

Article

Performance Art in the Age of Extinction

Gregorio Tenti 

Departament Humanitats, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, 08002 Barcelona, Spain; gregorio.tenti@upf.edu

Abstract: This paper aims to map out the transformations in contemporary performance art during the current ‘age of extinction’. The first section extends Claire Bishop’s notion of “delegated performance” in order to categorize a turn towards the inclusion of other-than-human entities in the performance field. This operation leads to the concept of ‘performative animism’, referring to the strategies of re-animation of reality through artistic performance. The second section works out the idea of ‘planetaryization’ of the performance field, which designates its opening to spatial and temporal fluxes coming from a dimension that overcomes the scale of human experience, that is, the planetary dimension. The third and final section interprets the meaning of these two transformations by introducing the concepts of ‘exbodiment’ and ‘excarnation’, which tie closely to a new political task for performance art.

Keywords: performance art; extinction; ecocriticism; animism; planetary

Starting from the mid-1990s, a growing body of literature has investigated the many ways in which the performing arts (and theatre in particular) have opened towards ecology and the diffused presence of climate crisis. In a recent work titled *Ecodramaturgies. Theatre, Performance and Climate Change*, Lisa Woynarski [1] singled out three subsequent waves of scholarship on this matter, articulating around fundamental contributions, such as Una Chaudhuri’s [2], Downing Cless’ [3], Bonnie Marranca’s [4], Szerszynski et al.’s [5], Giannachi’s and Stewart’s [6], Theresa May’s [7], and Heim’s and Margolis’ [8] among others. At present, the intersections between performing arts and ecology come as a rich and multifaceted area that engages with a great number of themes ([1], p. 19).

In the framework of this vast research area, this article narrows down the two terms in play (performing arts and ecology) to two specific aspects. In the heterogeneous field of the performing arts, I focus on performance art, intended broadly as a form of art tied to action, body, affective relations, and contingency. Due to its non-representational approach, performance art is particularly suited to reverberate the current epoch¹. In the equally multifarious field of ecology, I choose to use the lens of the concept of extinction, understood as a constellation of biosocial catastrophic events that are already unfolding in the present and will eventually put an end to this world—that is, to the state of things as we know them (see [10,11]). As John Jordan ([12], p. 390) summarizes, “or the majority of the world the collapse has already happened, but the scientific community is increasingly thinking that we are faced with a total collapse of civilization, most possibly in the lifetime of those of us who are reading these notes”. Broadly construed, however, the concept of extinction extends also to certain twentieth-century poetics of performance, like those of Antonin Artaud [13] and Carmelo Bene [14], that are not at all extraneous to the perspective I take on here. Extinction is a particularly cogent idea that is now exerting an increasing influence on our epoch.

My hypothesis is that at least two fundamental elements of performance art, namely bodies and affective relations, undergo relevant transformations in light of the extinctive



Academic Editors: Alessandro
Giovanni Bertinetto and
Lisa Giombini

Received: 10 November 2024

Revised: 31 December 2024

Accepted: 5 January 2025

Published: 20 January 2025

Citation: Tenti, G. Performance Art in the Age of Extinction. *Philosophies* **2025**, *10*, 13. <https://doi.org/10.3390/philosophies10010013>

Copyright: © 2025 by the author. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

event. The scope of this article, then, goes far beyond those performances that address the environmental crisis by representing it and aims to build an argument on artistic performances in general in their relations with the present epoch—although, of course, the subjects of my analysis are mere tendencies, which are therefore not shared by each and every manifestation of contemporary performance art, nor are they necessarily unfolded in their entirety, nor they will ever be.

In the course of my argument, I aim to observe the particular ways in which performance art engages with the age of extinction through a typological approach. In the first section, I extend Claire Bishop's notion of "delegated performance" in order to categorize a turn towards the inclusion of other-than-human entities in the performance field. This operation leads to devise the concept of 'performative animism', referring to the strategies of re-animation of reality through artistic performance. In the second section, I work out the idea of 'planetarization' of the performance field, which designates its opening to spatial and temporal fluxes coming from a dimension that overcomes the scale of human experience, the planetary dimension. In the article's third and final section, I interpret the meaning of the transformations illustrated above through the concept of 'exbodiment' and the related notion of 'excarnation' and finally shed light on the political task that descends from these concepts.

1. Hyper-Delegation and Performative Animism

In an article from 2012, art historian and critic Claire Bishop talks of "delegated performance" to conceptualize a tendency within performance art after the "social turn" of the 1990s: that of delegating the performance to "non-professionals or specialists in other fields", that is to people that perform "*their own socioeconomic category*" in the place of the artist. Bishop interprets this tendency as a way for the non-professionals to renegotiate their own social agency without actually leaving the social and economic structures and for the artist to access a source of authenticity (insofar as non-professionals are considered 'closer to life'). Thus, the artist's performing body would be able to reconnect with the wider social body. "In the last two decades", she argues, the live presence of the performing body "is no longer attached to the single performer but instead to the *collective* body of the social group" ([15], p. 91).

