose primary purpose is to produce little hits of serotonin and dopamine" (2014:129). His comments are echoed by critic Sven Lütticken, who argues that the work of Tino Sehgal exhibits a "perfect compatibility with the temporalized and *eventized* museum, in which something (anything) must happen almost all the time" (2015:91); when dance is brought into the museum, he writes, "the visitors effectively become co-performers in [...] the museum as three-dimensional Facebook" (96). More recently, a Canadian critic complained that Anne Imhof's *Angst* (2016/17) is just a "supremely Instagrammable spectacle": a "repertoire of images drawn at random" in which

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1. Performance is also increasingly present in commercial art galleries and art fairs, but the focus of this article is the museum due to its historical commitment to public access.

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performers labor four hours a night to produce carefully choreographed images, each ultimately "as fleeting as the Snapchats documenting it" (Hugill 2016). Even if these critics don't all directly draw an equation between performance and social media, they tend to equate performance with presentism, distraction, and entertainment, and implicitly make an appeal for the pleasure of looking at dead objects.[2]

Performance studies, by contrast, has been predictably less anxious about spectacle, and instead reads the resurgence of artistic interest in performance, and the performative turn of culture more generally, through theories of post-Fordist labor. As Jon McKenzie argues in *Perform or Else* (2001), neoliberal economies are fixated on performance as an index of evaluation; performance has become the regulatory ideal of our time, replacing Foucault's idea of disciplinary surveillance. Performance theorists have turned to Italian post-Workerist theory as a framework for contemporary performance, and conversely, Italian post-Workerists have turned to performance to account for post-Fordist labor practices.[3] Paolo Virno, for example, has argued that post-Fordism turns us all into virtuoso performers, since the basis of labor is no longer the production of a commodity as end-product (as it was on the Fordist production line), but today is a communicational act, designed for an audience; it is the fulfillment of an action internal to the action itself. In his account, wage labor is based around the possession (and performance) of aesthetic tastes, affects, emotions, and—most importantly—"linguistic cooperation." Today we are all virtuosic performers (Virno 2004:52–65).

This chiasmic relationship between performance and economics is easy to prove from a glance at recent works in museums and galleries. An entire subclass of performer has emerged who specializes in the performance of other artists' pieces, with contracts that are not quite zero-hour but certainly short-term and bereft of healthcare and insurance. (This is unlike the worlds of dance, music, theatre, and film, in which these benefits are long-established and often automatic.) Over 100 people were recruited for Sehgal's *These Associations* (2012) at Tate Modern, of whom 50 were performing at any one moment. Affective labor is often part of these works: outsourced performers are increasingly asked to draw upon their own experiences in order to lend authenticity and creativity to an artist or choreographer's project. *These Associations*, for example, required performers to recall when they felt a sense of belonging, and when they experienced a sense of arrival; these memories were then condensed into short stories and repeated to visitors throughout the performers' seven-hour shifts, four or five days a week, for three months. A crucial part of this performance was a "linguistic cooperation" with the public.

Yet as important as these readings related to labor are, I have reservations about their usefulness. Ultimately they lead us to the same gloomy prognoses of the art historians: performance in the museum relies upon neoliberal labor practices such as precarious short-term contracts, outsourcing, and affective labor. These issues come to dominate the discussion, and have the reductive effect of rendering live art a victim of neoliberal imperatives.[4] It also blinds us to

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2. Research for this article was supported by the Creative Capital | Andy Warhol Foundation Arts Writers Grant Program.

3. See for example the "Precarity and Performance" issue of *TDR*, edited by Nicholas Ridout and Rebecca Schneider (2012) and the "On Labour and Performance" issue of *Performance Research*, edited by Bojana Kunst and Gabriele Klein (2012).

4. In this essay I use "live art" to denote the full spectrum of live performance in the museum: music, theatre, dance, and performance art.

Figure 1. (facing page) A "dance exhibition" in the white cube gallery. Anne Imhof, Faust*, 2017, German Pavilion, 57th International Art Exhibition—La Biennale di Venezia. Performers: Eliza Douglas and Franziska Aigner. (Photo by Nadine Fraczkowski; courtesy of Anne Imhof and German Pavilion)*

other operations that take place when performance enters the museum. I want to argue that this work isn't simply an unreflexive replication of the neoliberal experience economy in which it thrives, but tells us important things about the changing character of spectatorship. This can best be seen in a new, hybrid type of performance that I call the *dance exhibition*: the prolongation of performance to fill gallery opening hours. It is a type used both by visual artists who hire professional dancers, singers, and actors to undertake their works (think of Pablo Bronstein, Cally Spooner, Alexandra Pirici, Anne Imhof) and by choreographers willing to adjust their stage works to exhibition spaces in order to reach wider and more diverse audiences (e.g., Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker, Xavier Le Roy, Maria Hassabi).[5] I read the dance exhibition as the paradigmatic form of the new "gray zones" for performance that have evolved out of the historical convergence of experimental theatre's "black box" and the gallery's "white cube." One of the characteristics of the gray zone is social media: smartphones are an integral part of spectatorship, in part because the dance exhibition emerged (and flourished) at precisely the same moment that our lives became dominated by ubiquitous portable technology: the first dance exhibitions took place in 2007, the same year as the introduction of the iPhone and the Cloud.[6] The symbiotic relation between the dance exhibition and digital technology is therefore not a problem to be disparaged or discounted, but is fundamental to the proliferation and popularity of this genre—while also giving rise to choreographic approaches that oppose this apparently unstoppable mutual attraction.[7]

Museums and Performance

How did we arrive at a situation in which so many visual artists are hiring dancers, and so many choreographers are presenting in museums? To answer this, we need to be mindful of the small but important differences between *visual art performance* (i.e., work created by visual artists) and the *performing arts* (i.e., work by those trained in theatre, dance, music). We then need to focus on the shifting relationship between these two modes over the course of the 20th century, taking into account the *apparatus* through which performance is presented.[8] I consider this apparatus to be a form of mediation prior to anything we habitually consider to be such—conventionally, video and photographic documentation.

As histories of performance art have shown, visual art performance from the historical avant-garde onwards has existed in an antagonistic and de-skilled relationship with the performing arts: think of Futurist *serate* and Dada cabaret parodying variety theatre, or the way in which

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5. See for example the comments of curator Frank Bock in Sara Wookey's *Who Cares? Dance in the Gallery and Museum* (2015:68).

6. Although Tino Sehgal can be said to have devised the protocols for sustaining performance continually in an exhibition space, it is telling that he began by forbidding all photography of his work. By the time of his solo exhibition at the Guggenheim Museum, New York, in 2010, it was no longer possible to control the photography of his performances as cameraphones could be used too quickly and discreetly. The first group exhibition to involve continuous performance in the gallery space seems to be *A Choreographed Exhibition*, Kunsthalle St Gallen, in 2007, which was open four hours a day, five days a week, between 1 December 2007 and 13 January 2008.

7. Although artists have found a way to exhibit theatre and music continually in the gallery, it is the visual and sensuous character of *dance* where we find the strongest convergence of contemporary anxieties around technology, attention, labor, and collective presence. This is why I use the phrase "dance exhibition" rather than "performance exhibition."

8. For Giorgio Agamben, an "apparatus" is defined very broadly as "anything that has in some way the capacity to capture, orient, determine, intercept, model, control, or secure the gestures, behaviours, opinions, or discourses of living beings" (2009:14). I use "apparatus" in a more limited sense, akin to film theory's description of the cinematic apparatus as the ideological production of a spectating subject who identifies with the (gendered) point of view onscreen.

