

In Vienna, a group of artists including Günter Brus, Otto Mühl, and Hermann Nitsch come together to form Viennese Actionism.

The formation of the Wiener Aktionsgruppe (Viennese Actionists group) follows what seems to have been the inexorable course of all postwar artistic activities, facing, on the one hand, the ruined conditions of the European avant-garde, either obliterated or destroyed by fascism and totalitarianism, and on the other hand the overwhelming promises of the American neo-avant-garde, in its emergence during the period of European reconstruction. In Vienna—as elsewhere—the seemingly universal impact of, in Allan Kaprow's words, "The Legacy of Jackson Pollock" became central (either by the direct encounter with his work, or via its highly misread mediations in the paintings of Georges Mathieu [born 1931] and Yves Klein, who exhibited in Vienna to great acclaim in the late fifties). Other European artists such as Manolo Millares (1926–72) and Alberto Burri (1915–95) (strangely enough Lucio Fontana was never mentioned) were equally cited by the Viennese Actionists as providing license for the destruction of the canvas and the spatialization of the painterly process.

### The desecration of painting as ritual

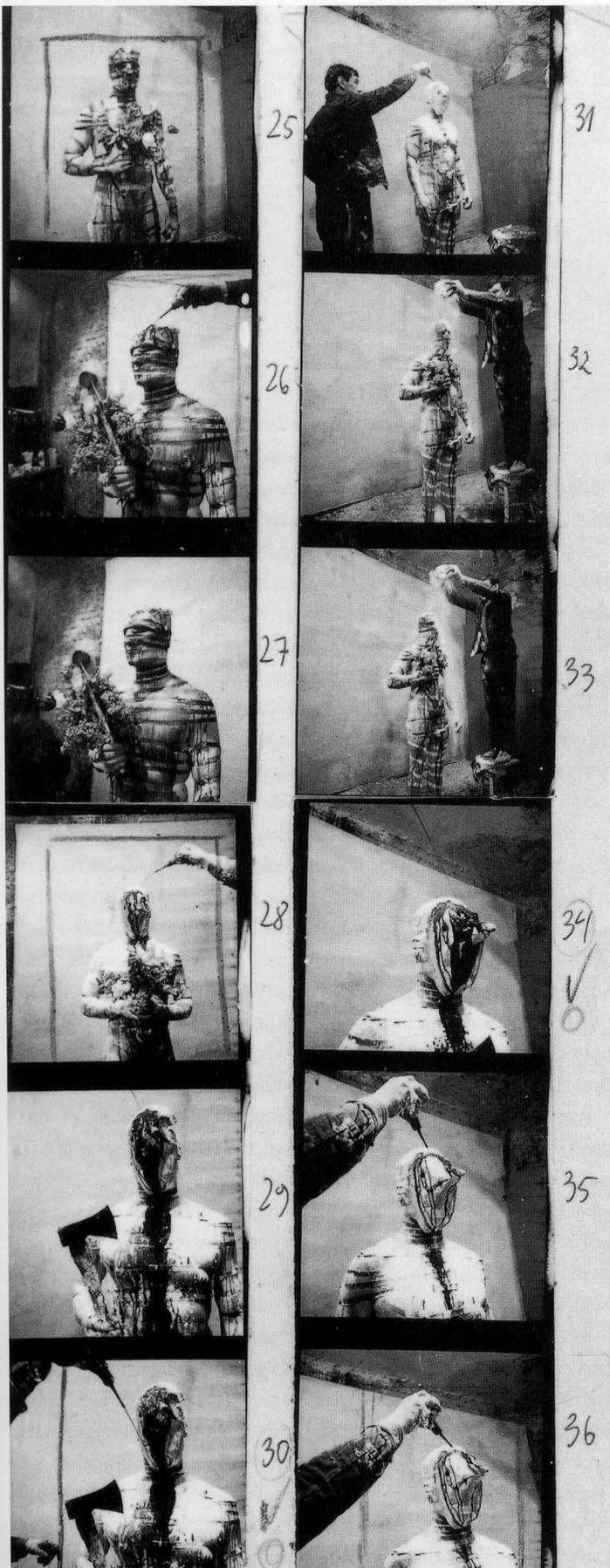
The first steps for the evacuation, if not outright destruction, of easel painting, its traditional formats, materials, and processes, were taken by the Viennese artists Günter Brus (born 1938), Otto Mühl (born 1925), and Hermann Nitsch (born 1938) around 1960. From then on, painting would be forced to regress to infantile smearing (Brus), to aleatory processes of application (as in the staining and pouring of the *Schüttbilder* [Pouring Paintings] by Nitsch), or to the actual defacement of the surface in the tearing and cutting of painting's support, the shift from relief to object (Mühl), making it evident that the canvas itself had become *one* surface among other surfaces, merely an object littered with other objects.

