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ANNE TERESA DE KEERSMAEKER, NICK MAUSS, HEIMO ZOBERNIG
AND CATHERINE WOOD IN CONVERSATION

A conversation about the relations between art, dance, and theater: about the movement between the spaces and values of these disciplines, and what is lost and gained.

Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker (1960 Mechelen, Belgium) is a contemporary dance choreographer.

Nick Mauss' diverse artistic practice encompasses drawing, sculpture and performance along with some curatorial projects that he initiated in the last years.

The work of **Heimo Zobernig** spans an array of media, from architectural intervention and installation, through performance, film and video, to sculpture and painting.

Catherine Wood is a critic and Senior Curator (Performance) at Tate Modern she works on performance projects, exhibitions, collection acquisitions and displays.

If performance in Western visual art was founded upon ideas associated with experimental collaboration between different disciplines, a "theater of mixed means" since the 1950s (the Rauschenberg/Cage/Cunningham model), it seems that we are in a fascinating, evolved moment where single practitioners move between the spaces and rituals of those disciplines. Dance is presented in the gallery, but often without the collaboration of visual artists; artists make theater plays. A more fitting historical precedent for this mind-set might be the attitude of the Gutai group in their *Gutai on the Stage* (1957-1958): a group exhibition as theater presentation.

CATHERINE WOOD

We seem to be in a situation now that is less about that cross-disciplinary colliding in a single space, and more about how dance or theater practice might appear within the space of art; or how art might appropriate the format of theater, or use choreography. What does this mean for your own practice?

ANNE TERESA DE KEERSMAEKER

I have spoken a lot about the kind of framed, limited time and space you have in the theater. In the museum, you have instead duration and continuity. You have the state of "availability": that the work of art is simply there. This raises, then, the question "do you also continue to perform even when there is not one spectator?"

CW

That's a nice characterization. Could you say something about the relative satisfaction of the two formats? Because your practice has long been about working in the theater, and that specific discipline. What do you lose from that in a gallery? I ask because I think that there is often an idea now that dance gains from the museum or gallery some kind of freedom and lack of constraint.

ADK

I find that, generally speaking, this idea of a day practice and an evening practice is quite crucial. Museum people are about daylight and visibility. Theater people go into the night...they go into the darkness. They make a campfire. The museum is a time of reflection, of celebration or of mourning during the daytime. In the museum, it's normally a time when people work. And in the theater, it is after working hours. The distinction is to do with what appears in the light. What appears in the darkness...

In terms of my own work, I was quite skeptical when there were these first propositions to perform in the museum at MoMA and Tate. Yet for both the dancers and myself, it was a transformative experience. You definitely get to a different relationship with your spectators, visitors. With the public, you approach the ideal duration and continuity, the aspect of proximity, the freedom of as many people... everyone can decide individually in his or her time and organize his or her time and space. There is the fact, also, that as a performer, you see the people that are watching you. This is nice. You know, when you are on stage, you basically have a black space with anonymous people, and you rarely see how they react. Somebody who decides to walk away in the theater is quite a strong statement. Somebody who goes away in the museum is liquid space and liquid time.

NICK MAUSS

An idealistic response to your question about where we are now is to see our current moment as a point of undoing, or at least as a moment of serious reevaluation of the terms of the relations between art, dance, and theater. But there is also the suspicion that the way in which dance and elements of theater appear in the spaces of art is a desultory engagement. What do we do with the glib language of performativity that circulates so freely now, with hollowed-out words such as *immersive*, *activation*, *liveness*, *engage*, *intervene*, even *queering*, applied so freely, and whenever convenient?

I believe that a central tension in the recent vogue for dance and stage performance in the spaces of art has to do with the very strange and shifting status of spectatorship, and with that, of attention and disinterest. The question of how an audience is constituted, on the one hand, and how attention can be modulated, on the other, calls into question how traditional spaces for art, such as museums, will function in the future.

CW

But Nick, what about the way in which "theater" figures in your work in installation, painting, sculpture, and also live performance?

NM

My own interest in theatrical notions of space, and in dance, came from a wish for a larger framework, both on the level of history and of the experience of the artwork, or of the exhibition as a form. I started making exhibitions in which my "work" became the arranging of dissonances between artworks and nonartworks by friends, known artists, and anonymous practitioners, in which the objects on view enacted new relationships, or took on the character of performers. But I was also looking at the "applied" role of painting in theater and dance, and this appeared as a trapdoor out of a solipsistic painting discourse to a space where decoration, irreverence, travesty, and contamination gain resonance.