Happenings and Aktionism dismantled proscenium theatre into participatory events, or of Fluxus's playful (and occasionally violent) subversions of the classical music recital.[9] Visual art performance consciously de-skilled the conventions of professional theatre, abandoning technical accoutrements (costumes, sets, lighting, amplified sound) as well as fixed seating and the centrality of text (with a narrative arc and character development) in favor of visual events in the same space-time as the audience. Many of these performances used abbreviated scores, rather than fleshed-out scripts, and were under-rehearsed precisely in order to elicit variation, risk, chance, and unpredictability.[10] Contingencies of location and audience were an important part of visual art performance's claims to realism, authenticity, and democratic antivirtuosity. The ideological strength of performance at its most experimental was staked on the *singularity* of the event, because repetition signaled not only a diminution of energy and risk, but also an unwanted proximity to commercial theatre. This refusal not just of objecthood but of commercial imperatives ensured that visual performance could uphold its reputation as institutional irritant.[11]

The venues through which such visual art performances were presented to the public tended to oscillate between two types: on the one hand, variety theatre and concert halls (Futurism, Dada, Fluxus); on the other, galleries and lofts (Happenings, body art).[12] Occasionally, both these frames were rejected in favor of the streets and other types of public space. By the early 1980s, artists were gravitating back towards clubs and cabaret venues, appearing alongside alternative musicians, comedians, and dancers—in part due to changes in funding, and in part from a desire for economic autonomy. In the 1990s the cabaret model lost its appeal: in the US at least, the list of visual artists who performed live is short, and once again swung between museums (Andrea Fraser) and the streets (William Pope.L). On the whole, however, this younger generation found itself more attracted to the high production values that were possible when performing for video and photography, seen most spectacularly in the work of Matthew Barney.

In Europe during the same decade, galleries found a way to accommodate two types of live installation: relational aesthetics, with its activation of the gallery space through participation and conviviality; and delegated performance—a type of work in which artists hire nonprofessionals, often to represent their own social demographic (women, the unemployed, immigrants, etc.). Informed by Fluxus and Conceptual Art instruction-based works, this latter tendency de-linked performance art from the singular charismatic artist. As soon as the individual artist was replaced by a workforce for hire, a performance could persist in a space for days, weeks, or even months. Performers were paid by the hour, and organized by rota, and thus became replaceable and interchangeable (see Bishop 2012:219–39). Visual art performance thereby became subject to a division of roles found in music: the performer, on the one hand, and the composer, on the other. Such "live installations" became readily reperformable since there was no original, and their instructions could even be acquired by museums—best seen in the meteoric rise of Tino Sehgal (whose first major solo show was in 2005), but also in the new market availability of works by older generations.[13] The event-score, whose open-ended iterability was

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9. The canonical history of visual art performance is RoseLee Goldberg's *Performance: Live Art, 1909 to the Present* (1979).

10. A classic statement of this opposition to theatre is Allan Kaprow's "Happenings in the New York Scene" ([1961] 1993).

11. Exceptions exist, of course—such as the short theatrical works (1975–1979) of Guy de Cointet using found language (see de Brugerolle, Butler, et al. 2007).

12. Commercial galleries were occasionally used as a venue for visual art performance in the 1970s—albeit primarily by male artists (Chris Burden, Vito Acconci), while female artists tended to work on the streets (Adrian Piper, Laurie Anderson).

13. For example, Tate acquired David Lamelas's *Time* (1970) in 2006, while MoMA acquired Simone Forti's *Dance Constructions* (1961) in 2016. Tino Sehgal's first major solo show was a series of three annual exhibitions at the ICA in London, 2005 to 2007.

so radical and noncommodifiable in the 1960s—implying that anyone and everyone could fulfill the work—has become, since 2000, a stabilizing force: a way to guarantee aesthetic continuity between different iterations, to ground meaning and value in a secure authorial figure, and thereby enabling live performance to enter the marketplace.

Concurrently, during the 1990s a number of artists began to be interested in reenactment as a way of making performances, revisiting previous works and historical events in order to explore difference through repetition.[14] A handful of curators then adopted the strategy of reenactment as a way to think through the historical presentation of performance art in an exhibition context: what if artists were invited to *restage* their performances and events, rather than simply *represent* them through objects and photographs in the gallery? *Out of Actions* at the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art (1998) featured reenactments by John Latham, Raphael Montañez Ortiz, and Wolf Vostell, among others, accompanying what was otherwise a conventional museum show.[15] *A Short History of Performance Art* at the Whitechapel Art Gallery (2002–2006), by contrast, came out of director Iwona Blazwick's frustration with having to represent the history of performance art solely via photography. Artists including Robert Morris, Carolee Schneemann, and Martha Rosler were invited to revisit and restage their own (now historic) works, the last two with the assistance of young performers.[16] The high watermark of performance reenactment was arguably Marina Abramović's *Seven Easy Pieces* (2005), in which she reperformed classic works of body art by her contemporaries over seven nights at the Guggenheim. By the end of the decade, however, it was more typical for reenactment to be outsourced to dance professionals, as in Abramović's 2010 retrospective at MoMA—a show whose scale and popularity also marked the death-knell of reenactment.[17] (From this point on, the idea of reperforming an original seemed to lose all appeal, and was replaced by the endlessly reperformable score.)

In tandem with the fad for reenactment, museums began to program performance, albeit on the model of one-off events. In the early 2000s, Tate invited visual artists but also choreographers and musicians to make use of spaces in and around the Tate Modern Turbine Hall, the Duveen Galleries at Tate Britain, and in the collection displays of both venues.[18] Its hallmark was the expansion of performance to include the *performing arts*, especially dance, music, and physical theatre. This was not the first time that such interdisciplinary programming had taken place at museums: from the mid-1960s to the late 1980s, the Whitney Museum of American

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14. The trend was prevalent in the UK: artists Pollard & Forsythe and Rod Dickinson both performed reenactments at the Institute of Contemporary Art, but the highest profile example is still Jeremy Deller's *Battle of Orgreave* (2001); in the US it was Marina Abramović's *Seven Easy Pieces* (2005) that consolidated this tendency (see Reynolds 2011:44–48). In Cuba, Tania Bruguera made reenactments of Ana Mendieta works beginning in 1986, shortly after the artist's death, until 1996.

15. Ortiz remade *Piano Destruction Concert* (1966), in which he destroys a piano with an axe, while Vostell presented *130 à l'heure*, one part of his nine-part Happening *9 Nein-dé-coll/agen* (1963): a Mercedes car was left on railroad tracks and destroyed by a locomotive, and the resulting wreck was installed outside the Geffen Contemporary. The object was more important than the action.

16. The exhibition *A Little Bit of History Repeated* (Kunst-Werke, 2001) could also be included here, but the curator, Jens Hoffmann, invited contemporary artists to creatively reinterpret past works, rather than inviting the original artists to reenact them.

17. Dancers have been central to the performance and reperformance of works by visual artists—presumably because the labor of dancing is always tied to the reperformance of another artist's work. It is worth noting, however, that Abramović speaks of having to retrain her performers—"to de-dance them, de-act them"—in order to perform her long durational pieces (Abramović and Bruguera 2009:181).

18. This work took place on a range of registers, from high cultural entertainment to messy experiment. Alex Poots programmed the high-end work (e.g., opera singer Jessye Norman performing beneath Anish Kapoor's *Marsyas*); Catherine Wood programmed the edgier, low-budget experiments by younger artists.