Regardless of whether delegated performance is a successful way to relate to social otherness or yet another ineffective act of condescendence coming from the art world, the notion proposed by Bishop proves useful to designate the gesture of redesigning performing corporeality by including 'other' bodies in the performance field. The cases of performance art that I will analyze in what follows display an apparently similar strategy in the frame of a different kind of relationism. In a growing number of performances of the past few decades, artists seem to enact a radically amplified act of delegation of their own agency: not simply to other people (non-artists) but to other-than-human entities such as animals, plants, machines, and inorganic formations. To reformulate Bishop's statement, the live presence of the performing body is no longer attached to the human performer, nor to the collective body of society, but to the body of the planet intended as the integrated ensemble of human and other-than-human collectives. This can be defined as a gesture of 'hyper-delegation', going beyond the tangle of socioeconomic identities—although without leaving the political *tout court*, as I will argue in the third section of the article.

One of the first other-than-human bodies to be included is that of the nonhuman animal. From Joseph Beuys' *I Like America and America Likes Me* (1974) and Marina Abramović's *Dragon Heads* (1990–1992) to Pierre Huyghe's *Colony Collapse* (2012), the nonhuman animal has been progressively freed from its symbolical value and included in multispecies performances in its vivid concreteness, as a pure injection of contingency

in this otherwise “most anthropocentric of the arts” ([16], p. 6), who refers to theatre alone; see also [17]. Romeo Castellucci, co-founder of Societas Raffaello Sanzio (now Societas), describes the inclusion of the nonhuman animal in performance as the inclusion of the body which is closest to matter, the one that holds “the lowest level of possible communication” ([18], p. 23)². The asignifying presence of the nonhuman animal taken in its “dull perfection”, he writes ([18], p. 27), has the power to remodulate the actor’s mission itself: no longer to gain naturalness through technique, but to fall back into nonhuman naturalness by abandoning all technique. This rhetoric of the natural origin may serve the purpose of legitimizing the presence of a living nonhuman creature in the performance but is, in any case, overcome by the radical uncanniness of such presence: the influence of what Derrida calls the “animal event” [20] on the human bodies and on the performative field as a whole cannot be reduced to the exotic truth of ‘nature’ in contrast to the ‘artifice’. This holds true both for theatrical or museum performances and for performances realized outside the institutional places, where the “impropriety of the animal on the theatre stage” ([21], p. 98) is still never reabsorbed despite the abolition of the stage itself.

Another meaningful case of hyper-delegated performance is the inclusion of plants. Engaging with the presence of vegetal bodies beyond their symbolic or decorative use means engaging with a completely different range of effects than the human one (see [22]). Examples abound of artists performing with plants in a theatre or a museum (like Essi Kausalainen performing with her house plants or Paul Rae and Kaylene Tan performing with bonsai in *Tree Duet*) or artists performing in places where plants grow (like Anna Rubios’ dances with trees). Other cases involve strategies of transplantation: *Portable Lawn* by Vaughn Bell, for instance, consists of the artist pushing a cart filled with a miniature lawn around Boston (see [23]); Danilo Balestro’s actions displace vegetal and other kinds of natural entities into human places such as university classes, concerts, and private parties ([24], p. 186). In many cases, the hiatus between vegetal and human is addressed via technological mediation (see [25]).

Yet, different kinds of hyper-delegated performances involve technical objects, inorganic formations, and natural elements. When machines are no longer employed as instruments for representation or mere props and appear in their concrete, uncanny presence (like Kleist’s *Marionetten*), the performative agency of the human artist is partially transferred to an artificial body [26]. An example of performing techno-bodies is *Articulated Head* by performance artist Stelarc, engineer Christian Kroos, and software developer Damith Herath, which is a robot with a digital portrait of Stelarc’s face programmed to interact with its spectators³. Even more pertinent examples are Ken Rinaldo’s cybernetic ballet titled *Autopoiesis*, Ruairi Glynn’s flock of moving robots, titled *Performative Ecologies*, or performances featuring robot arms such as Sun Yuan’s and Peng Yu’s *Can’t Help Myself* and Luis-Philippe Demers’ *Blind Robot* (see [29], pp. 40–47, 50–52). The delegation of agency to the inorganic manifests also in the inclusion of mineral bodies, as in Paula Suraco’s *Medium Noise* [30] and Manuela Infante’s *Como Converdirse en Piedra*; and in the inclusion of natural elements no longer employed as mere resources or settings, as in Regina José Galindo’s performances with soil and Luigi Berardi’s performances with wind. A similar case could be made for nonliving biological entities like viruses, as in the case of Pierre Huyghe’s *Influenced*.