As a second step, the Viennese recognized the necessity of noncompositionality to the decentering of perspectival order. They deployed the principles of permutations as well as (predominantly violent) chance operations. The third, and possibly most important, step was their push for painting's inevitable expansion into public space, theatrical if not social. Yet the perceptual parameters of that spatial expansion initially seem to have remained

opaque to the artists, since they either ignored or disregarded all earlier historical transformations of the interrelationships between painterly space and social space (for example, the work of El Lissitzky and that of the Soviet avant-garde in general).

Paradoxically, in spite of the Viennese histrionics about the absolute originality of their inventions, the actual works produced in the period prior to the development of the Viennese Actionist movement are in many instances similar to slightly earlier work by American artists: the paintings by Brus and Adolf Frohner (born 1934) exacerbate the desublimatory effects of the somatic graphemes of Cy Twombly in the late fifties, and Mühl's and Nitsch's *Materialbilder* (Material Pictures) uncannily resemble (if not repeat) the funk and neo-Dada assemblages by artists such as Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, Bruce Conner, or Allan Kaprow. Clearly, the Viennese Actionists misread Pollock's latent, yet inexorable spectacularization of painting as a celebratory legitimation of art's return to ritual (which Pollock's own rhetoric had fueled). The Viennese writer and theoretician Oswald Wiener (born 1935)—a founding member of the Wiener Gruppe who subsequently became to some extent the aesthetic and theoretical mastermind of the Viennese Actionists—had already declared in his *Cool Manifesto* in 1954 that artistic production would have to move away from *objects*, to focus on the work of art as an *event structure*. Thus, Wiener anticipates the prophecy of Kaprow's essay "The Legacy of Jackson Pollock" (written in 1956, published in 1958), stating that "not only will these bold creators show us, as if for the first time, the world we have always had about us but ignored, but they will disclose entirely unheard of *happenings and events*."

With the example of Pollock established, American artists began to engage painting's performance structure—with its implications of action and duration—as early as 1952 (for example when John Cage enacted his protohappening *Theatre Piece No. 1* with Robert Rauschenberg, Mary Caroline Richards, Merce Cunningham, and others at Black Mountain College). This was followed in 1959 by the first such work to use the term "happening" (coined by its maker): Allan Kaprow's *18 Happenings in 6 Parts* at the Reuben Gallery in New York. It is important to acknowledge immediately the specific differences between the early "happenings" of Kaprow, Dine, and Oldenburg and the performances of the Viennese



1 • Otto Mühl, *Materialaktion*, 1965

Photographic documents

Actionists, beginning in 1962. While the Americans' "happenings" focus on the clash between the body and technology, the mechanical and the mass-cultural environment (for instance, Jim Dine's *Car Crash*, Claes Oldenburg's *Photo Death* and his installation ▲ *The Street*) the artists of Viennese Actionism emphasize the return to ritual and theatricality right from the beginning. Furthermore, even in their very first performances, the Viennese Actionists single out the body itself and treat it as an analytic object, as the libidinal site where the intersection between psychosomatic subjectivity and social subjection can be dramatically enacted.

There are several reasons for these differences. The first is that the Actionists linked action painting and *tachisme* with the specifically local and regional Austrian Expressionist tradition. One of Vienna's foundational cultural characteristics had been the fusion of Catholicism and patriarchy with a powerful and hierarchical imperial order, a fusion that had been internalized and perpetuated most within its bourgeois class. From the beginning of the twentieth century, Viennese Expressionism had opposed these power structures and constituted itself within a poignant and lasting dialectic: on the one hand was a hypertrophic cult of the sexual body, touting its compulsions as subversive of the bourgeois regimes of sublimation and repression; on the other hand was a simultaneous loathing of the body and of sexuality as the very structures where social order and repression were most deeply anchored and acted out in compulsive behavior and neurotic suffering. This Expressionist tradition—beginning with Oskar Kokoschka's 1909 play and poster, revealingly titled *Murderer, the Hope of Woman*, and with the extraordinary drawings of Egon Schiele and Alfred Kubin—served as one crucial horizon and point of departure for Viennese Actionism.