Art regularly staged low-cost musical concerts and dance evenings in its building on Madison Avenue, occasionally even rehanging the galleries in order to complement the event.[19] It was only in the late 2000s, however, that a small number of museums (including the Whitney) hired dedicated performance curators.[20] Today, performance has even become a staple presence in art fairs, albeit as ornamental adornment rather than integral to sales; in 2014, Frieze Art Fair in London introduced a section called "Live," while in 2016 the Foire internationale d'art contemporain (FIAC) in Paris launched "Parades," a performance festival produced in collaboration with the Louvre.[21]

The incursion of the performing arts into the gallery space therefore places considerable pressure upon the history and character of visual art performance to date. Since its inception in the first decades of the 20th century, visual art performance has had a difficult relationship to art institutions — most obviously because its ephemerality precluded conventional acquisition: you can't buy performers. But this relationship was also fraught because of performance's content, which historically tended toward the transgressive: disrupting the performer/audience boundary, exceeding the limits of the body, unsettling gender norms and expectations, refusing the digestible temporality of entertainment, staking out oppositional politics, and operating with guerilla tactics. This unruliness exacerbated the problem of granting visual art performance a home within museums. The idea of "documentation" (in photographs, films, or fetishized holy relics) never seemed to be a satisfactory solution, failing to capture the intensity of good performance, which always creates a social dynamic that exceeds the work itself. This elusive relationship to objecthood, and a penchant for the trangressive, managed to keep visual art performance out of museums — and art histories — for most of the 20th century.

So it is particularly striking that as we near the third decade of the 21st century, the prevalence of performance in museums predominantly takes the form of *contemporary dance*.[22] Accounting for this shift is not simply a matter of charting the way museums have tended to colonize other disciplines, but of understanding internal changes within theatre and dance that have facilitated this accommodation. In performance studies there has been much discussion about "postdramatic theatre," a term proposed by Hans-Thies Lehmann to describe the decentralization of text as the epistemological basis of theatre. He argues that text is replaced with abstract form: music, but especially visual images (he names the Wooster Group and Robert

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19. The Whitney also staged dance and music concerts in its off-site venues in Fairfield, CT, the Philip Morris Branch, and downtown at its Water Street branch (see Bishop 2014).

20. Tate hired performance curators as of Tate Modern's opening in 2000 but still doesn't have a department as such — Catherine Wood is their "Curator of International Art (Performance)"; MoMA's Department of Media and Performance was set up in 2009; the Whitney Museum does not have a performance department per se, but has hired a fulltime performance curator since 2013 (Jay Sanders). In the buildup to its reopening in 2012, the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam established a "hybrid and critical platform" called *Public Program*, curated by Hendrik Folkerts, which sought to combine research and performance. This was dissolved in 2015 and replaced by *Friday Night*, based around talk shows and occasional performances. The Centre Georges Pompidou has programmed live art intermittently since its opening, but it is only since 2000 that it decided to structure the live art program as a "season" from September to June (on the model of theatre), after hiring Serge Laurent as artistic director. At the end of 2016, the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington, DC, hired its first performance curator, Mark Beasley.

21. The earliest editions of Frieze Art Fair (2000–2005) included enough live art commenting on its commercial context to merit a wry discussion of the trend by Jack Bankowsky, who refers to its Warholian attitude as "art fair art" (see Bankowsky 2005).

22. The list of choreographers who have performed in museums includes, but is not limited to: Jérôme Bel, Jonah Bokaer, Boris Charmatz, Siobhan Davies, Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker, William Forsythe, Trajal Harrell, Maria Hassabi, Mette Ingvartsen, Ralph Lemon, Xavier Le Roy, Sarah Michelson, Mårten Spångberg, Eszter Salomon, and Shen Wei Dance Arts. For a list of British choreographers, see Wookey (2015).

Wilson as salient pioneers of music and image, respectively; Lehmann [2006]). For Lehmann, the abstraction of modernist painting and the radical ruptures of convention by visual art performance are both constant points of reference for postdramatic theatre.

In dance, by contrast, it is striking that interest from museums and galleries has focused on choreography belonging only to certain traditions, above all Merce Cunningham and Judson Dance Theatre, both of which fostered rich interdisciplinary collaborations with visual artists.[23] Cunningham's Events provide the historical blueprint for dance within galleries: these 90-minute performances recombined elements of his preexisting repertory into new combinations for non-theatre venues such as museums, armories, gymnasiums, basketball courts, student lounges, and city plazas. The first was held in Vienna in 1964, and since then over 800 have taken place. Events are not frontal—they can be seen from all sides—and audiences can be itinerant, even though, in actuality, they tend to be static. The dancers and performers associated with Judson, by contrast, deployed strategies equivalent to those being developed in visual art at that time, above all an interest in desubjectivization and the everyday: the use of scores, tasks and chance procedures, the untrained body, and pedestrian movements like walking, leaning, and running. Such de-skilling was seen as a rejection both of the expressivity of modern dance and the conformity of trained bodies within Cunningham's company. Performances took place in the gymnasium and the sanctuary of Judson Memorial Church, playhouses within New York City, art galleries, outdoors (on rooftops, plazas, walls), as well as at sites more associated with Happenings (such as George Segal's farm in North Brunswick, NJ).[24]

However, it is not just a sanctioned choreographic lineage that satisfies the thirst for dance among contemporary curators. Since the 1990s, choreography itself has become more abstract and conceptual, often in response to developments in visual art. The emergence of the term "conceptual dance" in the 1990s offered a way to describe the neutral, ideas-led approach of a younger generation who took their lead from the objectivity of Cunningham and Judson, and who reflected on theatre as an institution. As dance theorist Bojana Cvejic explains,

> "Conceptual dance" in Europe in the 1990s arose from a critique of representation in theatre, taking [Yvonne] Rainer's debunking of spectacle further into a deconstruction of theatricality in self-referential speech acts and procedures with readymade, citation, and collage [...]. (2015:172)[25]

It is telling that the choreographers most frequently invited to perform in museums and galleries tend to work within this conceptual tradition (among them Jérôme Bel, Boris Charmatz, and Xavier Le Roy), or have trained in art schools (Maria Hassabi); they take an interest in visual art, and are strongly aware of institutional critique.[26] This cross-pollination with visual

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23. Jasper Johns, Robert Morris, Robert Rauschenberg, Frank Stella, Stan VanDerBeek, and Andy Warhol (among many others) designed sets for the Merce Cunningham Dance Company. The visual artists who performed at Judson include Robert Morris, Robert Rauschenberg, and Carolee Schneemann, while the Church's gallery held exhibitions by Jim Dine, Allan Kaprow, and Claes Oldenburg.

24. This proliferation of sites was accompanied by a mix of artists we usually tend to think of as working in completely disparate disciplines and sensibilities: "On 19 May, during an afternoon at George Segal's farm in North Brunswick, New Jersey, Allan Kaprow did a Happening, Wolf Vostell presented a Decoll/age, La Monte Young played music, Dick Higgins made *All Kinds of Trouble*, and Yvonne Rainer and Trisha Brown improvised on the roof of Segal's chicken coop" (Banes 1993:131).

25. Conceptual dance has become a specific subcategory within "contemporary choreography," a pluralist catch-all that encompasses anything being performed outside of the canon of Western and non-Western traditions, but also everything that followed postmodern dance in the 1960s.