If, according to Bishop ([15], p. 91), “one of the most conspicuous manifestations of the ‘social turn’ in contemporary art since the 1990s” was the delegation of performance to non-artists, we can observe a parallel ‘other-than-human turn’ around the acts of hyper-delegation to other-than-human bodies. Hyper-delegation prolongs and radicalizes the gesture of delegation through the relativization of the human actant and the subsequent metamorphosis and partial deposition of human agency. Of course, the same argument

encompasses socially marginalized collective of humans, such as disabled, racialized, and queer bodies: all non-universal bodies that do not conform to the socially and culturally defined standards of the 'human' (let us think of performance artists such as Nicola Fornoni, Senga Nengudi, or Ma Liuming). But these kinds of bodies can be made subject to hyper-delegation only because they are, in a way, socially dehumanized.

It is immediately evident that the word 'delegation' maintains a certain flavor linked to the juridical and political operation of agency transferal from a superior entity to an inferior one acting as a vicar. In Bishop's account, the delegation of performance raises a series of psycho-political issues precisely because the artist delegating their agency to the non-artist is still a sovereign subject conferring power to others. Hyper-delegation, instead, requires a fundamental displacement of human subjectivity, a deposition of human agency, and the subsequent dismissal of any instrumentalism, ventriloquism, and reifying attitude towards other entities. "In the specific case of animals", writes Ridout ([21], p. 97), "there is an uneasy sense that the animal on stage, unless very firmly tethered to a human being who looks like he or she owns it, is there against its will, or if not its will, at least its best interest". This very uneasiness is the key to overcoming the 'circus effect', which relies on the visual representation and forceful subjugation of the other-than-human, and to start engaging with an other-than-human presence. In this sense, the disruption of representation via the inclusion of otherness is a feature that has always belonged to performance art since the times when Hans Haacke displayed a yard of topsoil at MIT in 1967 (Grass) and declared: "I'm not interested in the form. I'm more interested in the growth of plants".

More than in other contemporary art fields, here, such an operation assumes the proportion of an animistic experimentation. The concept of animism can be mobilized as a "critical archaism" ([31], p. 220) to designate a non-Western and non-modern way to acknowledge the tangle of other-than-human agencies constituting a biosocial ecosystem and relate to it (see [32,33]). The performative animism brought about by hyper-delegation creates active zones of indiscernibility between bodies of different species and ontological regimes. In this way, it contributes to repopulating reality by exploring the affective dimension as a regulatory function between planetary collectives. The relativization of human agency is a fully performative project if we conceive of the repopulation of reality as a redistribution and evocation of agency that lets a dimension of "multiversal resonating performances" emerge ([34], p. 12) rather than as the constitution of new forms⁴.

2. Planetarization of the Performance Field

Through hyper-delegation, contemporary performance art opens up the performance field to other collectives of bodies, which in turn catalyzes new kinds of affective relations. Let me now provide some more working definitions. The 'performance field' can be defined here as the tangle of affective relations in which the bodies act and which, in turn, capture and constitute the acting bodies as such. The performance field is possibly (but not necessarily) framed into a representative grid, such as the theatre scene or the museum hall. As Artaud put it in *The Theatre and Its Double*, the space of performance is, first of all, a field of interaction between affective elements, in which a sound equals a gesture and an intonation equals a form: a "concrete language" that is "aimed at the senses" ([37], p. 26). Such a field is an intensification of its outside reality and transforms alongside it. The performative grid superimposed on this field, instead, is a 'hard' device of regulation that constitutes the outside reality as a radical otherness, a "xenological" device, as Sloterdijk [38] has it. Space and time are affective parameters in constant mutation within the performance field and fixed within the performance grid (e.g., as spatial framings like the theatre stage and temporal framings like Aristotelian units). In a growing number of cases in contemporary performance art, the performance field is programmatically freed

from the traditional grids of performative representation and comes to the fore more or less disruptively.

In the age of extinction, the inclusion of other-than-human bodies is one relevant path of transformation of the performance field. Another one is the opening to an affective otherness that comes from the extinctive reality, that is, to planetary affects (rather than planetary bodies). Here, I will concentrate only on the affective parameters of space and time. I will argue that the planetarization of performative space and time implies their diffraction and projection to proportions and modes that drastically overcome the scale of subjective experience: the performative ‘here’ is diffracted and projected towards a nonlocal dimension of spatial multiplicity; the performative ‘now’ is diffracted and projected towards a non-linear dimension of temporal multiplicity. Such multiplicity of spaces and times to which the performance sensitizes itself is the very texture of the planet, intended as the non-synthesizable nor analyzable complex of earthly bodies, relations, and effects (see [39,40]), which comes to the fore through the extinctive event.