CW

I agree, and I like how bodily movement in relation to artworks, or in the space of art, implies shifting positions that are emblematic of questions about value or meaning. I think a cluster of very recent presentations is relevant to this question: Anne Imhof's German Pavilion in Venice and her use of non-dance-derived movement

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and choreography; Maria Hassabi's live dance installation, combined with her theater-lighting and carpet sculptures, at Documenta; and Trajal Harrel's Barbican exhibition (developed after his MoMA residency), in which the gallery spaces are set up with different performance situations (seating, stages, plinths), which are activated according to a complex, overlapping schedule, daily.

NM
Trajal Harrel's work is deeply affecting—as dance, it manages to be both fragile and adamant, and it derives great power from the precise economy of its staging. As a viewer, one feels as though one has been invited personally to a special event, and the dances feel independent of, or even in defiance of, the institutional spaces that host them and for which they have been constructed. With simple make-do props, sleights of hand, and transformative gestures and expressions, Harrel conjures entire atmospheres and then pulverizes them.

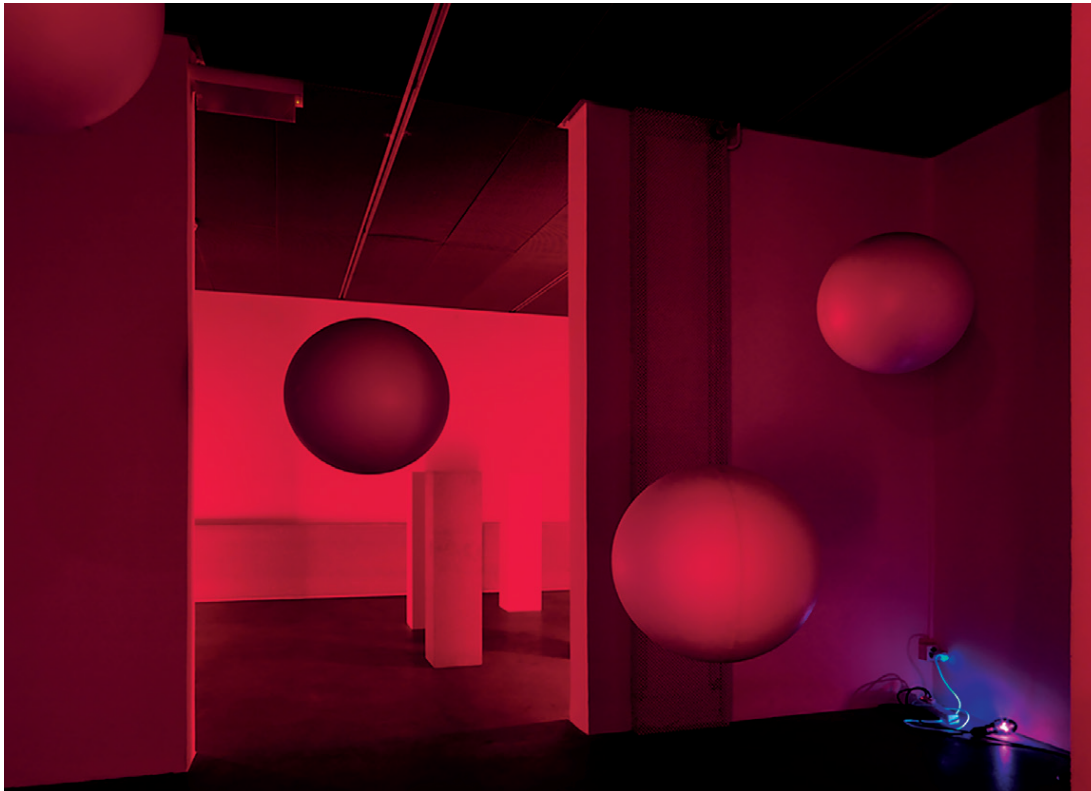
Ralph Lemon's exhibition at the Kitchen in 2016 was by far the most important artwork I have seen in recent memory. Not only

within this context, modes that are calibrated in a much more theater-like way. It's not that flat work-time of daylight, actually.

I'm curious as to how you see this: as a merging of disciplinary specificity or the movement from one kind of practice into the space of another, a "contamination"?