26. All four choreographers have performed in museums. Bel has adapted work for MoMA (2012, 2016); in 2009 Charmatz renamed the Centre National Chorégraphique de Rennes as "Musée de la Danse," and under this moniker has made several works specifically for museums and galleries (e.g., *expo-zéro*, 2009; *20 Dancers for the*

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art results in new forms of virtuosity and an attentiveness to the exhibition itself as a form. It also prompts adaptation to the new economics of cultural production: the flexibility to deal with project-based, site-specific work; the ability to adapt existing pieces to the space-time of a different institution (the museum); the production of choreography that can operate in a continual flow without beginning, middle, or end; and a willingness to exhibit not just one's work, but also one's labor (for example, by putting rehearsals on display). But the result is also a curious depoliticization: when dance moves into the museum, it almost guarantees a lack of institutional critique, because its institution is elsewhere — in the theatre.[27]

Retemporalization

The migration of the performing arts into the museum space brings with it a number of effects, among them a *retemporalization* of performance, from *event time* to *exhibition time*. I use the phrase *event time* to refer to a set of theatrical conventions that are not just temporal but also behavioral and economic: arriving at a designated venue, usually in the evening, for a seat at a ticketed performance, which one watches with others, from beginning to end.[28] I will use the term "black box" as shorthand for this theatrical temporalization and its mode of attention.[29] *Exhibition time*, by contrast, is more diffuse and linked to working hours, usually 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. It is governed by a self-directed viewing that is unsynchronized in relation to others present, and by physical mobility rather than stasis: one can walk in and out of the exhibition at any time. I will refer to this apparatus as the "white cube," and use it as a shorthand for all gallery contexts, regardless of their actual architecture and décor.

The black box and the white cube are, of course, both ideologically loaded spaces. The white cube is a blend of neutrality, objectivity, timelessness, and sanctity: a paradoxical combination that makes claims to rationality and detachment while also conferring a quasi-mystical value and significance upon the work.[30] It is also the archetypal modern exhibition space: it began to appear in Europe in the first decade of the 20th century, and gradually became the norm for galleries worldwide. Today it remains the global standard for art fairs, museums, and alternative spaces alike. The black box, by contrast, gained popularity in the 1960s, especially on university campuses, where it could draw upon a low- or no-cost student workforce.[31] Although

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XX Century, 2012); Le Roy has adapted his solo works into a self-standing gallery exhibition continually performed by other dancers (*"Retrospective,"* 2012); Maria Hassabi began making "live installations" for exhibition spaces in 2013.

27. If dance does operate as a critical intervention into the museum, it adopts other modes, such as Ralph Lemon's series of "Value Talks" at MoMA 2013/14, or Boris Charmatz's exhibition *Moments: A History of Performance in Ten Acts* at ZKM in 2012, which tested some of the boundaries of the art institution by allowing dancers to improvise with and around historical works of art.

28. My use of "event time" thus differs from Richard Schechner's definition of it as a measurement found primarily in games such as basketball: "the activity itself has a set form and all the steps within that form must be completed no matter how long (or short) the elapsed clocktime" (Schechner 1966:28). In Schechner's typology, event time is only occasionally used in theatre; his example is the first scene of Genet's *The Maids* (1947), which has to be completed before an alarm clock rings. By contrast, I use event time in opposition to performance that runs continuously throughout the day and has no apparent beginning or end.

29. Within visual art, the term "black box" began to be used in the 1990s to refer to the darkening of galleries to show video installations and other projected media.

30. Brian O'Doherty writes: "some of the sanctity of the church, the formality of the courtroom, the mystique of the experimental laboratory joins with chic design to produce a unique chamber of aesthetics" (1986:14). For a less journalistic account, see Grasskamp (2007:316–39).

31. An excellent discussion of black box theatre can be found in David Wiles, *A Short History of Western Performance Space* (2003:240–66).

its architecture was an outgrowth of "flexible theatre" and "modular theatre" in the 1950s, the black box was not crystallized ideologically until the publication of two books in 1968: Jerzy Grotowski's *Towards a Poor Theatre* and Peter Brook's *The Empty Space*.[32] Both directors sought to eliminate theatrical trappings, stripping away elaborate technology and sets in order to expose the actor-audience relationship that they perceived to be the essence of theatre.[33] In the words of Grotowski, "Let the most dramatic scenes happen face to face with the spectator so that he is within arm's reach of the actor, can feel his breathing and smell the perspiration" ([1968] 2002:41–42).[34] For both directors, what motivated this desire for proximity was new technology: theatre was unable to compete with the seductions of cinema and television, but what it could offer was immediacy, proximity, and communion.

Both the white cube and the black box are purportedly neutral frames that steer and hierarchize attention, and thus construct viewing subjects. Both are founded on long-established, unspoken behavioral conventions: in both black box and white cube environments, disruptions tend to be auditory rather than optical—coughing, rustling, eating, or talking too loud.

Figure 2. Maria Hassabi, PLASTIC, *live installation at the Museum of Modern Art, 2016. At times, spectators with cameras drew uncomfortably close to the performers. Performer: Maria Hassabi. (Photo by Thomas Poravas. Courtesy of Maria Hassabi; Koenig & Clinton, New York; The Breeder, Athens)*

32. See also Richard Schechner (1968).

33. Grotowski: "By gradually eliminating whatever proved superfluous, we found that theatre can exist without make-up, without autonomic costume and scenography, without a separate performance area (stage), without lighting and sound effects, etc. It cannot exist without the actor-spectator relationship of perceptual, direct, 'live' communion" ([1968] 2002:19).

34. This quest for medium specificity corresponds to a similar search in visual art at this time, programmatically laid out in the writings of Clement Greenberg (see for example, "The New Sculpture" [1949] 1986). In Greenberg, however, this search is tied to questions of quality, rather than attention; one judges a painting *as a painting*.

Both discipline and shape a bourgeois model of the subject that monitors his/her neighbors for indications of nonconformist behavior.[35] When dance is inserted into an exhibition, then, the viewing conventions of both the black box and the white cube are ruptured: a single-point perspective (seating in the theatre, standing in front of a work) is replaced by multi-perspectivalism and the absence of an ideal viewing position. Lighting rarely directs our attention (more often than not, it is still directed toward art on the walls); sound, if employed at all, tends to bounce horribly around the space. Because of the spectator's undefined position, the protocols surrounding audience behavior are less stable and more open to improvisation. This is why smartphone photography is rife at performances in museums, but still tends to be frowned upon in the theatre.[36]

The migration of the performing arts to the museum and gallery should therefore be read not (just) as a cynical attempt on the part of museums to attract audiences, but as a direct consequence of the white cube and the black box changing under the pressure of new technology and eventually converging to produce a hybrid apparatus. Since the 1980s, the black box has become more technologically driven, less concerned with existential communion than with multimedia immersion.[37] The dance exhibition can therefore be seen as an attempt to recapture the intimacy and experimentalism imputed to the black box in an era when these values are no longer synonymous with that apparatus: today, the white cube is where you go to see performers sweat.[38] The black box has also opened itself up to works of a longer duration and a mobile audience, more akin to installation art (e.g., Ralph Lemon's "refractions" of *Scaffold Room* [2014]). Despite the mobility of the audience in this installation situation, the dark walls and theatrical setting still tacitly enforce a protocol of rapt attention that disincentivizes photography, talking, and texting.

The white cube, meanwhile, under the pressure of digital technology, has been recalibrated as a space for unlimited documentation: taking installation shots (and selfies) and publishing them on hybridized public-private online platforms. Around 2008, museums began to abandon the photography restrictions they once enforced and now even suggest hashtags by which viewers can label their uploaded images to Instagram, Twitter, and Flickr. The movement from black box to white cube therefore brings two distinct spatial ideologies and sets of behavioral conventions into tension. The dance exhibition confers temporality upon an institution that habitually denies time by collecting objects for posterity, and which now needs to confront a living body that must be fed, clothed, sheltered, medicated, and paid.[39] The sedentary, focused attention of

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35. Playwright Howard Barker writes: "In all collective culture, your neighbour controls you by his gaze. In darkness he is eliminated and you are alone with the actor [...] In the black box you are trusted to be free, to be responsible" (1989:74). I disagree with Barker's diagnosis; the black box is dark, but hardly a space where we don't monitor our neighbors. As George Home-Cook points out, the main disruptions to attention in both theatre and cinema are auditory: phones ringing, people unwrapping sweets, whispering, etc. (see Home-Cook 2015:3).