As with regards to the dimension of space, the planetarization of performance inscribes itself in a wider ‘spatial turn’ begun in the 1990s (see [41–43]), after which the borders of the traditional performative grids have become more and more collectively negotiable [44]. As a sort of ‘hyper-spatial turn’, then, planetarization marks the shift from the “sense of the place” to a “sense of the planet”, as Ursula K. Heise [45] puts it. To perform in a planetarized space means to engage in acts of unstable localization. The interdisciplinary collective POST DISASTER, for example, uses the lens of the industrial city of Taranto in Southern Italy—a “manifesto-city of contemporary crisis, both urban and ecological”⁵—to address the role of planetary extraction and production processes as they resonate through the Mediterranean context. In the enlarged setting of a “fading city”⁶, POST DISASTER reactivates marginal territories such as rooftops and industrial areas through collective actions such as public discussions, assemblies, and shared experimentations of practices. A problematic locality is reframed into the planetary dimension, which has become the source of unexplainable transformations. In a similar way, the Italian collective DOM-mobilizes liminal spaces along fractures that overcome their own spatial scale, organizing collective walks through the decomposed Venetian countryside (Omne) and the Roman hinterland (Mamma Roma) or co-creative practices of nomadic housing (Roma non esiste, Half a House) and gardening (Garten, Wild Facts)⁷.

By performing post-disaster situations, these performances diffract and project an opaque ‘here’ into a wider context of practice, thus aiming at reappropriating the planetary gesture. They do not simply denounce global displacement and spatial alienation or interrogate the boundaries of planetary representation; they actively engage in letting planetary spatiality proliferate along new lines of interaction with the environment. Their goal is learning and instating ways of collectively inhabiting the planet. To go through a portion of the planet means to enter into contact with processes that are impossible to explain in light of the local territory, which implies, among other things, overcoming the distinction between foreign and autochthonous. The political nature of this transformation (the fact that it is inflicted by certain collectives and suffered by others) is usually brought to light by these kinds of post-disaster actions, which, in this sense, are akin to acts of indigenous resistance.

Walking, for instance, is a performative strategy often employed to reinstate a form of unstable yet shared planetary locality. In performances such as Robert Bean’s and Barbara Lounder’s *Being-in-the-Breathable* [46] or Andrea Conte’s *Parata tiberina* [47], walking becomes a way of reappropriating the natural commons like air, water, and soil after events that have not happened ‘here’. But walking is also an exemplary case of the potential reappropriation of social space performed by non-universal bodies. For a non-universal

body, experiencing public and socialized spatiality means coming into direct contact with the social construction of space ([48], p. 161). The fact that, for example, walking is a different practice for Black people is emphasized by collective performances such as *Walking While Black*, organized by Natasha Thembiso Ruwona. As Black geographies and Black spatial imaginaries are always already planetarized by the African diaspora [49] and suffer from a racialized construction of space, Black place-making becomes a primary way to unveil spatial neutralization through the performance of trans-local powers and agencies.

The role of non-universal bodies emerges with even greater evidence in relation to the planetarization of time. Many instantiations of contemporary performance art go against the intrinsic presentism that has always characterized this tradition⁸ by aiming at reopening the frozen narrations of the past and the future. Against de-futurization and the immobilization of history, performance art engages in elaborating multiple temporal vectors departing from the bodies' living presence. As T.J. Demos ([51], p. 47) writes, "it matters what history we invoke, what tradition we construct, draw on, and enliven, for what future we build, just as much as what history, tradition, and future help produce the collective power and identity of the 'we' in turn". Such a chronopolitical gesture, however, is also the invasion and diffraction of the temporal sequence by a non-universal, other-than-human history. We could think of cases such as Fabien Giraud's and Pierre Huyghe's *The Feral*, in which an AI performs a one-thousand-year-long film inside a natural park (somewhere in between installation and technological performance); Eduardo Kac's *Time Capsule*, a reflection on the inscription of time into biological bodies; or examples of Asia-futurism such as *Don't Follow the Wind* by the collective Chim-Pom and *The History of the Future* by the Propeller Group⁹. These performances anachronize the present time by injecting nonhuman contingency in the form of deep-time visions. The chronopolitical gesture always requires (at least in some part) the gesture of imagining a time greater than the present.

The temporal planetarization of performance is often best realized by those non-universal bodies that experience time as a dimension of oppression ([51], p. 86). It is the case of the femBlack Performance Collective's Afrofuturist performances such as another *space/memory*, which uses bodies as memory-machines rooted in the future; or of the performances by the Otolith Group, which convey a "poethics of thickening time"¹⁰ aimed at unraveling the archives of an epoch birthed out of social and environmental violence and favoring the emergence of transformative forces in the present. Even more exemplary is the work of collectives like Black Quantum Futurism and Super Futures Haunt Collective, which stages full-fledged visitations of a planetary future that hold power to reconfigure the collective present and past. In *AFTER LIFE (what remains)* by Super Futures Haunt Collective, for instance, the performance field functions as a "specularity" through which the future comes to haunt the present, just like the Indigenous past haunts the colonial present (the Indigenous returns and resists after its displacement)¹¹. An even different kind of chronopolitical poetics can be found in performances such as those of Jonas Staal and Jeanne van Heeswijk, which take root in the Western "tradition of the oppressed" to experiment in future forms of social justice, reappropriation, and political organization.

