

Body tools for performative practices

To collaborate, care and connect

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Relatório de Projeto para a obtenção do grau de Mestre em Artes Plásticas, com a especialização em Escultura da Faculdade de Belas Artes da Universidade do Porto

Sob a orientação da Professora Doutora

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Setembro, 2023, Porto

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to my orientator Professor Teresa Almeida, for her invaluable guidance, unwavering support, and expert insights throughout the entire process of structuring my master thesis. Her thoughtful feedback and constructive criticism have been instrumental in shaping the clarity and coherence of my research.

I am immensely thankful to Professor Mmag. Lucie Strecker, my performance professor, whose encouragement, mentorship, and belief in my abilities have been transformative. Her guidance provided me with the confidence and clarity to explore and refine my performative practice, inspiring me to push the boundaries of artistic expression.

I extend my appreciation to Sen. Lect. Mag. art. Jakob Scheid and Univ.-Ass. B.A. Julia Stern, the art technicians in the metal and textile workshops at the University of Applied Arts, whose technical expertise and assistance were indispensable in bringing my artistic vision to life. Their unwavering support and willingness to share their knowledge have been instrumental in the realization of my creative projects.

I am thankful for the support of to my artistic colleagues Angelika, Arina, Sofie, Salphina, Linda, and Ana for participating in my performative works. Their collaboration, creativity, and dedication have enriched my artistic practice and elevated the impact of my performances.

To my parents and my sister, I am profoundly grateful for their unwavering emotional support and belief in my artistic pursuit. Their understanding and encouragement have provided me with the strength and clarity to navigate the challenges and uncertainties of this journey.

To all those mentioned and countless others who have contributed in various ways to the completion of this master thesis, I extend my heartfelt thanks. Your support, encouragement, and belief in my work have been a driving force behind the realization of this artistic endeavour.

Abstract

This master thesis intertwines performative art practices with the theories of human sciences. More specifically, the thesis interlaces the sociological theory of Norbert Elias, the psychological and physiological need theory of Klaus Grawe and Stephanie Stahl with the artistic practice of performative artists Yoko Ono, Rebecca Horn and Marina Abramović. The personal artistic work is based upon combining these investigations of artistic practices with the theoretical references. The artistic methodology, applied, is creating artistic utility tools for performative works. The utility tools are used for social interactions. The main focus is thereby on the sociological theory on table manners and the psychological need theory. The tools were applied to experimentally investigate the social boundaries between social attachment, control and pain/ pleasure avoidance. The result of the authorial work is to highlight transformative forms for shared eating experiences. In conclusion, the work is about exploring and expanding the realm of human relationships and to generate experimental tools for an innovative approach for human interactions and ephemeral experiences.

keywords:

performance art; ephemeral art; tools of utility; interactions; eating rituals; psychological need theory

Resumo

Esta relatório de projeto entrelaça as práticas artísticas performativas com as teorias das ciências humanas. Mais especificamente, cruza a teoria sociológica de Norbert Elias, a teoria das necessidades psicológicas e fisiológicas de Klaus Grawe e Stephanie Stahl com a prática artística das artistas performativas Yoko Ono, Rebecca Horn e Marina Abramović. O trabalho artístico pessoal baseia-se na combinação destas investigações de práticas artísticas com as referências teóricas. A metodologia artística, aplicada, é a criação de ferramentas de utilidade artística para trabalhos performativos. As ferramentas utilitárias são utilizadas para interações sociais. O foco principal é assim, a teoria sociológica das boas maneiras à mesa e a teoria das necessidades psicológicas. Os instrumentos foram aplicados para investigar experimentalmente as fronteiras sociais entre a ligação social, o controlo e a evitação da dor/prazer. O resultado do trabalho autoral é destacar formas transformadoras de experiências alimentares partilhadas. Em conclusão, a prática artística consiste em explorar e expandir o domínio das relações humanas e em gerar ferramentas experimentais para uma abordagem inovadora das interações humanas e das experiências efémeras.