36. See for example Britain's Theatre Charter campaign to improve audience behavior, which focuses above all on restricting the use of mobile phones (www.theatre-charter.co.uk).

37. This development was spearheaded in part by the Wooster Group's use of video alongside live performance, first seen in *Route 1 & 9 (The Last Act)*, 1981. The multiple screens used by contemporary theatre companies like Temporary Distortion are often installed with conscious reference to contemporary video art.

38. Trajal Harrell: "I like working in the white cube. I like what it does to the body, how you see the body differently. I like the intimacy, the different way that people deal with time" (in Howe 2015:78).

39. Tate curator Catherine Wood describes the institutional struggles over the simplest requests: "there are pressure points in terms of care, between the classic one—whether the dancers can bring water in, which they need—and collection care—being worried about the artworks on display—but also pressure points around audience behaviour" (in Wookey 2015:34).

the black box, meanwhile, confronts the harsh illumination of the white cube and its multiple, mobile publics with smartphones—or occasionally, even no audience at all.[40]

The uneasiness of the shift from black box to white cube can be seen in the reluctance among a certain sector of the art world to use the word "performance" to describe live art in the gallery; instead, it is said to approach the condition of sculpture. Throughout the 2000s, Tino Sehgal argued that his "situations" were best thought of as sculpture, present in the gallery during the entire working day—an analogy best seen in his early works like *Kiss* (2004).[41] When discussing Marina Abramović's landmark retrospective at MoMA, Klaus Biesenbach observed that the performers reenacting her works "will be present as if they were sculpture" (in MoMA 2010).[42] Rebecca Schneider has suggested that such an insistence on rebranding performance as sculpture is a way of validating this work against "the messy, impure, and historically feminized performance-based arts of theatre and dance" (2011:130). For Schneider, aligning performance with sculpture affiliates it with the latter's discourses of timelessness, mastery, and singular authorship—and, I would add, clearly separates it from any association with theatre and entertainment.[43] But the static, timeless quality of sculpture is a less accurate paradigm for performance in the museum than the automated loop, a mechanism synonymous with the compact disc and the DVD, respectively introduced in the 1980s and 1990s. The way in which the performing arts accommodate themselves to exhibition time is above all by repetition—of scripts, gestures, or movements—on a live loop for the duration of the working day.

Figure 3. Maria Hassabi, PLASTIC*, live installation at Museum of Modern Art, 2016. Performer: Maria Hassabi. Each dancer's virtuosic slow-motion descent of the staircase took two hours. (Photo by Thomas Poravas. Courtesy of Maria Hassabi; Koenig & Clinton, New York; The Breeder, Athens)*

This retemporalization of performance, and its intrinsic relationship to technology, can be clearly seen in three recent examples. Maria Hassabi's *PLASTIC* (2015), developed for the Stedelijk Museum, the Hammer Museum, and MoMA, is what she calls a "live installation," presumably because at first glance it is the antithesis of activation: rather than animating the space, *PLASTIC* formed a counterpoint composition of still bodies. At moments, the dancers even resembled lifeless corpses, as if recently shot or felled by hazardous radiation, an impres-
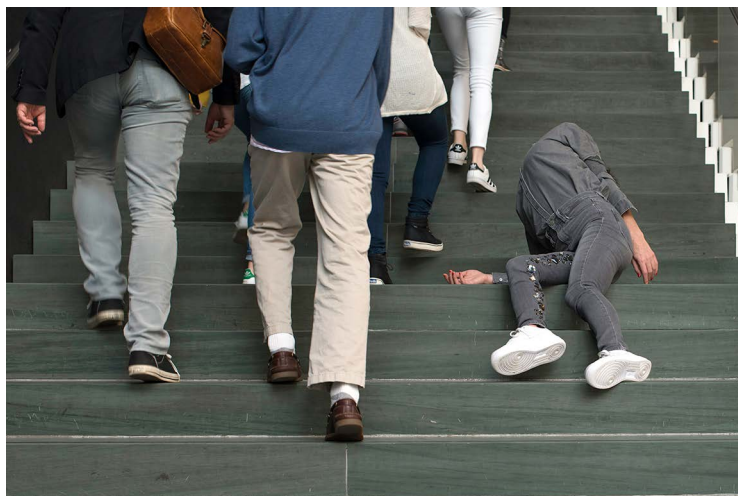
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40. Choreographer Jennifer Lacey, discussing her contribution to *A Choreographed Exhibition* in 2007, notes that her work had to become an endurance piece: "The question of duration was [...] glaringly obvious to me. It was a crazy thing for the dancers to go in and to work constantly with all these different notions of performance and *with the possibility of being exposed to maybe nobody all day long*" (in Copeland [2010] 2013:123; emphasis added).

41. Tino Sehgal: "[I] was trying to fulfill all conventions to make my work comparable to a traditional sculpture" (in Carpenter 2014).

42. See also Benjamin H.D. Buchloh on Sehgal's performance at the 2013 Venice Biennale: "we might classify [it] as a work of sculpture, if only to bring out through such an act of conventionalization the work's truly radical dimensions and deliver it from the instantly neutralizing category of performance" (Buchloh 2013:313).

43. This reinforces the art world's longstanding "anti-theatrical prejudice" (see Barish 1981).

sion that was particularly striking when viewed from the balconies above. This abject horizontality contrasted with the vertical visitors who either stepped over the dancers as if nothing were happening, or who stared at them, moved closer, and reached automatically for their smartphones to capture what they saw—sometimes standing in uncomfortably intrusive proximity to the performers. Movement is nevertheless central to *PLASTIC*; it is simply incremental to the point of only just being visible. It took two hours, for example, for Hassabi to descend the 24 steps of MoMA's main staircase while streams of visitors trudged past her. Virtuosity was reformulated as an intensity of slow motion and self-control in the face of an unpredictable crowd. Like most performance in the museum, *PLASTIC* was also disarmingly low-tech: no stage, no seating, no special lighting to demarcate the performance area, and no props or special effects. Nor was there an official beginning or end to the work, just a continual performance during opening hours.

PLASTIC differs from the art historical paradigm of sculpture and installation in its organization of time. As Hassabi writes, "because we need to sustain the 'loop,' which is essentially the structure of the work, counting becomes very important. Each performer counts everything we do, and we synchronize our rhythm of counting with the iPhone timer in the morning—like little machines" (2015). While many choreographers since Cunningham have abandoned musical beat in favor of clock time, what interests me in Hassabi's comment is her specific comparison of the dancer to the iPhone, whose digital precision is internalized by the performers. At the same time, however, the very title—*PLASTIC*—foregrounds the nonmediated and nontechnological: a confrontation with physical materiality as the dancers press themselves against and into the building. Fingers stretch over the cold floor; a torso sinks uncomfortably into the staircase; a face pushes awkwardly into a sofa. This gravitational pull could not be *less* virtual: the dancers did not embody a gravity-defying verticality but held poses vulnerably on the floor. *PLASTIC* exemplifies, in a particularly concise way, the dance exhibition's simultaneous repression and reassertion of the live body in relation to technology. Artists and choreographers strip back the theatrical apparatus to expose the degree zero of performance—bodies in space and time, without lighting, amplified sound, props, effects. But they do this only to reinstate technology (the digital loop, the iPhone timer) as a means of organizing duration.

