



Hand Out Symposium BodyTalks

October 14th 2011, Auditorium Academy of Fine Arts and Design, Maastricht

10.00

Word of welcome by Bart van den Boom en Eric J. de Jong

10.15

Intimate Strangers – Dr. Ike Kamphof (Maastricht University)

People like to watch other people. In doing that, they are mostly watching each other's bodies. While, it has been argued that public space has become a place of anonymity, where passers by refrain from communicating with each other, the situation looks different when we include the body into consideration. This paper explores the role of watching bodies in public streets.

11.00

The Memory of the Body of Dancer/Choreographer Steve Paxton – Dr. Mia Vaerman (University of Brussels)

American choreographer, dancer and teacher Steve Paxton is known as the “dancing encyclopedia”, because in the course of his career he learned an infinite number of movement structures. Later, he dedicated himself to improvisation, with the purpose of breaking through the mechanism of automatic movements. But he discovered that while the mind thinks of something, some gesture for instance, the body gets the upper hand most of the time. Paxton's bodily experiences place him right in the middle of two opponent thinkers: Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Henri Bergson. They have a clear opposite view on the memory of the body, and that discussion still doesn't seem to be settled today.

11.45

In Search of Meaning, Gesturing figures in Contemporary Sculpture - Anne Berk (Art critic, The Netherlands)

Anne Berk is a renowned Dutch art critic, author and filmmaker. She wrote many articles for art magazines and newspapers including *Het Financieele Dagblad* and *Kunstbeeld*. Her book *Bodytalk* (Waanders, 2004) deals with the shift from abstract to figurative art in Dutch sculpture, in the context of changes in society. Now she works on a follow-up *In Search of Meaning, the Human Figure in Contemporary Sculpture*. She organizes dialogues about art for www.KunstNaderBekeken.nl and contributes to www.myfirstartcollection.nl. Recently, she makes video reviews on YouTube.

video art in public space

VIEWMASTER

12.30 – 14.00

Lunch break

14.00

Benny Nemerofsky Ramsay (Artist, Canada / Berlin)

The artist will present his work and the ways his body, gestures and voice are used as tools in his work. He will focus on the energetic space between popular culture and the bodies of the pop culture audience, about the feelings of longing and identification that occur to one's body when experiencing popular culture, or any creative act for that matter. Central will be how the artist early work seeks to re-inhabit spaces in popular media culture and how the artist seeks to place his own body in the frame of a music video, in the frame of surveillance cameras, in the frame of television culture. The voice will also be central to this discussion, especially as the artist will discuss some of his more recent work, which is more focused on voices than bodies.

14.40

The Virtual Body. Staging the virtual presence in contemporary performances - Peter Missotten (Maastricht Theatre Academy)

In our research project - The Virtual Body - we investigate the implications of a virtual stage presence of the actor/performer in contemporary performances. A basic question - albeit an important one - could be: how does a public react to the virtual intruder? On the more philosophical (or moral, or political) end of the spectrum, one could question if a virtual presence infects (or even perverts or annihilates) the human presence in 'flesh and blood' on stage. What are the implications of the virtual intruder into this live art? Could the virtual enhance the live aspect by emphasizing it's own absence?

15.20

NOW! - Anet van de Elzen (Artist, The Netherlands)

The artist uses her own physicality to communicate the images she makes. Being in the 'now' is an important factor; a condition to be able to do this, is to let go of your explanatory and factual thoughts and to trust your physicality. At the performances of Anet van de Elzen, contact with the audience determines another part. Always first is the poetic image, which transforms into reality when it comes into contact with the audience. This form of performance, live art dealing with the power of presence, is maybe the most confronting of the visual arts. The intensity of images can be very powerful because of the physicality and directness.

The times of NOW are times of an overload of information, new media, digital screens and e-mail; the importance of the actual contact between people, their physical presence and a very special and essential experience disappears into the background.