Palavras chaves:

arte performativa; arte efémera; ferramentas de utilidade; interações; rituais alimentares; teoria das necessidades psicológicas

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Introduction

The following master thesis intertwines the artistic practices of the contemporary performance artist Marina Abramović, the experimental Fluxus movement and the innovative somatic artworks by artist Rebecca Horn with the theoretical sociological and psychological theories by Norbert Elias, Klaus Grawe and Stephanie Stahl. Furthermore, a subchapter of the theoretical references is dealing with the principles of Zen Buddhism, which the Fluxus Movement based a lot of their artistic practices on. The personal artwork is based upon the theories of these influential contemporary artist, especially focusing on performative art, and the theories of human science. The main aspect of the personal work is centring on the sociological evolution on table manners and the psychological need of eating combined with the psychological need of attachment. Considering these artistic references and scientific theories, tools were created to apply these researches into performative works.

The first chapter deals with the theories of Zen Buddhism and human science, referencing theories by sociologist Norbert Elias, psychologist Klaus Grawe and Stephanie Stahl. Furthermore, the second subchapter introduces the Zen Buddhism and the Shaolin Principle. Moreover, the thesis draws on Norbert Elias' sociological work on eating manners. Elias's theories on the civilizing process and the ways in which society shapes individual behaviour provide a compelling framework to analyse the societal implications of the artists' performances, particularly in relation to rituals, norms, and the embodiment of cultural values (Elias, 1997, pp. 231- 236). Furthermore, the psychological need theory proposed by Klaus Grawe offer a valuable lens to examine the underlying motivations and emotional responses of both the artists and their audiences. Understanding how performance art can fulfil intrinsic needs for identity, autonomy and relatedness sheds light on the impact of these artistic expressions on the human psyche (Grawe, 2000, p.395- 398).

The second chapter, deals with the works of three artists and art forms, as mentioned above. Foremost, the Fluxus movement. Born in the 1960s, the movement sought to blur the lines between art and life, rejecting traditional aesthetics in favour of spontaneity, simplicity, and participation. Rejecting the notion of the artist as a solitary genius, Fluxus artists engaged in collaborative and often playful performances, encouraging audience involvement to dissolve the barriers between performer and spectator (Pfeiffer, 2013, pp.23). The movement sought to democratize art and create a sense of collective creativity, leaving an indelible mark on the evolution of performance art. Yoko Ono, an influential figure in the Fluxus movement and an avant-garde artist, has consistently challenged societal norms through her art. Ono's work invites profound introspection, exploring themes of peace, feminism, and human connection. Her performances, often deeply rooted in conceptualism and minimalism, have become a testament to the power of art to bridge gaps, sow seeds of change, and inspire generations (Pfeiffer, 2018, pp.26-35). Another reference mentioned is the female German artist Rebecca Horn. With her innovative use of body prosthetics and kinetic sculptures, she has expanded the horizons of performance art by integrating technology and the human form. Her art explores the relationship between the physical and the metaphysical, inviting audiences to contemplate the interplay between the body, mind, and environment. Through her masterful use of transformative installations, Horn raises questions about identity, vulnerability, and the symbiosis of human and machine (Jones, 2005, pp. 53). Lastly, the artistic chapter introduce works of Marina Abramović. A name synonymous with endurance and transformative art, she has played a pivotal role in shaping the landscape of contemporary performance art. Her performances are often centred around the exploration of human limits, both physical and emotional, as well as themes of vulnerability, intimacy, and the shared human experience. Through her art, Abramović invites viewers to question their own existence, confront the boundaries of their bodies, and grapple with the essence of human relationships (Meier, 2008, pp.60-120).

The final section of my master thesis focuses on my personal artistic practice, which involves crafting utility tools for performative works, specifically made for social interactions. The emphasis is on sociological theory related to table manners and psychological theory of needs. These tools were used experimentally to explore social boundaries of attachment and autonomy. The outcome highlights new ways of shared eating experiences, ultimately expanding human relationships through innovative tools and ephemeral encounters. These artistic tools serve the aim of generating a new approach for social caretaking.

Primarily, this master thesis embarks on an interdisciplinary exploration of the dynamic interplay between performance art, sociological contexts, and psychological needs. By analysing the works of Marina Abramović, the Fluxus Movement, Yoko Ono, and Rebecca Horn through the sociological lens of Norbert Elias, the psychological aspects of Klaus Grawe and Stephanie Stahl and the principles of the Zen Buddhism. The aim is to unravel the intricate threads that weave together art, society, and the human experience. Through this endeavour, the thesis aims to expand the possibilities of performance art's and to foster introspection, empathy, and social change.