#### Psychoanalysis and polymorphous perversity

The second reason for the cultural divide between the American and Viennese artists is the fact that the Viennese Actionists emerged from a culture of psychoanalysis. The rediscovery of the prewar theories of Sigmund Freud and the rearticulation of psychoanalysis in its various strands and deviations from Wilhelm Reich (who would become crucial for Mühl) to Carl G. Jung (whose theory of unconscious archetypes was of particular importance to Nitsch), are certainly another defining element in Viennese Actionism. Yet the conception of the body in Viennese Actionism is distinctly post-Freudian, since it foregrounds the polymorph perverse origins of the libidinal structure rather than, as Freud had required, conceiving of sexuality as a teleological trajectory in which the subject's earlier and "primitive" stages of instinctual development are surpassed, culminating in a presumably hegemonic and heterosexual genitality. The new postlinguistic theatricality of the Viennese Actionists originates precisely in a recourse to these partial drives, in an almost programmatic and ostentatious regression to, not to say propagandistic staging of, the primitive phases of sexual development. This particular

confrontation reminds us of course of a similar conflict between André Breton's Surrealist psychoanalytic theories and Georges Bataille's and Antonin Artaud's derisive critique of Surrealism and of Freudian orthodoxy. Yet the Actionists were equally influenced by Breton's Surrealism (ignoring Bataille) and of Artaud's "Theatre of Cruelty." They seem to have worked through both positions in the process of formulating the project of Actionism.

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, the Viennese Actionists positioned themselves and their work quite explicitly within the sociohistorical framework of postfascist Austria. Thus Otto Mühl, the oldest member of the group, spent two years in the German Army during the war and later stated that his Actionism was his personal response to the experience of fascism. After 1945, Austria, like Germany, had been occupied by the four Allies. From the fifties onwards it was systematically restructured according to the laws of a liberal democracy.

Adopting the principles of the so-called free market society, the conduct of everyday life in Austria was rapidly forced into the American mold of compulsive consumption. As was the case in post-Nazi Germany, Austrians seem to have been convinced that this transition could be achieved most efficiently by embracing the principles of solid repression and via a massive amnesia about their own recent fascist past, both in its self-generated variety of Austro-Fascism and in its externally imposed version of the 1938 German Nazi *Anschluss* (Annexation), and the catastrophic consequences of both.

The extraordinary violence with which the work of the Actionists confronts its spectators thus seems to originate in a dialectic that is particular to the postfascist cultures of Europe: on the one hand, the Viennese Actionists seem to have recognized that experience could be resuscitated only by breaking through the armor of collectively enforced repression. Therefore, the ritualistic reenactment of brutal and excessive forms of human defilement and the theatrical debasement of the human body would become mandatory, since all cultural representation from that point onward would have to be measured against the destruction of the subject, which had now been historically established on a massive scale. On the other hand, Viennese Actionism voluntarily seems to have enforced the total reritualization of artistic practices under the newly emerging aegis of spectacle culture. While the grotesque performances of Georges Mathieu and Yves Klein seemed to indicate at least an ironic glimpse of understanding their condition, there is little evidence that the Viennese Actionists actually grasped this external determination.

### *Gesamtkunstwerk* and travesty

As early as 1960, Nitsch had begun to produce his variations on the legacies of *tachisme* and action painting by pouring (mostly blood-red) paint directly onto (or rather *into*) his canvases. The blood-stained appearance of these *Schüttbilder*—as Nitsch would call them—attempted to simulate sacrifice using modernist monochromy. These paintings declared that a flat canvas was not just an

object of neopositivist self-reflexivity but that it should become, once again, a vessel of ritualistic and transcendental experience. Accordingly, Nitsch's titles, such as *Stations of the Cross*, *Wall of Flagellation*, and *Triptych of the Blood of the Cross*, situate each work programmatically outside of modernist painting and reclaim its putative access to the spheres of the sacred, of myth, and of liturgical performance. Nitsch would later state in his "Blood Organ Manifesto" in 1962:

*Through my art production (a form of devotion to life) I take upon myself that which appears to be a negative, perverse and obscene lust and the sacrificial hysteria resulting from it, so as to spare you the defilement and shame of a descent into the extreme.*