ADK

My collaboration with Ann Veronica Janssens has been important, not in terms of adding objects or "décor," but to find ways to work with what is already there in a space. It has always been a very strange thing, for me, that when you create dance, you work for months, you work during the day in the daylight, and you construct everything, the whole moving architecture of the dance, during daylight in the working hours. And then at the last moment you go into the black box of the theater, and you make it all black around, and you start to put artificial light, and you start to create a whole thing around it. I was always frustrated by that. Then it was Ann Veronica who made me think differently: to empty that space and look at ev-



Heimo Zobernig, *ohne Titel (in red)* installation view at Kunsthalle Zürich, Zurich, 2011. Courtesy: Galerie Nagel Draxler, Berlin. Photo: Archive HZ

did Lemon completely undo and blur the purpose and order of the "white cube" upstairs and the "black cube" downstairs, it was hard to leave the various experiences presented during its duration with a sense of how to capture it in a category—dance, lecture, exhibition, reading, casting, performance, installation, reperformance, political fantasy, and fiction were all held in play. This splinter stays with me: Yvonne Rainer cast to read the Marquis de Sade, almost as if she were one of those drag queens in Pasolini's *Salò*, interrupting her reading to wonder aloud why she had been asked to do this.

CW

Yvonne embodies all of this in one person! In the works we've mentioned here, the codes of black box and white cube are scrambled in ways that unsettle the position of the viewer and the experience of time and duration. Interestingly, Imhof and Harrel both move on from the looping strategies of artists like Tino Sehgal's enactors' permanent presence. Instead, they create arcs and pauses of attention

ery object—including the body: the body, the sound, the existing architecture. She directed me to observe it and then to try and frame it, to frame what was already existing. Without adding. The Latin origin of the word *abstraction* comes from the Latin word [meaning] "to pull away." When I think about embodying abstraction, it means performing an operation of taking away. But somehow to allow more freedom to emerge, and to create another space that is available. So, it is not the fact of putting objects on stage but... the framework...

CW

So actually Anne Veronica's contribution was to help you think through that framework materially and conceptually—from a point of view as a visual artist—rather than adding an object or a décor. A different kind of cross-disciplinarity?

ADK

Exactly, exactly. And she also helped me with Wiels. She was the one that said let's take the windows away and allow the daylight

and its movement to come in. And she systematically always takes things away. In the theater also, when we worked together, it was always operations of taking things away but not adding objects. Sort of scrape things away and you get to the DNA of things. Whether you come in a theater or in a museum space, just first looking at what is available. So it's nearly also an aesthetic, ecological, ethical thing. Since my first collaboration with Ann Veronica about nine years ago, which was with *Keeping Still* in the theater, we have this joke going on that in the last decade we don't have a technical crew anymore. We just have a cleaning crew. We throw everything out, you know, all the dust and all the draperies and so on.

CW Heimo, what does this characterization of the white cube gallery-time as “daytime” or daylight mean for you? I'm interested because it focuses less on the usual question of theater as fixed ritual versus the gallery as autonomous, ambient. I wonder how you think about this daylight mode of viewing in relation to “pictoriality”?

CW These approaches of yours in the gallery with lighting might appear quite “theatrical,” in contrast with the stripping away that Anne Teresa describes. At the same time, the “theatrical” has long been a denigrated term, art historically. Is it a term that is relevant to contemporary sculpture, such as yours, Heimo? What kind of seeing do you want or imagine with such an approach? Is it about seeing with the body as well as the eyes? Are you interested in a viewer's narrative projection into the scene?

HZ In my work now, I totally do not refer to the theater. Theater, dance, film, etc., are some of many art forms that reflect on reality as such: The body takes in reality with every sense. Next, there is the brain that finds combinations for everything and creates perception: the “presentation.” We then know what is behind, above, below us. We have a rough vision of our position, in space and time. The things, the spaces, the city lead our way through the world. And this is reflected in very different art forms.



Heimo Zobernig, *untitled*, 2009, installation view at CAPC, musée d'art contemporain, Bordeaux, 2009. Courtesy: Gallerie Chantal Crousel, Paris. Photo: Archive HZ

HEIMO ZOBERNIG

Light has a predominant role in theater. In its qualities for composition, it is a highly complex medium. In my early works as stage designer, I repeatedly searched for very simple but effective solutions in lighting. I wanted to make sure that the light design is easy to understand—only one light source, for example. But even simple light settings have complications.