1. Chapter I: Theoretical References

The theoretical research of the thesis, and therefore my artistic work, is supported by human sciences, such as psychology and sociology and the philosophy of Zen-Buddhism. In specific, my first source contains the research of Zen-Buddhism, and its life principles, which is practiced by the Shaolin monks. Moreover, I am interested in how the philosophy of Buddhism influenced the Fluxus movement in the sixties. As I dedicate a subchapter in the artistic research to the Fluxus movement, I wanted to get more insights on the theories and practices of the Zen-Buddhism. My second theoretical reference is based on the research of the psychologist Stefanie Stahl (1963). In her book 'Who we are. How we perceive, feel and love' (2022) she gives insights on the human needs and their desires, which are shaped by our childhood experiences and our environment. This section is especially important to me, as the basis of my work is to understand by which psychological needs humans are motivated by. Lastly, the third reference contains the work of sociologist Norbert Elias (1897-1990). His work 'The Civilizing Process, Vol. I. The History of Manners' (1939), traces the historical developments of the European habitus, and the particular individual psychic structures which are moulded by social attitudes. For my research I took a closer look at developments of table manners through the years and the introduction of cutlery to the dining culture. This interests me especially because my artistic work deals with questioning certain unwritten table manners and its transformations of cutlery as we are familiar to it today.

1.1 Buddhism: Entering the Presence

As the second chapter takes a closer look at the Fluxus movement and its influences, this chapter focuses on Zen Buddhism, which a lot of their artistic practices is based on. The central praxis of Buddhism is based on mediation. Post the second world war, artists took inspiration from this philosophy, which transformed their work into a more conceptual form of art. The eastern philosophy gave the artists an alternative approach to their artistic practice. (Zimna, 2014, pp.73) The approach of Buddhism is different from the dichotomy of Western theories. The Zen Buddhism inspired the artists to invite non-categorized as traditional art components, into their work. Such as; materials of everyday use, activities, objects, noise, improvisation and the interaction with viewers and the audience. The Zen philosophy knows no hierarchy. This was also implemented in the use of artistic forms and materials; the artists did not distinguish between hierarchal classifications between the quality of materials. This is opposite to the western tradition, which separates the centres from the margins and is asking for structural hierarchies. (Zimna, 2014, pp.64) The Fluxus movement invited the playfulness into their practice; jokes, games and rituals were an occurring theme in their work. Their interest was based on play, which has the potential for sudden creativity, spontaneity and evokes moments of unpredictable events. Playfulness allows room for experimentation, free association and shifting of patterns. The Fluxus artists were curious about small transformations through the interaction with one another and within the environment. The artists of this movement were mixing and combining research, innovation, experiment in a fluid ever changing spirit. (Zimna, 2014, pp.76) Their movement produced various ephemeral works which took several different shapes, from artist books, to mail-art, poems, performances, happenings, instructions, multi-sensorial, noise, music compositions, games, puzzles, texts and event scorecards. The artists switched the role of the maker into a designer and instructor. With their work, they aspired an anti-professional, anti-elite approach. (Zimna, 2014, pp.77). The boundaries between artist and viewer, art and life became blurred. (Zimna, 2014, pp.163).

The highest aim of their Zen philosophy lies in the experience of the moment and the present awareness. In this sequence I will take a more detailed look at the Shaolin Principle. Shaolin, is the name of a small village in central China. More than 1500 year ago, a Chinese monk founded a monastery there. Over this period of time, the monks developed the art of Shaolin Kung-Fu. In the monastery they learnt about the art of fighting, to feel their body and to understand how to use it. In their theory, thoughts have the power to either give the body energy or take energy from it. Thoughts have the strength to change the environment. Their philosophy is based