By contrast, Mühl's first *Materialbilder* (begun in the summer of 1961) owe more to his encounter with the idiom of junk sculpture, by then universally practiced in the work of Jean Tinguely in Paris and David Smith, Richard Stankiewicz, and John Chamberlain in New York, all of whom had introduced contemporary industrial refuse to form countermachinic sculptures by that time. Rather than continuing as a painter/sculptor in the assemblage tradition of Kurt Schwitters, whom the Viennese venerated as one of their greatest predecessors, Mühl subsequently identified himself only as a "poet and director" beginning in 1963. Already pointing in the direction of his subsequent *Materialaktionen* (Material Action Performances), he describes his assemblage work in the following terms: "a sensual expansion and movement in space, ground up, mixed up, broken up, piled up, scratched, hacked up and blown up." Mühl declares his artistic project to be one of *deconstructivism* (presumably in opposition to *Constructivism*) and he announces its anarchist and nihilist dogma to be one of "absolute revolt, total disobedience, and systematic sabotage.... All art will be destroyed, annihilated, terminated and something new will begin."

Deriving directly from the Futurist proclamation that *industrial materials* are equally valid for artistic production, Mühl now celebrates the incorporation of the most banal substances of everyday consumer culture. Thus, in Mühl's theatrical performances (which he called "Happenings" after 1963, when Kiki Kogelnik [1935–77], an Austrian artist living in New York, told him about Kaprow's term), it is no longer the forces of industrialization, but the universal regime of commodification that sets the terms for the individual's subjection. At the moment of the breakthrough from action painting to *Materialaktion*, Mühl states that "meals and meat, vegetables and sauces, jam and breadcrumbs, liquid paint and powdered pigment, paper, rags, dust, wood, stones, whipped cream, milk, oil, smoke, fire, tools, machines, airplanes etc., etc." are all equally valid for the production of a *Materialaktion*. And we find a very similar position in the writings of Nitsch at that time when he states that "all the normal substances of everyday life, like oil and vinegar, wine and honey, egg yolks and blood, meat as matter, intestines, and talcum powder were discovered for Actionism because of their substance and material sensuality." Both statements inevitably recall once again Allan Kaprow's essay

▲ 1924, 1930b

▲ 1960a

● 1945

■ 1926

◆ 1921

“The Legacy of Jackson Pollock” and *its* lists of newly discovered materials from everydaylife:

*We shall utilize the specific substances of sight, sound, movements, people, odors, touch. Objects of every sort are materials for the new art: paint, chairs, food, electric and neon lights, smoke, water, old socks, a dog, movies, a thousand other things that will be discovered by the present generation of artists.*

Mühl’s *Materialaktionen* from 1963 onward deploy two crucial strategies, that of *Entzweckung* (disfunctionalization) and that of *Entwirklichung* (derealization). Both detach objects and materials from their common functions and achieve the estrangement effect for performances of everyday activities within the context of the *Materialaktion*, aiming quite explicitly at a newly experienced immediacy of sensation and cognition comparable to the tradition of the Soviet Formalist model of *ostranenie*. Despite their explicit antitheatrical claims, and beyond the tremendous impact on the Viennese Actionists at large of the theories and writings of Artaud, the *Materialaktionen* seem to fuse the endless despair of Samuel Beckett’s *Endgame* (1958) or *Happy Days* (1961) with a Viennese variation of Buster Keaton’s and Charlie Chaplin’s slapstick comedies (such as “Modern Times” of 1936) about the subject’s hapless and helpless submission to the forces of advanced industrialization [1].

Viennese Actionism thus operates across a spectrum ranging from the sacred to the grotesque. Nitsch’s *Orgien Mysterien Theater* (Orgies Mysteries Theater), sincerely attempting to reconstitute the intensity of experience once offered by catharsis in the classical tragedies, the redeeming rituals of Christianity, opera, and Baroque theater, occupies one extreme of that spectrum. The simultaneous totality of objects, materials, and actions, and the ensuing conditions of synesthesia, inevitably lead to a new conception of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* (and Nitsch of course considered Richard Wagner a heroic precursor worthy of following). In Nitsch’s modern mystery shows, acoustic and optical, haptic and olfactory perceptions are fused with a range of activities on the stage that shift from ritual to provocation, from mere object performance to hieratic celebration. As Nitsch states: “Everything comes together in the reality of our actions. Poetry becomes painting, or painting becomes poetry, music becomes action, action painting becomes theater, informal theater becomes primarily an optical event.” [2]