Not differently from performing the planetarized space, performing the planetarized time stems out of the impossibility of being in the 'now' of a linear history that holds a universal value. Temporal locality is then reopened as a domain of potential non-linear emancipation. However, the temporal and spatial planetarizations of performance can be distinguished according to their different treatments of distance. I would argue that the planetarization of time operates by *producing distance* in order to diffract an immobilized past and a cancelled future¹², whereas the planetarization of space operates by *absorbing*

and dispersing distance in order to repopulate a marginal, deserted place. Whereas the first acts on the saturation of time, the second operates on the hollowing of space.

In either case, the planetary represents both a force of oppressive axiomatization and a chance of liberation. As argued again by Demos ([51], pp. 76–77), planetarized poetics of performance are often marked by the dialectics between enclosure and emancipation (the Greek word ‘chorus’, from which the prefix ‘choreo-’ derives, means ‘dance within an enclosure’): that is, enclosure in and emancipation from the extraction of places and presents, that often is no longer crystallized in a representative grid. Experimenting polemically in heterotopies and heterocronies might contribute to a general choreography of the planetarized affective continuum intended as the poetic task of the age of extinction. Unlike other poetics of relations, a planetary choreography would be “choreopolitics”, not severed from the sphere of social and political action [53–55]¹³.

3. Strategies for a Politics of Performance

I have singled out and discussed two tendencies in contemporary performance art that I consider particularly relevant for how they enact the current age of extinction. The re-animation of reality through zones of performative indiscernibility relates the corporeity of performance to planetary collectives, be they human or other-than-human. The same holds true for the planetarization of the affective continuum of performance: those bodies who participate in a non-universal, anachronistic temporality and a nonlocal, heterotopic spatiality become manifestations of a more or less actualized collective emanating from their gestures and relations. The performative deposition of the anthropomorphic sovereign subject goes hand in hand with the experimental materialization of new forms of aggregation, which sometimes form new communities of struggle. The performing body expands into a protean movement of commoning.

When performance art becomes a practice of creation of impermanent common zones in space, time, and the affective continuum, it does so not by embodying immaterial principles into material bodies; on the contrary, it disembodies singular and non-universal bodily principles into common affective surfaces. In order to confront itself with other kinds of bodies, the performing body must destitute its previous structures and build new zones of relations from the interaction with the qualities of the others. In order to measure itself with other kinds of spatialities and temporalities, it must reorient its rhythm and vectors into shared affective surfaces that are not given in advance. We can conceptualize this aspect by twisting the traditional categories of ‘incarnation’ and ‘embodiment’ into those of *excarnation* and *exbodiment*¹⁴. If incarnation is the bodily materialization of a transcendent, immaterial principle, excarnation is the dematerialization of an immanent material principle. While the principle of incarnation is that of a universal law, the principle of excarnation is that of a singular body taken in its potencies and acts. The dematerialization of a bodily principle does not result in a new universal but rather in a common affective rhythm, a temporary configuration of qualities and intensities, which disarticulates, fragmentates, and redistributes the singular body. Incarnation is a theological (and notably Christian) idea that has turned into a political–theological structure in the course of Western history, a way to institute bodies into a regime of representation structured by a transcendent principle. Excarnation would be the reverse strategy of letting the bodily vectors blossom, aggregate, and organize from below: no longer a movement from the universal divine to the singularity of the flesh but from the flesh to the non-universal common. The performative commoning of planetarized and de-universalized bodies in affective transition would be their process of exbodiment.

Excarinated bodies inspire not only different performative strategies but also different relations between collectives as they shift towards the “multiplicity of nonhumans and the

enigma of their associations” ([59], p. 41) as well as to the jungle of material (i.e., social, political, artistic, economic, technological, etc.) fluxes of the planet. Many of the cases analyzed in this paper hint at the impossibility of applying the political vocabulary of Western representative democracy to the interplay of planetary collectives, as attempted, for example, by Bruno Latour in *Politics of Nature* (2004). As Federico Luisetti ([60], p. 66) paradigmatically points out, “Latour portrays himself as a sorcerer-diplomat, whose mandate is to reverse the decline of Western universalism and introduce a new constituent lingua franca, «in preparation for the times when we shall no longer be in a position of strength»”. To put it briefly, Latour seeks for a new politics of universality.

On the other hand, we should be careful not to slip into a celebration of ontological diversity in the name of what Agamben calls “bare life”: an ungovernable otherness completely indifferent to human politics. Too often, such a fascination with the exotic Other has failed to distance itself from the logic of neoliberal technoscientific governance (see [61]). In the end, the political discourse of Western modernity comes down to this: whether parliamentary democracy or anomie. Beyond this false alternative, the cases that I have discussed address the question of what to do with our collective bodies in a different way: against a Eurocentric universalist approach, they build on affective contingency; against an oecumenic ontological approach, they insist on human political emancipation as a fundamental step of planetary coexistence. Performance becomes a way to let common practices blossom from affective kinships rather than universal instituting principles. In this sense, performance art can provide the necessary training for the not-yet—that is not for when “we shall no longer be in a position of strength” but for when we shall finally be in the position to take action.