on thirteen life principles. (Moestl, 2008, pp.7) These life principles, helped me in the development of my work and have parallels with the artistic creation of the Fluxus Movement and Marina Abramović artistic practice. This life principles influenced my work, as they made me reflect on the essential mental and physical aspects during a performance. Abramović is thereby an important reference, as she is interested in spiritual practices, especially in the Buddhist philosophy and other religions which deal with ascetism. (Meier, 2008, pp.60) The preparation before the execution of the work is form great importance to Abramović. She recognizes the body as a house we live in and which needs the same kind of cleaning. Buddhism is centring their philosophy around the theory and practice on entering the mind into a state of presence and awareness. These practices are implemented in preparation for Abramović performances. (Abramović, 2013, pp.20-21). Empty your mind, be mindful of yourself, overcome fear of loss, conserve your energy, meet at eye level (Moestl, 2008, pp.228). These are important principles of the Zen-Buddhism. In regards to this research, my aim was also, to cultivate these rituals to prepare the mind and the body, before my performances. Furthermore, my performance teacher Mmag. Lucie Strecker, taught us meditating exercises, which I implemented before my own performances. These technics helped me to regulate my nervous system and to stay focused during the performance. As my performances are mostly, executed in pairs, the practice of eye gazing is a helpful training to stay focused during the performance. This is, as well, a reference to the performance ‘The Artist is Present’ (2010) by Abramović.¹ As mentioned above, the thirteen life principles by the Shaolin monks give a detailed insight on how the Shaolin monks strengthen their mind. The thirteen principles are as follows: the principle to learn how to stand, the principle of mindfulness, the principle of determination, the principle of not wanting to possess, the principle of serenity, the principle of slowness, the principle of imitation, the principle of opportunity, the principle of yielding, the principle of superiority, the principle of letting go, the principle of self-knowledge, and lastly, the principle of togetherness.²

1.2 Psychology: The Hierarchy of Needs

The second subchapter of the theoretical research deals with the human psychology and how we are conditioned. The German psychologist Stefanie Stahl (1963) writes in her book ‘Who we are. How we perceive, feel and love’ about the human needs and how we are shaped by our upbringing and our surroundings. A lot of our human condition is, as well, based on evolutionary DNA. Although there are preconditions which we have no influence about when it comes to our well-being, we do have some personal power and decisions we have control over. As my work focuses on social relationships and discovering the individual personal boundaries and needs, the theoretical research of Stephanie Stahl is a key source for my work. Stephanie Stahl is interested on what motivates us and how to manifest contentment in our life. Most of our well-being depends on our personal decisions and to accept its consequences. It is about radically excepting our life choices. The core idea is to control our emotions and to not try to chance other circumstances which you have no control over. (Stahl, 2022, pp.25) Emotions navigate our life. Fear admonishes us to prevent us from physical and psychological harm. Grief indicates our loss. Disgust warns us against contagion and poisoning. Shame causes us to adapt to human norms and remain a member of society. Feelings of guilt are the consequence when we have harmed ourselves or someone else. Envy can spur us on, jealousy motivates us to cling to important relationships. Without emotions we would not be motivated to stay alive. (Stahl, 2022, pp.24). The Buddhist teaching aims to master the human emotional state. Buddhists aim to accept reality as it is and to break free from attachments. Attachment is understood as a longing for attachment to other people, objects and conditions that promise

¹ I write in more detail about this work in the third chapter.

² In the appendix, these thirteen principles are listed in more detail.

happiness, such as material possessions, fame, status and also an excessive attachment to other people. The less I am attached, the less expectation or greed can arise. Basically, successful Buddhists practice an efficient management of expectations, which protects them from strong emotional swings in one direction or the other and thus puts them in a state of extreme serenity. (Stahl, 2022, pp.26) Pleasant feelings arise when, what I strive for on the inside happens on the outside. Feelings of happiness come when I get more than expected. We can be unhappy if what is happening on the outside differs greatly from what we wish for and expect. (Stahl, 2022, pp.26) On the one hand, our emotional life is strongly determined by our expectations and desires and on the other hand, on the perception of reality. (Stahl, 2022, pp.27) Humans strive for consistency. We desire that our inner needs match our expectation. Inconsistency and the stress that comes with it are the basis for psychological problems and disorders. It always arises when desires conflict with reality or conflict with other values and desires that I impose on myself. The real world consists only of electromagnetic waves in different intensities and wavelengths. There are no colours out there. It takes place in our head. The colour illusion is created on our retina (Ittens, 1987, pp. 15- 18). We cannot see other rays like infrared or x-rays. Animals can perceive some things better than we can, for example ultrasound (Frings., Müller, 2019, 301-308). Our human perception is so far removed from reality that we cannot even imagine what reality might actually look like. Our human perception is already one reason why our view of reality is limited and distorted (Ott, G., Proskauer, H., O, 2003, pp. 104- 117). We perceive the world according to our own desires, needs and deficiencies. Our state of mind has a great influence on our perception. Our perception is based on our inner needs and our past experiences. Our perception is very much determined by our subjective experience and memory. Learning takes place through the linking of perception, experience and feeling. Decisive is the subjective meaning we give to a perception. This triggers feelings and sensations. They control our thinking and our feelings and our behaviour. (Stahl, 2022, pp.47)