By contrast, Mühl’s cornucopia of negated objects, and his proliferation of matters of consumption, often engulfing, if not actually physically burying the performers, of course demarcates the opposite extreme of the spectrum. Even the titles of the *Materialaktionen* manifestly separate them from the project of Nitsch’s *Orgien Mysterien Theater: The Swamping of a Nude*, *OMO* (named after what was then the most “prominent” laundry detergent), *Mama and Papa*, or *Leda and the Swan*. All of these stagings of scandal, public defilement, and the denigration of the subjects’ bodies perform grotesque exorcisms of consumption more in the



2 • Hermann Nitsch, 4. Aktion, 1963

Performance

manner of a travesty or a satyr-play than that of ritualistic redemption and tragedy.

## Positivism and pathology

The joint performance of Nitsch, Mühl, and Frohner, called *Die Blutorgel* (The Blood Organ) in 1962 is clearly the founding event of Viennese Actionism. Nitsch describes the work as a collective festival, deploying scientific models derived from depth- and mass-psychology, to reignite that experience that cults from antiquity through Christianity had presumably offered. In opposition to what Nitsch perceives as the “collective inability to experience and the collective fear of existence,” his *Orgien Mysterien Theater* sought to induce its public “through the ritualistic organization of elementary sensuous forms to attain a breakthrough to life as a continuous celebratory festivity.”

By 1966, Mühl had initiated—in collaboration with Oswald Wiener—a project of countercultural activism, called *ZOCK* (an acronym that Peter Weibel (born 1944) took to mean “destruction of order, Christianity and culture,” but also a verb, “*zocken*,” that means to hit, beat, or play cards in German slang). *ZOCK* takes its cues explicitly from Dada’s antiartistic stances, yet in its pronunciations it reminds us once again of the grandiloquent anticultural prophecies of Futurism. Thus, Wiener and Mühl announce in their manifesto that “all opera houses, theaters, museums, and libraries should be razed,” and they continue their polemic by listing the artists from Pop art and Minimalist art to Land art and Conceptual art as the worst enemies of their own anticultural venture.

The centrality of Oswald Wiener as a theoretician of both the Wiener Gruppe and of the Viennese Actionists (a role continued slightly later by Weibel who was to become the most complex critic and historian of both groups, at the same time developing an artistic practice that attempts to overcome the Actionists' historical and geopolitical limitations) points to yet another condition that is very specific to the Vienna avant-garde. At first glance one might assume that the neopositivist approach to poetic language practiced in the Wiener Gruppe and the Viennese Actionists' celebration of the prelinguistic world of polymorph perverse sexuality would be mutually exclusive. In fact, they form the halves not just of the general dialectics of enlightenment, but more specifically of the epistemological duality that has marked Viennese culture since the late nineteenth century, best embodied in the simultaneous emergence of the psychoanalytical project of Freud and the epistemological project of Ernst Mach, whose empirico-criticism had insisted on a theory of intelligibility that was defined solely by material evidence, rather than by metaphysical or historical concepts.

The third—and possibly the most complex—figure of the group, Günter Brus, seems to have been initiated into Actionism under the tutelage of the older Mühl, who in 1964 insisted that Brus abandon his late *Informel Labyrinth Paintings* in favor of direct performance-based actions. From the beginning, Brus explicitly aligned painting with sexuality, stating that painting is a form of masturbation, since both take place in utter privacy. His first performance, *Ana* in 1964, marks his initial step into Actionism.

Brus shifted the painterly process directly onto the performing body (most often the artist's own), exhibiting himself, painted white, in rooms covered with the same paint. Performing in front of his paintings at the Galerie Junge Generation in Vienna in 1965, he paid tribute to the work of Arnulf Rainer (born 1929) (whose *Übermalungen* [overpaintings] were held in great esteem by all of the Actionists). Gradually expanding the sites of his performance activities, Brus positioned himself and his work in direct confrontation with public social space. In his work *Spaziergang* (Promenade; 1965), the artist, painted white, with a black line inscribing a vertical split and dividing his body in half, walked through the streets of Vienna, where he was promptly arrested by the police. What distinguished Brus's work from that of his peers in the movement is that from the very beginning he situated his activities outside of any theatrical enactment, and beyond any promises of a healing redemption by ritual [3].