In an exhibition, I am looking for the opposite of dramatic light. No shadow play. I want to have a situation where you do not think about it at all. It is bright, and everything is obvious—a pragmatic point of view.

On other occasions, I was using the light and its color as the dominant figure or medium in itself. My contribution for the Kunstverein Bonn was a huge space with nothing but engulfing heavy lighting. For the CAPC Bordeaux, my installation was dominated by a red: the vibrant red light in the space originated from a red curtain on the one side and a video projection of an animated red curtain on the other.

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De-skilling Theater, Re-skilling Performance by Claire Bishop, December 10, 2011
Brooklyn Rail

Of course, the behavior/performance of an audience/viewer of sculpture can be seen as dance performance. And, evidently, all art forms are part of our reality. Additionally, I like to make references to the routine/behavior of people in the situation of theater, dance, music performance. But not in the sense of genre crossover.

CW Related to this point, recall that Claire Bishop wrote a few years ago in her *Brooklyn Rail* piece¹, “dance satisfies a yearning for skill and seduction that visual art performance rejected in its inaugural refusal of spectacle and theater.” Is it an extension of the “reskilling” that she says it is? Or a real moment of deep rethinking about how we segregate these disciplines? (Or is art just sucking up and claiming everything else?) Anne Teresa has described learning something from the conceptual and material discipline of Ann Veronica. What is art learning from theater? (And perhaps to Nick specifically, since you so productively borrow from theater and dance in your

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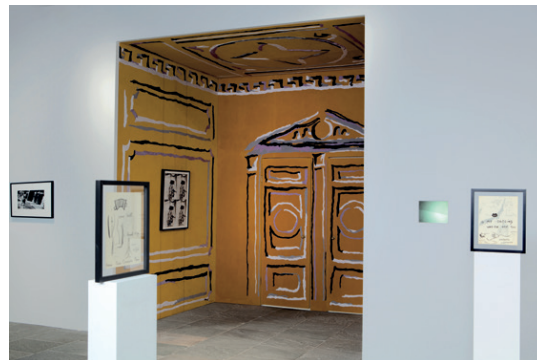
Left - Nick Mauss, *Untitled*, 2014; Léon Bakst, *Une nymphe, costume for L'Après-midi d'un faune*, ca. 1912. Exhibition design by Nick Mauss. *Designing Dreams: a celebration of Léon Bakst* installation view at Nouveau Musée National de Monaco, Monaco, 2016. © Nick Mauss
Right - Heimo Zobernig, *untitled*, 1998, installation view at Bonner Kunstverein, Bonn, 1998. Photo: Archive HZ

Below, from top clockwise - Nick Mauss, *Untitled*, 2014, installation view at Art Basel | Art Unlimited, 2014. © Nick Mauss. Courtesy: 303 Gallery, New York and Campoli Presti, London / Paris. Photo: Andrea Rossetti

Garry Winogrand, *Beverly Hills, California*, 1978, from the portfolio *Women are better than man. Not only have they survived, they do prevail*, 1968-1980; Eyre de Lanux, [Sketches of women], date unknown; Nick Mauss, *Concern, Crush, Desire*, 2011; Andy Warhol, *Untitled (Cyclist)*, ca. 1976; Nick Mauss, *Untitled*, 2011; Eyre de Lanux, [Sketch for Consuelo], date unknown. Whitney Biennial 2012 installation view at Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 2012. © Nick Mauss. Courtesy: Whitney Museum of Art, New York

Nick Mauss, *Depend, fasten, lower, suppose, dwell*, 2010. *Non-Solo Show, Non-Group Show* installation view at Kunsthalle Zürich, Zurich. © Nick Mauss. Photo: Stefan Altenburger Photography

Heimo Zobernig installation view at MUDAM Luxembourg, Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean, Luxembourg, 2014. Photo: Remi Villaggi



Opposite - Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker, *Work/Travail/Arbeid* at WIELS, Brussels, 2015. Photo: Anne Van Aerschot

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own work, in order to resituate the art object in a meaningful/useful social context: do you have disciplinary envy?!

NM Disciplinary specificity is essential and rare, especially if it manages to reinvent the discipline. As a spectator of Anne Teresa's work, I would say that this specificity is crucial to the work, and distinguishes it from other occurrences of dance in the museum that tend to look imported.