A different internalization of digital technology is evident in Xavier Le Roy's "*Retrospective*" (2012), with its rotating cast of six performers who present in a gallery their own versions of Le Roy's solo works, all originally produced for black box

Figure 4. Xavier Le Roy, "Retrospective," *MoMA PS1, 2014. In an empty gallery, performers present their own versions of Le Roy's solo works. Performers: Oisín Monaghan, K.J. Holmes, Eleanor Bauer, Michael Helland. (Photo by Matthew Septimus, courtesy of Xavier Le Roy and MoMA PS1)*

theatres. The viewer enters an unadorned white gallery to find four performers stationed in different parts of the room, and engaged in different types of activity: holding a pose, performing a sequence of movements, talking to visitors, or engaging in some combination of all three. Every now and then three of the dancers make a curious buzzing sound and scamper out of view, only to return at a different station and resume their activity. It takes a while for viewers

to understand the performance roles assigned to different stations in the room, some of which can be readily understood, but others demand more attention. The majority of visitors spend the most time at the station furthest from the entrance, in which one of the performers uninterruptedly speaks about his or her career as a dancer—an informal lecture-demonstration that can last up to half an hour. All of the stations were seemingly irresistible in terms of photographic capture, to the extent that connecting to the audience became difficult for the performers; Scarlet Yu, for example, has noted: "sometimes I have the feeling of dancing more for these cameras than for people, it's a challenge" (in Hayes 2017:6; translation mine).
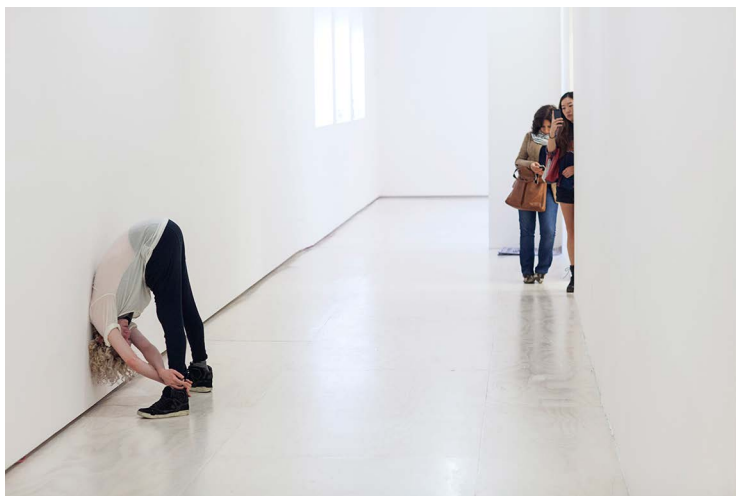

Figure 5. Xavier Le Roy, "Retrospective," *MoMA PS1, 2014. Performer: Oisín Monaghan. Some performers have the impression of dancing more for cameras than for an audience. (Photo by Matthew Septimus, courtesy of Xavier Le Roy and MoMA PS1)*

As the title *"Retrospective"* implies, Le Roy's performance is also an exhibition, spanning six to eight weeks in duration. A conscious part of the choreographer's schema was to use three different display modes as tools for presenting fragments of his solo performances—the sculpture, the loop, and the narrative. Sculpture is exemplified in the reduction of *Self-Unfinished* (1998) to a particularly iconic pose; the loop can be seen in excerpts of his most familiar works including *Le Sacre du Printemps* (2007) and *Giszelle* (2001); the narrative part comprises a lecture-demonstration, scripted by each performer, about his or her own path to dance, after the fashion of Le Roy's own lecture-performance *Product of Circumstances* (1999).[44] Although the loop seems to be the dominant display mode of *"Retrospective,"* it is inadequate to account for the exhibition's heterochronic structure. The audience pays attention to different sequences by the four performers, but three of these are regularly "reset" (i.e., refreshed) every time a new visitor enters the gallery.[45] The best technological analogy for this device is neither sculpture nor the loop, but in fact the multiple temporalities of the webpage, where the refresh rate of headlines, stories, videos, ads, banners, pop-ups, and so on are all different. *"Retrospective"* effectively amounts to a live browser that the audience can surf, and from which they can walk away/click off at any moment.

This digital logic is fully realized in Anne Imhof's *Faust* (2017), produced for the German Pavilion at the Venice Biennale. During the opening of the exhibition, visitors entered the pavilion on a highly reflective glass surface, raised about 4 feet above the existing floor, beneath which a cast of 10 dancers engaged in a range of affectless gestures and activities. Occasionally the performers emerged from under the glass to share the viewers' space, standing on glass shelves or behind glass walls; poses seemed more important than movement, which rendered the work irrefutably photogenic—not least because the dancers exuded an attitude and sensibility familiar to us from fashion magazines and advertising. When I visited *Faust*, the public's

44. When the dancers weren't performing in one of these three modes, they occupied a separate space for rehearsal and research that was also visible to the public.

45. This device was first used by Tino Sehgal to signal the arrival of new visitors (and thus a resetting of the work to its initial position) in *This Objective of That Object* (2004).

hunger to capture the work on their camera phones was overwhelming. Watching them, I was struck by the sense with which the pavilion functioned as a mise en abyme of screens: the central component of the installation—the glass floor and walls—was effectively one large touchscreen. The glass became one more interface between the viewers (clamoring to supplement their mediated vision with physical proximity) and the performers, who in turn pushed up against the structure by breathing or licking its surface, or pressing their heads and limbs against its oppressive limits. The entire pavilion became an apparatus for watching a live performance through a screen.

Such contiguity between physical and virtual spectatorship has been reinforced in recent years by the aesthetic slippage between the white cube and the white webpage. As Mike Sanchez observes, galleries today "employ a large number of high-wattage fluorescent-light fixtures, as opposed to more traditional spot lighting, making their walls pulsate like a white IPS screen (the now-ubiquitous LCD technology introduced by Apple in 2010)" (Sanchez 2013:297).[46] More than ever, the white cube

Figure 6. Anne Imhof, Faust, 2017, German Pavilion, 57th International Art Exhibition — La Biennale di Venezia. Performer: Eliza Douglas. The glass floor as screen interface between the viewers and the performers. (Photo by Nikki Columbus, courtesy of Anne Imhof and German Pavilion)

is the stage set for photographs destined to circulate digitally on a white webpage.[47] Artists acknowledge that they now install exhibitions with the installation shot in mind.[48] The ephemerality of the exhibition is now just a moment en route to its afterlife—if not its real life—as an online JPEG. The question is to what extent performance in the gallery resists or capitulates to a condition that is now the norm for visual art.

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46. Sanchez continues: "Such fluorescent-lighting systems became ubiquitous in galleries in the mid- to late 2000s, at the same time that galleries began systematically posting images of their exhibitions on their websites" (2013:297).

47. Most gallery websites are designed to replicate the neutrality of the white cube, with installation shots arrayed on plain white backgrounds.

48. See for example artist Simon Denny: "I look at an installation and wonder how it will photograph as I install. It makes [sense] to be realistic about how viewers will encounter the material. These images are an important part of the exhibition experience" (2013:64).