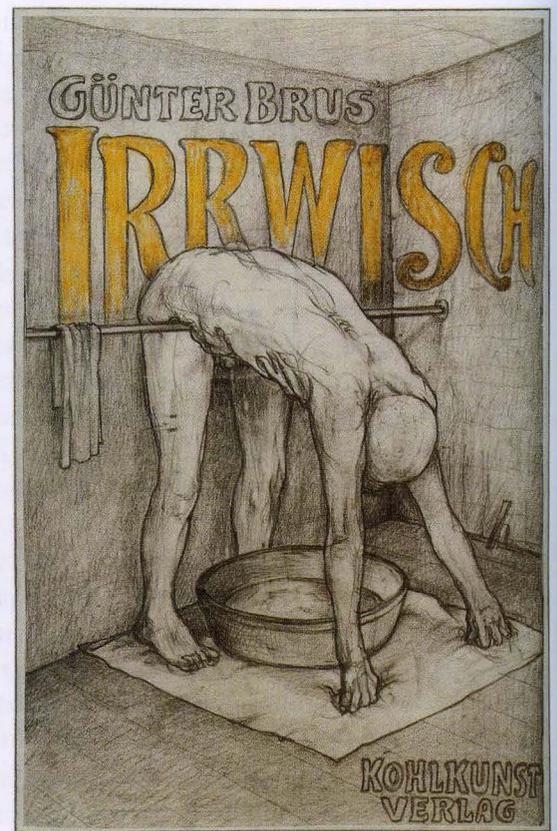
Brus began his project of *Total Aktion* in 1966, once again in collaboration with Mühl. Their first joint performance, staged at the Adolf Loos Villa on June 2, 1966, is significantly titled *Ornament is a Crime*, adding the verb and indefinite article to Loos's famous title ▲ (“Ornament and Crime”) to imbue it with a renewed urgency and concreteness. *Total Aktion* combines elements of Nitsch's *Orgien Mysterien Theater* with Mühl's *Materialaktion*. Language is here reduced to its most elementary prelinguistic sounds of stuttering, hissing, heavy breathing, screaming, bordering on a public enactment of psychologist Dr. Arthur Janov's “primal therapy,” from *The Primal Scream* (1970).

1960–1969



3 • Günter Brus, *Untitled*, 1965

Photographic documentation of various performance works



4 • Günter Brus, cover of *Der Irrwisch*, Kohle Kunst Verlag, Frankfurt, 1971

▲ 1900a

Brus's most important contribution to the culture of postwar Vienna is undoubtedly his prolific output of extraordinary drawings (such as his book *Der Irrwisch* [1971]), in which the martyrdom of contemporaneity is recorded in the lapidary manner of a draughtsman for the courtroom in which photography is prohibited [4]. Or equally adequate (since the cult of mental alterity in children and deranged adults is yet another central cultural topos among the Actionists), the drawings appear to be made in the manner of those of mental patients, for whom compulsively executed detail promises the highest realization of a vision or the closest proximity to the object of desire.

If there is any oeuvre of drawing in the twentieth century with which Brus's drawings could be compared, it would be the compulsively detailed erotic drawings of Pierre Klossowski (1905–2001), even though they were certainly unknown to Brus (since they were mostly inaccessible during the sixties). Brus's conception of sexuality and bodily experience opens up all the registers of the repressed histories of individual and collective libidinal development. When the body in Brus's drawings is subjected to an infinity of acts of torture and abject degradation, the inflictions suffered by the subject appear, almost always, as highly mechanical not to say neuro-motoric. As a result it becomes apparent that Brus's imaginary torture machines correlate to the actually existing social orders that regulate, dominate, and control the subject's libidinal apparatus. His extreme formulations articulate, in a dialectical manner, the repressions at the root of unquestioned normalcy within the conditions regulating everyday life in latecapitalist society.