To quote the words of the manifesto for Commoning times in Salento by the . . . and . . . and . . . and initiative, “whatever process of learning we would like to initiate has first and foremost to do with our sensorium and the capacity through various practices to enhance and cultivate the relation to the interdependency of different life forms and the necessity to develop an understanding on the common/s that is not strictly centered on human life”¹⁵. A politics of movement and affects prepared by similar artistic experiences would form around the constant strive to restructure common forms of life in close contact with the contingency of a turbulent reality.

Funding: This research was funded by the European Union’s Horizon 2022 research and innovation programme under the Marie-Skłodowska Curie Grant Agreement No. 101105444.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: No new data were created or analyzed in this study.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

Notes

- ¹ Sarah Kanouse ([9], p. 162), amongst others, has already argued that “the inescapable contingency of live performance reinforces, at the level of form and structure, the practices of experimentation, iteration, and improvisation necessary to move through the impasse of climate change”. Due to its power of crossing culturally constructed boundaries, performance art is particularly apt to become an exercise in living during transitional times (Orozco 2020). My standpoint on this matter will be clarified in the course of the article.
- ² In the play *Tragedia Engonidia* by Societas, a monkey and a goat appear on stage ([19], pp. 47–48, 135–137). Another of Societas’ plays, *Giulio Cesare*, involves the appearance of a live horse.
- ³ Although this is more of an installation than a performative action, the very act of “evoking an artificial agency” [27] implies endowing an artificial entity with the potential to act and perform. Blurring these boundaries is fundamental in order to contradict

the ‘naturalism’ of performance art, that is, its presupposed ties with the live, non-technical body. Some have even argued that the inclusion of robots in performance epitomizes the shift from representational to performative artistic ontologies [28].

One must be careful to maintain the distinction between the philosophical concept of performativity, performance studies (on which see [35]), and performance art. On these oscillations, see [36]. Within my argument, however, the performative act of destituting forms without constituting other ones (in the Bataillean sense) favors the emergence of a dimension constituted by behaviors rather than identities, and it does so through performance art.

<https://www.postdisaster.it/rooftops/> (accessed on 31 December 2024).

<https://www.postdisaster.it/pdr-ep01/> (accessed on 31 December 2024).

DOM-’s work is visible at <http://www.casadom.org/> (accessed on 31 December 2024).

Since its beginnings, performance art theory has emphasized how “performance’s only life is in the present” ([50], p. 146).

Don’t Follow the Wind consists of a selection of artworks secreted away in the perimeter of the radioactive Fukushima zone, which will therefore become visible only in a distant, no longer radioactive future. The History of the Future consists in the burial of a wooden version of a Star Trek rifle (carved using old Vietnamese techniques) in a location whose GPS coordinates will be disclosed in 2112.

<https://otolithgroup.org/> (accessed on 31 December 2024).

See <https://superfutures.art/AFTER-LIFE-what-remains> (accessed on 31 December 2024).

Bishop [52] has already talked of a “production of distance” with reference to the performances by the Collective Actions group, whose aim was to re-open the oppressive social grid of the Soviet Union by producing temporal and spatial distance from within it.

In this sense, the cases we have examined break with the tradition of relational aesthetics by creatively building on conflicts, contradictions, and dissensus ([51], p. 141; see also [56]).

On the term “excarnation” see [57,58]. “Exbodiment” is my own term.

The call for Commoning times in Salento (2013) can be found on the website of . . .art . . .art . . .art (<https://andandand.org/>, accessed on 31 December 2024). A more in-depth explanation of this series of performances is available at <https://www.commoningtimes.org/> (accessed on 31 December 2024).