The therapy researcher Klaus Grawe (1943- 2005) has identified four different basic needs that control our psychological experience. They have evolved through evolution. We are motivated to satisfy the needs to ensure our survival, and thus the spread of our genes. There are also the basic physical needs for food intake. The psychological as well as the physical basic needs are essential and concern every human being. The four basic psychological needs are:

1. need for attachment and belonging
2. need for autonomy and control
3. need for self-esteem
4. need to get feelings of pleasure and to avoid feelings of displeasure.

All of these basic needs are interrelated. If one basic need is unsatisfied or satisfied, the other basic needs are also affected (Grawe, 2000, pp.395- 398). The desire for control is closely linked to our goals and needs. We are always concerned with achieving goals. The fulfilment of our basic psychological and physical needs is our greatest driver. However, our needs are often in conflict with each other. Behind many needs is the desire for security. The desire for secure attachment and a sense of belonging. (Grawe, 2000, pp.396- 411) In order for me to achieve my goals, and thus fulfil my needs, we need control over our emotions, thoughts, behaviour, and the external environment. We need control not only over our body, but also over our will. Even though our need for control strongly dominates our thoughts, actions and feelings, our need for attachment is the basis of our lives. Everything begins with attachment; in motherhood, we are totally dependent on our caretakers (Stahl, 2022, pp.53).

A central aspect of primal trust is that the child's brain learns to regulate its emotions through the loving attention of its parents. Children's brains cannot regulate stress in the first two years of life. Stress occurs whenever basic physical or psychological needs are not met. (Stahl, 2022, pp.76) Humans always strive for a balance between autonomy and attachment. Skills necessary for good attachment is: Pleasing others through external attractiveness and sympathetic behaviour. Listening, adjusting accordingly, and being empathetic. Cooperating and finding compromises. Being able to adapt and give in. Being able to trust. (Stahl, 2022, pp.85) Trust is the essence of sustainable relationships. Trust strengthens relationships because it creates a sense of harmony and connection. (Stahl, 2022, pp.89) While bonding is about 'what do we have in common?', autonomy is about 'what makes us different?'. It is about individual needs.

Skills that are necessary for autonomy are: Sensing one's own feelings and needs. Making decisions, setting goals. Arguing and fighting. Being able to separate (Stahl, 2022, pp.90) While attachment is about pushing our own needs to the back, autonomy requires a good connection to our own feelings. Otherwise it is difficult for us to make decisions. Feelings show the direction I want to go. Even decisions that I seem to make out of pure reason have an emotional component. Often it is about the question: do I adapt or do I assert myself? For the realization of my own goals, I need my own assertiveness. Nature has given us a lot of feelings so that we bond with other people. For the assertion of our own interests, however, it has reserved only one feeling for us, namely aggression. Without a certain amount of healthy aggression, I am not able to stand up for myself. (Stahl, 2022, pp.91) A distinction is made between the secure attachment style: it has internalized that relationships are something positive that one can help shape. He also believes that he is autonomous enough within a relationship to be able to satisfy his needs. The opposite of this is the insecure attachment style: people with an insecure attachment style have had the early childhood experience that one cannot rely on others. They have difficulty trusting others. How they express themselves is related to their early childhood experiences. If parents succeed in meeting both needs (autonomy-bonding), a child learns to develop healthy attachment behaviour. It acquires the ability it needs to feel its own feelings and to stand up for its goals and wishes (Stahl, 2022, pp.97). The self-esteem - the epicentre of our psyche. We strive for is self-optimization. Everyone wants to be beautiful, successful, helpful and good. Our self-worth is the quintessence of our mental map/inner child. We have the desire to feel pleasant states like joy, inspiration pleasure and love and to avoid unpleasant feelings like sadness, fear and shame. (Stahl, 2022, pp.111) We want to avoid unpleasant feelings as much as possible. They always arise when there is a gap between what we want and what is. This condition is called inconsistency. In order to change our situation, we need to be in control, set new priorities and thus change our focus. It is also important to accept things that cannot be changed. Healthy actions to change my inner attitude towards a problem are: adjusting expectations, focusing on other priorities, or accepting the unchangeable. Displacement becomes dysfunctional when it ends up causing me more problems than it solves. (Stahl, 2022, pp.152) Positive beliefs are: I am enough, I am valuable (lovable), I am allowed to feel my feelings, I am allowed to make mistakes, I am on an equal footing with my fellow human beings, I am important, I am allowed to cry, I am allowed to be me, I can connect at any time, I am allowed to seek help, I am welcome, I am allowed to live. (Stahl, 2022, pp.309) Our feelings are the essence of our consciousness. Our problems are interlocked with our feelings. Self-reflection, which always includes contact with our own feelings, would be a way to a more loving and peaceful relationship. (Stahl, 2022, pp.324) Peace, compassion and tolerance help to lower one's level of aggression. A meaning in life, a higher value is healing for our life.