Reminiscent in that regard of Bertolt Brecht's famous question, "What is the murder of a man by comparison to his lifelong employment?", the semblance of horror in Brus's drawings and Mühl's *Materialaktionen*, the depth of their revulsion and their apparently appalling regressions into the deepest recesses of a polymorph perverse history of the subject, at the same time articulate a manifest opposition to the subject's scandalous reduction, in the process of assimilation, to enforced heterosexuality, to the rules of the monogamous family, to the seeming supremacy of genitality and patriarchal order, and worst of all, to the subjection and extreme reduction of the libidinal complexity of the subject to socially "acceptable" and "desirable" roles and activities (for example, enforced consumption and the total passivity of experience under the regime of spectacle culture).

A turning-point in Viennese Actionism, undoubtedly prepared by the radical contemporaneity and analytical precision of Brus's work, would emerge in the late sixties with the arrival of a younger generation of artists, such as Valie Export (born 1940) and Peter Weibel. It appears that for Export and Weibel, Actionism's perpetual entanglement with rereitualization by that time had become as insufferable as the latent, if not manifest, patriarchal sexism that had gone on unquestioned in all of their activities. As had been the case with Surrealism, latent sexism had driven even the Actionists' most radical attempts to trace the formation of a subject's sexuality in patriarchal capitalist society. In this trajectory, Export's extraor-



5 • Valie Export, *Tapp und Tastkino*, 1968  
Body action

inary *Tapp und Tastkino* (Pat and Paw Cinema) [5] appears as a paradigmatic reversal of almost all the principles of Viennese Actionism. In her public self-exposure (in a street performance her breasts are being offered to anyone who wants to touch them through the openings of a box entitled the "pat and paw cinema"), the radicality of Brus's self-sacrificial auto-analysis, and the specificity of its transfer into the public social spaces where the self is constituted, are both exceeded and displaced. This happens, first of all, via Export's brilliant shift from ritualistic self-exposure to the real registers where social control and oppression are most powerfully inscribed within sexual behavior. Moreover, the performance makes it blatantly obvious that the engagement with rituals of redemption or cathartic healing no longer have any purchase in a world of advanced technological and industrialized spectacle culture. And lastly, Export, more than anybody among the Actionists, manifestly recodes the radical dimension of self-sacrifice that had been exemplarily performed by Brus. She exchanges ritual for emancipatory shock, by bringing about in her spectators/participants a sudden insight into those registers of socialization where the socialized forms of sexual repression and the eternal infantilization of the subject are anchored with industrial means.

#### FURTHER READING

- Kerstin Braun, *Der Wiener Aktionismus* (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 1999)
- Malcolm Green, (ed.), *Brus Mühl/Nitsch Schwarzkogler: Writings of the Vienna Actionists* (London: Atlas Press, 1999)
- Dieter Schwarz et al., *Wiener Aktionismus/Vienna Actionism* (Winterthur: Kunstmuseum; Edinburgh: Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art; and Klagenfurt: Ritter Verlag, 1988)
- Peter Weibel and Valie Export (eds), *wien: bildkompendium wiener aktionismus und film* (Frankfurt: Kohlkunst Verlag, 1970)

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With love, admiration, and grief, we dedicate this book to Nikos Stangos, great editor, poet, and friend, whose belief in this project both instigated and sustained it through the course of its development.

We would like to thank Thomas Neurath and Peter Warner for their patient support, and Nikos Stangos and Andrew Brown for their editorial expertise. The book would not have been begun without Nikos; it would not have been completed without Andrew.

The publishers would like to thank Amy Dempsey for her assistance in the preparation of this book.

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First published in the United Kingdom in 2004 by Thames & Hudson Ltd,  
181A High Holborn, London WC1V 7QX

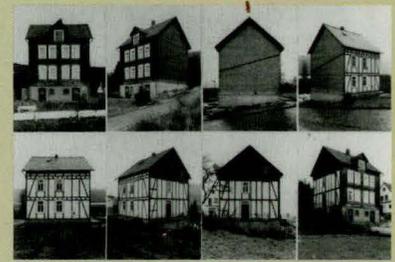
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Reprinted with corrections 2007

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British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data  
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library  
ISBN 978-0-500-23818-9