Attention

At stake here is not just the competing discourses of black box and white cube, and their ideological claims to neutrality, but the whole question of how technology impacts upon attention. In his *Singularities* (2016), dance theorist André Lepecki argues for a fundamental distinction between the *spectator* of performance and the *witness*. The spectator is a passive, silent accomplice who Instagrams clichéd poses, and "who chooses to check his iPhone or to Google the latest blog on the piece he is presently (non)watching, so to be (forensically) assured of the *facts*. The spectator searches above all, for *information* for the sake of non-ambiguity" (2016:175). Lepecki contrasts this spectator to the more political and ethical figure of the witness, an actor-storyteller who takes responsibility for the work by transmitting an experience of it to future audiences through the work of translation into language. For Lepecki, only the witness sees the whole performance and is properly "subjective-corporeal-affective-historical"; the spectator, by contrast, checks in and out (173).

While Lepecki's opposition to the cult of information is understandable, his approval of the "witness" reinforces the primacy of presence, denigrates technologies of mediation, and overvalues the role of the writer. It also neglects the fact that focused attention is a relatively recent phenomenon in the history of Western performance. It was only in the 1870s, when Wagner designed the theatre at Bayreuth to remove lateral views, provide a frontal perspective for everyone, conceal the orchestra, and plunge the audience into near-complete darkness, that the ideal of full immersion and concentration came into being. Before that moment, Western theatre had been replete with peripheral distractions (primarily social) that were one of the main reasons why people attended theatre in the first place. Images of 18th- and 19th-century theatre rarely show rapt audiences: people turn to converse with each other, or look across the orchestra stalls to scrutinize their counterparts in the boxes opposite. During performances in 18th-century London, "fruit women" moved among the audience selling refreshments and copies of plays and songbooks, and prostitutes roamed about looking for customers. The dance exhibition, by returning us to a model of spectatorship as sociability, reminds us that attention and distraction have always been intrinsically intertwined and rarely exist as pure entities.[49] The gadget has simply changed: opera glasses have been replaced by cellphones.

The roots of the attention/distraction dialectic, however, lie not in theatre but in the much broader context of industrialization. As Jonathan Crary has brilliantly demonstrated, modernity gave rise to a dual concern for attention and distraction as a direct result of capitalism's reformulation of human perception. It imposed a disciplinary regime of attentiveness (for example, in the vigilance needed to stay safe when using factory machinery), but simultaneously worked *against* this by also requiring the subject to adapt to ever-faster cycles of change, replacement, and obsolescence (1999:12–13). These contradictory demands have become a hallmark of 20th-century life, with well-known psychological consequences. The Taylorization of labor in the early 20th century, for example, was accompanied by a corresponding Taylorization of attention: minimizing interruptions and narrowing focus to maximize measurable productivity, at the cost of workers' monotony and alienation.

By contrast, the most recent economic turn, the neoliberal digitization of labor, challenges the efficiency of Taylorized attention because it no longer upholds a manufactured separation between work and the rest of life. The computer is both a mechanism of distraction that can interrupt our effectiveness at work, and also the tool that allows work to invade our homes, our

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49. In 1976, Richard Schechner noted a trend in avantgarde performance since the 1960s to make long, episodic, loosely constructed works in which the audience "can come or go, pay attention or select when not to pay attention. [...] The work is essentially meditative rather than dramatic. The use of *selective inattention* is a kind of alpha-rhythm performance, one in which deep relaxation rather than tension is evoked" (1976:18; my emphasis). His example is Robert Wilson's 12-hour performance of *The Life and Times of Joseph Stalin* at BAM in 1973, where an adjacent space was set up for food, drink, and socializing.

Figure 7. (left) "Stop" (a.k.a. Louis Morel-Retz), Aux Italiens (At the Italian Theatre), caricature from Le Petit Journal pour Rire, 1857. Opera glasses as the 19th-century iPhone. (Courtesy of The Courtauld Gallery, London)
Figure 8. (right) Audience watching Jérôme Bel, MoMA Dance Company at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, October 2016. Tablets and iPhones as the opera glasses of today. (Photo by Claire Bishop)

weekends, and our holidays (Davidson 2011:169). Today's ideal subject of consumer capitalism therefore has to thrive within yet another structural contradiction: the computer is the apparatus of both work and non-work, to the point where the latter increasingly comes to feel like the former.[50] And as the line between compensated work and voluntary content provision becomes increasingly blurred, so too does the distinction between attention and distraction. As numerous writers have pointed out, this combination of digital culture and precarious labor has psychological ramifications (Berardi 2011; Fisher 2014). Its effects have been pathologized as "attention deficit hyperactivity disorder" (ADHD), classified in 1980 as a mental illness that requires medication. Today, prescription pharmaceuticals enable children to behave and conform at school, and allow adults to cope with the inundation of information and multitasking at work.

But alongside the pathologization of attention, we also find its moralization. Every month, articles and books are published that lament the emotional costs of smartphone addiction, the need to take a "digital detox," the recalibration of knowledge as a result of the internet, and the inability of students to endure a seminar or lecture without checking their phones and laptops for messages.[51] While many of these critiques are salient—there is no question that digital technology is reorganizing both the intellect and social relations—distraction is often presented as a weakness of character that can be reined in through willpower and inner strength; attention, by contrast, connotes agency and self-determination. The requirement to be *both* attentive *and* distracted is, however, unfulfillable: the ideal subject of neoliberal capitalism is not in fact human at all, but a computer, able to multitask and perform several procedures simultaneously (Crary 1999:14).

A handful of recent performances explicitly thematize the impossibility of full attention and foreground an aesthetics of digital distraction. In Ryan McNamara's *ME3M: A Story Ballet*

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50. The imperative to maintain your social media profile (update your status, post photographs, like everyone else's posts, and consume as much as possible) extends the work of self-branding far beyond paid employment; for many in the creative industries, the frenetic production of a self-image blurring public and private life has become an unspoken component of any job.

51. See for example, Joelle Renstrom, "And their eyes glazed over" (2016).

About the Internet (2013), audience members sit in chairs that are individually wheeled around the theatre by people-movers; they watch selected clusters of choreography (derived from YouTube) and are thereby deprived of seeing others—replicating, with deliberately clumsy physicality, the process of browsing webpages, but also the social media phenomenon of FOMO (fear of missing out). Mårten Spångberg's three-and-a-half-hour performance *The Internet* (2015) is designed for three dancers in a gallery space; like *ME3M*, it is propelled by pop music (in the last hour, Lil Wayne's *I'm Single* is played on loop for 57 minutes). The audience is given permission to chat, drink, check email, take photographs, and so on—as are the performers, who talk to each other continually (but in voices too low for the audience to hear) and who receive any changes Spångberg makes to the performance in real time via text message or Facebook (Spångberg 2016).[52]

In these works, audience attention is oriented towards the performance, but not exclusively; we participate in a collective experience and its documentation, but selectively turn away from the performers to converse with our friends, virtually or in real life. Rather than generating a troubling new mode of ADHD spectatorship, these works only externalize and make literal the mental drift that occurs *whenever we watch any performance*. Attention exists on a continuum of other states not necessarily attached to the optical, including trance, reverie, daydream, hypnosis, meditation, and dissociation. These internal states were once thought essential to creativity, but today tend to be devalued as nonproductive time. Durational forms of dance, theatre, and opera provide a particularly rich space for such internal meditation. Philip Glass has observed that it is perfectly acceptable for audiences to nod off during his four-and-a-half hour opera *Einstein on the Beach* (1976), and quotes Robert Wilson: "Well, you know, if you fall asleep, when you wake up it'll still be going on" (in Sillito 2012). The difference between duration in the 1970s and duration today is that the two-way oscillation between watching a performance and the mind's own "internal journey" is now opened up to a three-way communication that triangulates the performance, inner drift, and cyberspace.