References

1. Woynarski, L. *Ecodramaturgies. Theatre, Performance and Climate Change*; Palgrave MacMillan: Cham, Switzerland, 2020.
2. Chaudhuri, U. “There Must Be a Lot of Fish in That Lake”: Toward an Ecological Theater. *Theatre* **1994**, *25*, 23–31. [CrossRef]
3. Cless, D. Eco-Theatre, USA: The Grassroots Is Greener. *Drama Rev.* **1996**, *40*, 79–102. [CrossRef]
4. Marranca, B. *Ecologies of Theater: Essays at the Century Turning*; The John Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, MD, USA, 1996.
5. Szerszynski, B.; Heim, W.; Waterton, C. (Eds.) *Nature Performed: Environment, Culture and Performance*; Wiley-Blackwell: Hoboken, NJ, USA, 2004.
6. Giannachi, G.; Stewart, N. (Eds.) *Performing Nature: Explorations in Ecology and the Arts*; Peter Lang AG: Bern, Switzerland, 2005.
7. May, T. Greening the Theater: Taking Ecocriticism from Page to Stage. *J. Interdiscip. Stud.* **2005**, *7*, 84v103.
8. Heim, W.; Margolies, E. *Landing Stages: Selections from the Ashden Directory of Environment and Performance 2000–2014*; Crinkle Crackle Press: London, UK, 2014.
9. Kanouse, S. Staying with the Troubling. Performing in the Impasse. In *The Routledge Companion to Contemporary Art, Visual Culture, and Climate Change*; Demos, T.J., Scott, E.E., Banerjee, S., Eds.; Routledge: London, UK; New York, NY, USA, 2021; pp. 153–163.
10. Moynihan, T. *X-Risk. How Humanity Discovered Its Own Extinction*; MIT Press: Cambridge, MA, USA, 2020.
11. Ware, B. *On Extinction. Beginning Again at the End*; Verso: London, UK; New York, NY, USA, 2024.
12. Jordan, J. The Work of Life in the Age of Extinction: Notes Towards an Art of Aliveness. In *The Routledge Companion to Contemporary Art, Visual Culture, and Climate Change*; Demos, T.J., Scott, E.E., Banerjee, S., Eds.; Routledge: London, UK; New York, NY, USA, 2021; pp. 389–398.
13. Dolphijn, R. ‘Man Is Ill Because He Is Badly Constructed’: Artaud, Klossowski and Deleuze in Search for the Earth Inside. *Deleuze Stud.* **2011**, *5*, 18–34. [CrossRef]
14. Chiesa, L. A Theatre of Subtractive Extinction: Bene Without Deleuze. In *Deleuze and Performance*; Cull, L., Ed.; Edinburgh University Press: Edinburgh, Scotland, 2009; pp. 71–88.
15. Bishop, C. Delegated Performance: Outsourcing Authenticity. *October* **2012**, *140*, 91–112. [CrossRef]
16. Chaudhuri, U. *The Stage Lives of Animals. Zooësis and Performance*; Routledge: London, UK; New York, NY, USA, 2017.
17. Budriesi, L. Animalizzare la scena. *Cult. Teatr.* **2020**, *29*, 201–222.
18. Castellucci, R. The Animal Being on Stage. *Perform. Res. A J. Perform. Arts* **2014**, *5*, 23–28. [CrossRef]
19. Castellucci, C.; Castellucci, R.; Guidi, C.; Kelleher, J.; Ridout, N. *The Theatre of Societas Raffaello Sanzio*; Routledge: London, UK; New York, NY, USA, 2007.
20. Pefanis, G. Is the ‘Animal Event’ Possible? Animal Precariousness and Moral Indeterminacy in Performance. *New Theatre Q.* **2018**, *34*, 176–185. [CrossRef]