Perhaps I am motivated by a kind of envy to look to fields outside art that appear truly rigorous. To study the couture of Madame Grès, for example, as though I had Isa Genzken's sculptures in mind. I am trying to think and see together what is otherwise seen apart, so I tend to move across or in combinations of disciplines. But a specific disciplinary framework can be a great excuse to articulate new ideas. In the twentieth century, ballet and avant-garde dance sparked new possibilities for criticism in the voices of Edwin Denby and Jill Johnston. Johnston herself admits that "...while my column was still headlined DANCE, or DANCE JOURNAL, my subjects were anything but." She goes on to say, about the "confusion of roles (artists making dances, dancers using artists as performers)," that "those games of identification are usually substitutes for seeing...they arise from fear."

One thing that is now possible, rather than the experimental, cross-disciplinary collisions of the classical avant-garde you refer to, is the construction of historical collisions, by which I mean the active rewiring and re-presentation of histories—"what if" or "as if." Trajal Harrel performs such an operation in his cycle *The Twenty Looks or Paris Is Burning at the Judson Church*, by taking the synchronism of Judson Dance Theater with the development of vogue balls as a way to mutually interrogate and assign new values to both forms and histories.

I had such an experience years ago when I watched a VHS tape of *Saturday Night at the Baths* and noticed Robert Morris's infamous bare-chested self-portrait in helmet and chains decorating the bedroom wall of one of the protagonists, somehow perfectly out of place and in place at the same time. Alvin Baltrop's photographs of men cruising on the West Side piers under Gordon Matta-Clark's giant cutout of the pier facade, or even the thought of George Balanchine and Merce Cunningham choreographing during the same historical moment, have a similar effect of almost unfathomable copresence: history as heterotopia. We can take our current vantage point as a position from which to radically reconfigure, or think together, previously unthinkable relations.

I'm interested in deep discipline, whatever form that may take. I am trying to imagine, for example, a museum that could show the charged spaces between a painting, a perfume, a gesture, a dress, and a film. Your question about how we segregate disciplines is crucial, particularly in a global situation tending more and more towards polarization and essentialism. But I don't want to acquiesce to the notion that art is a single, steam-rolling entity that has it within its power to suck up and claim other forms, without regard for their specific histories and economies. To do so would give the current notion of art too much power, and would mean that it is no longer possible to think of other kinds of art.

CW Tino Sehgal raised questions in the past about the relative cultural power of theatre and art: seeing the arena of art as the locus of significant effect. But Anne Teresa, you are committed to working in theatre. Yet is the disciplinary specificity of theater something you seek to break? I'm trying to think from the work of yours that I've seen on stage. You haven't gone as far as to make the whole situation light inside a theater? Do you feel that would be cross-contaminating the wrong codes somehow?

ADK Well, the fact that the audience are in the dark is relatively recent. Until Wagner, there was always light in the audience. It was Wagner who said that the audience and the orchestra had to go in the dark and to create this kind of super illusion. Before there was always light. It also has to do with architecture, in the sense that since the Italian

theaters, very often you have the possibility to strip the stage, but the theaters are full, full, full of information architecturally. So the attention created by light is a focus thing also. We had the premiere of my new work in this industrial space in the Ruhr, in Germany, and we purposely started the performance at seven o'clock with the daylight, and then the night came in. The piece incorporated the falling of the day and then in the night, coming from the darkness into the light.

And my experience has been that when you try to do that in a black-box theater in the evening, then you have to do it with artificial light, and it's super difficult and you can't compete with it. And also, of course, because the stage is very fixed, and everyone is sitting on their chairs. I also realize people prefer to go to museums... but people have real difficulty to stay in groups in stillness! It's this notion of shared concentration, and attention in a group is super difficult.

If the theater performance is historically also an extension of sitting around the campfire and then assisting at a ritual and going to church, which is, you know, a moment of reflection and celebration or mourning and where, as a collective, you sit together and create physical stillness... I mean, to a certain extent theater performance *grew* out of that, and in the same way it disappeared in Western society. It hasn't in other parts of the world, but in Western society it disappeared. I sometimes wonder if the same thing is going to happen with theaters. That people will not go to the theater anymore.

CW But it's interesting to consider how the matrix of relations that is "theatre" morphoses in new ways too. Nick, in terms of your works that don't involve actual live dance, where you use tape or metal structures to articulate a provisional architecture, or make and install curtains, often in relation to painting: could you say a bit more about what you hinted at earlier in terms of utilizing ideas of theater to "situate" painting?