The denigration of performance in museums can thus be positioned as the latest iteration of longstanding anxieties about attention and technology. It also puts pressure on the debate around live and mediatized that so dominated performance studies in the 1990s. Mediation today is less a matter of documentation than it is a compositional method: McNamara deriving choreography from online resources (*ME3M*), Hassabi holding poses that invite photographic capture (*PLASTIC*), or Anne Imhof installing a vast glass floor—in effect one vast touchscreen—under which the performers move (*Faust*). This is because the very apparatus that artists choose to engage with *is already a form of mediation*: wheeling viewers around the back rooms of a theatre, or stepping past performers on a museum staircase, or watching their movements through a glass floor. Spectatorship has always been a function of mediation; the difference today is that attention is also externalized and social, existing not just in the individual mind but directed outwardly and online too. The dance exhibition thus foregrounds the coexisting (and competing) regimes of attention that contemporary performance instantiates at this transitional moment: not just the blurring of black box and white cube, but the digital technology that infiltrates both these *dispositifs*.

This, then, is the gray zone: an apparatus in which behavioral conventions are not yet established and up for negotiation. (It is perhaps not coincidental that in *PLASTIC*, Hassabi and her dancers were clad in gray denim, and that the walls of MoMA's atrium were painted gray—identifying neither with the black box nor the white cube.) The dance exhibition thus occupies a hybrid realm in which audience behavior is unpredictable and the performers may even need to be protected by guards. The only thing that seems certain about the gray zone is

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52. Spångberg describes the dancers' behavior and speech as "like three women/people going to a museum" (2016). Anne Imhof also makes adjustments to *Faust* by sending text messages to the performers, whose phones are visible and charging beneath the glass floor.

the extent to which photography and social media are unavoidable. The fact that the dance exhibition emerges at the same moment as the smartphone is of course external to performance's own development, but it has unquestionably propelled the popularity of the gray zone, and has unwittingly come to define its identity. It also exposes what previously remained hidden: the extent to which audiences are always already distracted. The dream of full concentration and focused vision, as an attempt to recoup perceptual unity and subjective wholeness, is a fantasy that arose in lockstep synchronicity with the routinization of perception in modernity. While there are of course levels of distraction (those viewers who photograph to archive a particular movement or sequence are different from those who defensively watch the entire performance through a lens), my bigger point is that distraction is just another form of attention.[53] Today, spectatorship takes place on several levels: it is perfectly possible for full, embodied attention and absorbed thinking to exist alongside the process of continuous archiving and communication with others.

Figure 9. Maria Hassabi, PLASTIC, *live installation at Museum of Modern Art, 2016. Performers hold poses that invite photographic capture. (Photo by Thomas Poravas. Courtesy of Maria Hassabi; Koenig & Clinton, New York; The Breeder, Athens)*

One of the most unexpected and forceful defenses of social media in recent years has come from philosopher and political theorist Judith Butler, who has emphasized its role in constituting a people, especially during the uprisings of 2011.[54] Occupational forms of protest exist in the 24/7 flow of internet time: protestors sought to overcome the distinction between private and public, deciding to live and sleep on the pavement, or to stand for days on end (like artist and choreographer Erdem Gündüz)—precisely because cameras never stop recording and social media feeds never stop updating.[55] The occupational character of contemporary protest finds an unlikely analogue in the dance exhibition: both are immediate, embodied, durational—and relentlessly mediated. This reference is not intended to politicize dance in the museum, which would be difficult, as many of these works are highly formal and studiously avoid references to current affairs. But this analogy does allow us to move away from the typical framework of describing dance in the museum as an act of colonization by visual art, and instead to regard it in terms of a resistance or intervention.[56] It also acknowledges the ongoing

53. Dancers are fully aware of the different uses of cameras (see Hassabi 2017).

54. Butler argues that media "has entered into the very definition of the people [...;] it is the stuff of self-constitution, the site of the hegemonic struggle over who we are" (2015:20).

55. Although Gündüz does not consider his "Standing Man" protest in Taksim Square to be a performance, it was informed by his experience as a performer in Jérôme Bel's *The Show Must Go On* (2001), particularly the sequence in which the dancers stand onstage staring at the audience for the duration of "Every Breath You Take" by The Police (see Ertem 2014:n10).

56. Choreographer Ralph Lemon has observed that the performers he invited to MoMA in 2012 were all "dealing with being outsiders in that space. None of them belonged in the Atrium, or they didn't belong until they belonged. Fugitives. They had to create their own presence in a space not meant for them" (in Perel 2012).

friction between performance and visual art, rather than assigning the former a terminal complicity with marketing and spectacle. This antagonism can be heard every time dancers complain of hard floors and poor payment, and in choreographers' own mixed motives for accepting museum invitations: every opportunity for experimentation and new audiences being equally a desire to access the capital that flows around contemporary art.

The dance exhibition is therefore paradoxical: it both reflects a retemporalized daily life under a 24/7 networked digital regime, while also working against its speed and virtuality by offering a locus of temporal deceleration and meditation. It reveals a genuine desire—on the part of performers and audience alike—for experiences that stand as a counterpoint to our lives online: embodied immediacy, shared collective presence, physical proximity, a sense of place, and an internal meditation in the company of others. And yet the dance exhibition that satisfies our desire for embodied presence and community is *simultaneously* the artistic form that most prompts the desire to capture and circulate digitally our experience. Technological mediation has become integral to our self-constitution as subjects and as an audience, but also to the dance exhibition itself. At the same time, alternatives to a perceived excess of mediation have already begun to emerge: choreographers who develop strategies to disincentivize photographic circulation by organizing performances late at night, in intimate surrounds and interstitial spaces, or who restrict the public's access to their work by carefully controlling the dissemination of a given project.[57]

The museum's interest in the performing arts has unquestionably resulted in a certain de-fanging of visual art performance, which is no longer concerned with transgression, protest, or institutional critique. That role has instead fallen to activist collectives such as Liberate Tate and Gulf Labor.[58] What the migration of black box into white cube *can* offer, however, is a zoom lens onto the conflicts underlying technology's reshaping of our sensorium. Dance exhibitions are a strange hybrid: both a *symptom* of and *compensation* for the virtualization of perception. While insisting on a largely de-technologized and stripped-down approach to production that foregrounds the intimate proximity of the human body, they nevertheless carry the negative imprint of digital technology in their very structure. By asserting the inextricability of immediacy and mediation, however, dance exhibitions problematize the way in which contemporary attention—and thus the contemporary subject—is configured at this particular historical moment. This is a subject caught between competing notions of public and personal, subject and object, physicality and virtuality, being institutionally shaped and being self-constituted. The question is where we head next: to codify the ideological stakes of the gray zone, push its contradictions further—or to avert its paradoxes altogether by taking performance out of the gallery and housing it in dedicated new museum spaces that are more comfortable and conventional, but which also lack the friction of an interface with the public in all of its uncontrollably distracted multiplicity.

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57. For example, Faustin Linyekula gave a lecture-demonstration in and around an elevator at the Walker Arts Center (*Artist Talk*, 2011); Trajal Harrell performed by the escalator at MoMA late at night (*In the Mood for Frankie*, 2016); and Ralph Lemon has strictly controlled the images that circulate of his collaboration with a family in Little Yazoo, Mississippi, since 2002. One of the most outspoken proponents of this position in visual art and music is Terre Thaemlitz, for example "Social Media Content Removal Fail" (2013).

58. Liberate Tate (2010–) pressured the museum to divest itself of BP sponsorship via numerous "oil spill" actions at Tate Modern and Tate Britain, while Gulf Labor intervened at the Guggenheim on 1 May 2015, showering the rotunda with On Kawara flyers to protest the museum's labor practices in the United Arab Emirates.

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