21. Ridout, N. *Stage Fright, Animals, and Other Theatrical Problems*; Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, UK, 2006.
22. Arlander, A. Performing with Plants in the Ob-scene Anthropocene. *Nord. Theatre Stud.* **2020**, *32*, 131–142. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
23. Ryan, C. Playing with Plants. *Theatre J.* **2013**, *65*, 335–353. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
24. Rossini, R. Percorsi della performance art in Italia 1960/2000. In *Italian Performance Art*; Fontana, G., Frangioni, N., Rossini, R., Eds.; SAGEP: Monza, Italy, 2015; pp. 160–193.
25. John, C.R. Plant-Art: The Virtual and the Vegetal in Contemporary Performance and Installation Art. *Resilience* **2015**, *2*, 40–57. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
26. Goodall, J. Transferred Agencies: Performance and the Fear of Automatism. *Theatre J.* **1997**, *49*, 441–453. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
27. Kroos, C.; Herath, D.; Stelarc. Evoking Agency: Attention Model and Behavior Control in a Robotic Art Installation. *Leonardo* **2012**, *45*, 401–407. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
28. Penny, S. Art and Robotics: Sixty Years of Situated Machines. *AI Soc.* **2012**, *28*, 147–156. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
29. Abramović, B. The Non-Human Turn in Performance Art: Conversations. Ph.D. Dissertation, Aalborg University and the Media Arts Cultures Consortium, Aalborg, Denmark, 2019.
30. Cantera, A.L. Escucha de escombros. Anudamiento geopolíticos desde un arte más-que-humano. In *Futuros Multispecie. Prácticas Vinculantes Para un Planeta en Emergencia*; Cantera, A., Núñez, A., Martínez-Wong, A., Castro, A., Thomley, L., Horne, L., Velarde, M., Chappuis, M.J., Piderit, G.M.F., Ptqk, M., et al., Eds.; Bartlebooth: Valencia, Spain, 2023; pp. 247–262.
31. Luisetti, F. Decolonizing the State of Nature: Notes on Political Animism. In *Critical Posthumanism and Planetary Futures*; Banerji, D., Paranjape, M.R., Eds.; Springer: Delhi, India, 2016; pp. 215–224.
32. Franke, A. (Ed.) *Animism (Exhibition Companion)*; Sternberg Press: Berlin, Germany; New York, NY, USA, 2010.
33. Deer, J. *Radical Animism: Reading for the End of the World*; Bloomsbury: London, UK, 2020.
34. Ruiz, S.; Vorlouis, H. *Formless Formation. Vignettes from the End of this World*; Minor Compositions: Brooklyn, NY, USA, 2021.
35. Schechner, R. *Performance Studies: An Introduction*; Routledge: London, UK; New York, NY, USA, 2013.
36. Iacobone, A. Formatività e performatività. Sull'attualità dell'estetica di Luigi Pareyson. *Annu. Filos.* **2022**, *38*, 259–286.
37. Artaud, A. *The Theatre and Its Double*; Alma Classics: London, UK, 2011.
38. Sloterdijk, P. The Museum: School of Disconcertment. In *The Aesthetic Imperative. Writings on Art*; Sloterdijk, P., Weibel, P., Eds.; Polity Press: Cambridge, UK; Malden, MA, USA, 2017; pp. 221–230.
39. Tusa, G. De-limitations. Of Other Earths. *Stasis* **2020**, *9*, 166–183. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
40. Tusa, G. *Terra Cosmica. Traces of Georealism*; Tenement Press: Bristol, UK, 2024.
41. Chaudhuri, U. *Staging Place: The Geography of Modern Drama*; University of Michigan Press: Ann Arbor, MI, USA, 1995.
42. McAuley, G. *Space in Performance: Making Meaning in the Theatre*; University of Michigan Press: Ann Arbor, MI, USA, 2000.
43. Fuchs, E.; Chaudhuri, U. (Eds.) *Land/Scape/Theater*; University of Michigan Press: Ann Arbor, MI, USA, 2002.
44. Ligan, E.B. The Contested Maps, Multiple Worlds, and Negotiable Borders of Theatre. In *Mapping Across Academia*; Brunn, S.D., Dodge, M., Eds.; Springer: Cham, Switzerland, 2017; pp. 375–388.
45. Heise, U.K. *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet. The Environmental Imagination of the Global*; Oxford University Press: Oxford, UK, 2008.
46. Bean, R.; Louder, B. Being-in-the-Breathable: Atmospheres of the Anthropocene. *Antennae* **2023**, *61*, 149–170.
47. Conte, A. Andrea Conte: Art, Sustainability, and the Climate Emergency. *Antennae* **2023**, *61*, 40–70.
48. DeFrantz, T.; Gonzalez, A. (Eds.) *Black Performance Theory*; Duke University Press: Durham, UK; London, UK, 2014.
49. Beasley, M. *Performance, Art, and Politics and the African Diaspora. Necropolitics and the Black Body*; Routledge: London, UK; New York, NY, USA, 2023.
50. Phelan, P. *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance*; Routledge: New York, NY, USA, 1993.
51. Demos, T.J. *Radical Futurisms. Ecologies of Collapse, Chronopolitics, and Justice-to-Come*; Sternberg Press: Berlin, Germany, 2023.
52. Bishop, C. Zones of Indistinguishability: Collective Actions Group and Participatory Art. *e-flux* **2011**, *29*. Available online: <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/29/68116/zones-of-indistinguishability-collective-actions-group-and-participatory-art/> (accessed on 31 December 2024).
53. Hewitt, A. *Social Choreography: Ideology as Performance in Dance and Everyday Movement*; Duke University Press: Durham, UK, 2005.
54. Lepecki, A. The Choreopolitical. Agency in the Age of Control. In *The Routledge Companion to Art and Politics*; Martin, R., Ed.; Routledge: London, UK; New York, NY, USA, 2015; pp. 44–52.
55. Marchart, O. *Conflictual Aesthetics. Artistic Activism and the Public Sphere*; Sternberg Press: Berlin, Germany, 2019.
56. Bishop, C. *Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics*; The MIT Press: Cambridge, MA, USA, 2004; Volume 110, pp. 51–79.
57. Bolton, R.K. *Políticas de la Excaración. Para una Genealogía Teológica de la Biopolítica*; UNIPÉ Editorial Universitaria: Buenos Aires, Argentina, 2014.
58. Roberti, B. Il mistero dell'escarnazione. Corpo in frammenti e corpo bambino nel cinema di Raoul Ruiz. In *Il Corpo Parlante. Contaminazioni e Slittamenti tra Psicoanalisi, Cinema, Multimedialità e Arti Visive*; Bartorelli, G., Bianchi, G., Salvatore, R., Stevanin, F., Eds.; Quodlibet: Macerata, Italy, 2021; pp. 37–47.
59. Latour, B. *Politics of Nature. How to Bring the Sciences into Democracy*; Harvard University Press: Cambridge, UK; London, UK, 2004.

60. Luisetti, F. Decolonizing Gaia. Or, Why the Savages Should Fear Bruno Latour's Political Animism. *Azimuth* **2017**, *9*, 61–70.
61. Pellizzoni, L. *Cavalcare L'ingovernabile. Natura, Neoliberalismo e Nuovi Materialismi*; Orthotes: Napoli, Italy, 2023.

Disclaimer/Publisher's Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.