And maybe also you could say a little about your work for Frieze Projects, which—perhaps unlike Anne Teresa at WIELS—put the dancers very much on display?

NM I can't really think of an art viewing experience that is not theatrical. But a particular relationship to theater in my work comes through in my focus on the frame. In making exhibitions, I put a great deal of emphasis on the presence of people looking at my work, apprehending it but also becoming the figures in the work. Protocols of spectatorship are warped or rerouted by structures such as the ones you've described, this banister-like sculpture that is a drawing of the movement of the eye through the space, or hanging, collapsible rooms made of ribbons that impose themselves on a space while delimiting another kind of possibility. I think of the way one might move through the space, and what can be encountered along the way, or how this experience can be frustrated. The automated curtains are large paintings running on automated tracks programmed to open and close at varying intervals, creating volumes of air between them. They open and close, revealing nothing but the different spaces they create.

The most directly theatrical work I can think of is *Concern, crush, desire*, a velvet appliqué reiteration of a proscenium-like antechamber designed by Christian Bérard for Jean-Michel Frank, invoking the overlay of stage design with interior architecture with surrealism. The work is installed in such a way that the viewer enters the work and finds herself looking out the "fourth wall" into a space in which a constellation of other works is encountered. At the 2012 Whitney Biennial, I mounted recto-verso rebus drawings by Eyre de Lanux on freestanding pedestals like game pieces, or characters populating this scenario.

My work "with" dance has generally been linked to a curatorial process. Dance objects and artifacts have an amazing charge, but a dubious status, and I think they pose interesting questions with regard to the supposedly more stable status of art objects and the narratives to which they are made to adhere. But *INVERSIONS*, in 2014, the work I made for Frieze Projects, was the first time I made what would normally be called a performance. The work was entirely shaped by the context of the fair and by my questions about how a performance might exist within its particular energy. It also became a frame for a set of invitations I was able to make to two ballet companies, to choreographer Lorena Randi, and to

Kim Gordon and Juliana Huxtable, none of whom were intended to be compatible with one another, but rather singular in their roles within the setting I devised. Juxtaposed in the entirety of their internal and external contradictions—to bring a way of working over from “curating.” I resisted a performance with traditional staging conventions, turning the process of a ballet inside-out, rather than presenting it frontally and temporarily. There were long pauses and interruptions, things let to happen as they happened, and also simultaneous intensities—rehearsals and improvisation. And moments that also felt “on stage.”

The antic ebb and flow of the art fair’s audience became an important element of the work. It was fascinating to see people try to negotiate this kind of time and viewership that was very different from how one is supposed to “use” and “do” an art fair, and what to do with that space of uncertainty as well as the pleasure of viewing something that is forming without a purpose.

CW
It’s a tough call to negotiate this highly purpose-driven context, the fair. A losing battle so far as inviting any kind of concentration that Anne Teresa was talking about. But how to “perform” as a question of asserting visibility is surely a key part of what it means to make work today, so in this way, the fair is a harsh frontline context in which to experiment! Whatever criticisms there are of ambient modes of museum performance, it remains in contrast with even the most atomized autonomy of the conventional gallery situation.

Heimo, speaking of conventional viewing modes, I was especially curious about your exhibition at MUDAM, in Luxembourg, where you separated the theatrical quality of the sculpture from the pictorial quality of your painting. How do these two approaches to illusion coexist, for you?

HZ
It does not matter whether the objects/sculptures are theatrical or not. For the perception of things in a space, we want to and have to go beyond and around them—in order to understand them. With pictures, a similar thing can be experienced; they, too, encourage the viewer to observe them from various distances.

In order to be able to move freely, I was showing paintings and sculptures in separate rooms. The viewers should not trip over things when they step back to view the paintings from different perspectives. Certainly, paintings are objects, and sculptures are pictorial. Through the spatial separation of sculptures and paintings, the differences can be experienced—probably in a better way.

CW
And referring to your Bregenz show, Heimo: what about the language of plinths, podiums, platforms, screens, and of furniture such as shelves: it is as though your work is a perfect setting for the display of something else, or for some action to take place?