Printed and bound in Singapore by CS Graphics



## 1960–1969

- 434 1960a Critic Pierre Restany organizes a group of diverse artists in Paris to form *Nouveau Réalisme*, redefining the paradigms of collage, the readymade, and the monochrome.  
box: The neo-avant-garde
- 439 1960b Clement Greenberg publishes "Modernist Painting": his criticism reorients itself and in its new guise shapes the debates of the sixties.  
box • Leo Steinberg: the flatbed picture plane
- 445 1960c Roy Lichtenstein and Andy Warhol start to use cartoons and advertisements as sources for paintings, followed by James Rosenquist, Ed Ruscha, and others: American Pop art is born.
- 450 1961 In December, Claes Oldenburg opens *The Store* in New York's East Village, an "environment" that mimicked the setting of surrounding cheap shops and from which all the items were for sale: throughout the winter and the following spring, ten different "happenings" would be performed by Oldenburg's Ray Gun Theater in *The Store* locale.
- 456 1962a In Wiesbaden, West Germany, George Maciunas organizes the first of a series of international events that mark the formation of the Fluxus movement.
- 464 1962b In Vienna, a group of artists including Günter Brus, Otto Mühl, and Hermann Nitsch come together to form Viennese Actionism.
- 470 1962c Spurred by the publication of *The Great Experiment: Russian Art 1863–1922* by Camilla Gray, Western interest revives in the Constructivist principles of Vladimir Tatlin and Aleksandr Rodchenko, which are elaborated in different ways by younger artists such as Dan Flavin, Carl Andre, Sol LeWitt, and others.  
box • *Artforum*

- 475 1963 After publishing two manifestos with the painter Eugen Schönebeck, Georg Baselitz exhibits *Die Grosse Nacht im Eimer* (Great Night Down the Drain) in Berlin.
- 480 1964a On July 20, the twentieth anniversary of the failed Stauffenberg coup against Hitler, Joseph Beuys publishes his fictitious autobiography and generates an outbreak of public violence at the "Festival of New Art" in Aachen, West Germany.
- 486 1964b *Thirteen Most Wanted Men* by Andy Warhol is installed, momentarily, on the facade of the State Pavilion at the World's Fair in New York.
- 492 1965 Donald Judd publishes "Specific Objects": Minimalism receives its theorization at the hands of its major practitioners, Judd and Robert Morris.  
box • Maurice Merleau-Ponty
- 496 1966a Marcel Duchamp completes his installation *Etant Donnés* in the Philadelphia Museum of Art: his mounting influence on younger artists climaxes with the posthumous revelation of this new work.
- 500 1966b The exhibition "Eccentric Abstraction" opens in New York: the work of Louise Bourgeois, Eva Hesse, Yayoi Kusama, and others points to an expressive alternative to the sculptural language of Minimalism.
- 505 1967a Publishing "A Tour of the Monuments of Passaic, New Jersey," Robert Smithson marks "entropy" as a generative concept of artistic practice in the late sixties.
- 509 1967b The Italian critic Germano Celant mounts the first *Arte Povera* exhibition.
- 515 1967c For their first manifestation, the four artists of the French group BMPT paint in public, each artist repeating exactly from canvas to canvas a simple configuration of his choice: their form of Conceptualist painting is the latest in a line of attacks against "official" abstraction in postwar France.

- 521 1968a Two major museums committed to the most advanced European and American art of the sixties—the Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven and the Städtisches Museum Abteiberg in Mönchengladbach—exhibit the work of Bernd and Hilla Becher, placing them at the forefront of an interest in Conceptual art and photography.
- 527 1968b Conceptual art manifests itself in publications by Sol LeWitt, Dan Graham, and Lawrence Weiner, while Seth Siegelaub organizes its first exhibitions.  
box • Artists' journals  
box • Deskillung
- 534 1969 The exhibition "When Attitudes Become Form" in Bern and London surveys Postminimalist developments, while "Anti-Illusion: Procedures/Materials" in New York focuses on Process art, the three principal aspects of which are elaborated by Richard Serra, Robert Morris, and Eva Hesse.

## 1970–1979

- 540 1970 Michael Asher installs his Pomona College Project: the rise of site-specific work opens up a logical field between modernist sculpture and Conceptual art.
- 545 1971 The Guggenheim Museum in New York cancels Hans Haacke's show and suppresses Daniel Buren's contribution to the Sixth Guggenheim International Exhibition: practices of institutional critique encounter the resistance of the Minimalist generation.  
box • Michel Foucault
- 549 1972a Marcel Broodthaers installs his "Musée d'Art Moderne, Département des Aigles, Section des Figures," in Düsseldorf, West Germany.
- 554 1972b The international exhibition "Documenta 5," held in Kassel, West Germany, marks the institutional acceptance of Conceptual art in Europe.