HZ
It is exactly what it is meant to be: objects, sculptures in an exhibition. The dimensions result from the common use of such objects. Take shelves, for example. We have certain experiences and ideas of the usage of those objects. Curiously, we talk to them: Where is this book? Can I put this on here? and the like. We have ideas and knowledge of their character and style. I try to show their structure in a very reduced form. And with “reduction/reduce,” I refer to the fundamental form of things, in order to make their impact/effect/appeal comparable. In the exhibition design, we are confronted with these things as sculptures, and in this setting, we can reflect our vision and use of everyday objects. In other site-specific installations, the sculptural aspects of those objects would step behind their usage as a display. However, the exhibition in Bregenz focused on the inspection rather than their application.

ADK
In dance, the fact is that we create an experience. The fact that we don’t create something that can be speculated (sold) and that with dance, we are doomed to disappearance... let’s celebrate that, no?

CW
Yes, absolutely. It’s beautiful. But the interesting thing is, since the so-called dematerialization of the art object in the sixties, art needs to learn some things from theater and dance. Learning about calibrating time and configuring spectatorship. These issues are relevant to objects too, I think.

ASK
Yeah, but maybe that doesn’t really work in the market.

CW
I’m talking more about sharing a work. I was thinking, for example, of the artist Senga Nengudi, who used to collaborate with a dancer, Maren Hassinger. She’s part of the African American Studio Z movement in the 1970s. She chose to make sculpture out of womens’ tights and sand: stretching the nylons and pinning them on the gallery wall because she said that she liked the idea that she could turn up with her handbag and open it and make her work. And her sculpture was as much about portability and disappearance as the performance that she staged with Hassinger around it. But of course, you’re right, galleries are selling them as objects. But that comes after the intention of the artist.

Yet my point is that “performance” is the catchall under which live art, dance, theater appear in galleries and museums. Shannon Jackson identifies the elements of performance (describing an emergent context of performance studies) as “gesture, image, space, voice, facial expression, corporeal motion, and collective gathering” but leaves out materials, which in my view (and in both of your work) can appear as performers or performative elements.

Without wishing to replicate the casual application of terms to do with performance in the art world that Nick describes, is the “choreographic” a better term to approach this continuum between bodies moving and things? What does choreography mean for you both, in terms of considering our encounter with an aesthetic space that includes all of these elements, as well as / in relation to the art object? The idea that beyond dancing per se, choreography is a way of stabilizing or ritualizing a “state of movement” seems more and more important—as does the idea of witnessing, and collective gathering as the foundation of the experience of art.

NM
I see choreography as a mode of organization and reorganization, of working with material over time to find new forms and sequences, as well as bringing historical material to life in the present. The walls of Eileen Gray’s villa E-1027 are stenciled with commands that prescribe uses (and misuses) for its different spaces: ENTER SLOWLY, LAUGHTER FORBIDDEN, BIRD SANCTUARY... I am fixated on the architecture of encounter, which vibrates with my own memories of experiences of viewership or spectatorship. Of being confronted with an object or an event that produces new language. Choreography becomes a spatial organization, a pacing, a delimiting of spaces. What I am curious about now is the meeting of choreography with the archive, with the traces and artifacts of movement, or how thinking through their status destabilizes the status of the artwork.

ADK
Well, firstly, I am a choreographer; therefore I work on organizing movement through time and space with a certain energy. The time and space of a theater and the time and space of a museum remain fundamentally different. Secondly, what I like so much about dancing is embodying: the presence of the body as a medium. Thirdly, I am interested in collective experience: in relations, relationships between people, whether in the theater or the museum. Ultimately, in the museum, the space and time allow you as an individual to decide how to attend to the work. When people get connected, the intensity of it can be really quite beautiful. I feel that at WIELS, you had people coming back day after day. People said, “I want to be here.”

CW
And the constellation of an audience group of people you see is a kind of choreography of their free will. It’s not because they’re expected by convention to sit in seat number E14 for an hour? I also find that kind of mobile architecture of the audience quite thrilling.

ADK
Yes, yet within these shifting contexts, the central question that remains, maybe, is how you can create stillness and concentration. Sometimes the work needs that.

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Left - Nick Mauss installation view at 303 Gallery, New York, 2015.
© Nick Mauss. Courtesy: 303 Gallery, New York. Photo: John Berens

Below - Nick Mauss, *Answering a glance, glance up* installation view at Campoli Presti, Rome, 2012-2013. Courtesy: the artist and Campoli Presti, London / Paris