Stephanie Stahl dares to doubt that almost all the problems we have in this world, such as social injustice, racism, sexism, violence, wars, the climate catastrophe are due to a lack of self-reflection of those responsible. The world lacks wisdom in a close connection to self-reflection. The wise human acts in the interest of the community. The wise person lives values such as justice, equality, tolerance, compassion, generosity and peace.

The key to understanding people is to understand oneself. The better you feel yourself, the better you feel your fellow human beings (Stahl, 2022, pp.357). Who we are is intertwined with who we wish to be.

1.3 Sociology: The Evolution of Table Manners

Norbert Elias sees societies as developmental processes. Elias asks how and why is our society the way it is? Why do we behave the way we do? Norbert Elias understands civilisation as a process, as a civilisation of people and society. What is the difference between civilisation and culture? We understand civilisation as the opposite of primitive and barbaric. The Occident always wanted to distinguish itself from what is not the Occident in order to be able to distinguish itself better. Boundaries of shame and rules of etiquette change over time. (Treibel, A., 2008, pp. 52- 53) This shows that civilisation is a process. There is no fixed value for it, but is subject to constant change. According to Norbert Elias people in the middle age had a lower sense of shame. In the transition to modern times, people began to exercise increasing self-control. People observed themselves and their counterparts more closely and developed a finer sense for what was going on in others. Social control, the compulsion that people exerted on each other became stronger and stronger, the demand for good behaviour became louder and louder. This compulsion is internalised by the individual, one feels something embarrassing oneself. (Elias, 1970, pp. 12- 19) Why do mores exist? And why do they change?

The upper classes always want to distinguish themselves from the lower classes, they want to show that they are not like the proletariat. That's why they start eating with forks and knives. The proletariat eats with their fingers. But the middle class also wants to go up, and by imitating the customs of the upper class, the middle class claims it belongs (Treibel, A., 2008, pp. 54- 55). The upper class, in turn, does not want this and therefore invents new customs as new distinguishing features from the middle class. Therefore, not only do they need forks and knives, but they need forks and knives made of silver to distinguish themselves from the proletariat. The aristocracy is forced or driven to a constant refinement of its manners and behaviour. This means that the threshold of embarrassment is moving further and further forward. At some point it is not only embarrassing to eat without cutlery, but it is also embarrassing to eat without a napkin and at some point, it is embarrassing to eat only with a napkin that does not have an embroidered monogram. Just as the customs of a culture become more and more refined, because the upper class wants to set itself apart and the middle class wants to follow suit, the customs of the individual, from child to adult, also become more refined. At a certain age, we want to show that we are no longer children. And that too is the process of civilisation (Treibel, A., 2008, pp. 56- 59).

As civilisation progressed, life became increasingly divided into two spheres. Into a public sphere and an intimate sphere. Expressions of urges are perceived as animalistic, they are gradually repressed and associated with fear, shame and feelings of guilt. At the same time, the desire to attack in civilised society shifts to sporting competitions. This also means that everyday life in civilisation becomes more boring. Life becomes less dangerous, and also more affectless and listless. (Elias, 1980, pp.135) Living together determines manners. There are also more refined manners because people are becoming more and more dependent on each other. Living together is becoming more and more complex. This process of refinement in interpersonal life happened around the year 1000. New markets emerged, monetary transactions pushed into the natural economy, a new class of craftsmen and traders emerged alongside warriors and clergy, who then became the bourgeoisie. Population growth, division of labour, trade, the coexistence of many in a smaller space, in cities, all this required a stronger regulation of sexual life, and at the same time the modern state came into being. Self-control determines our animal culture. (Elias, 1997, pp. 89-95) In the 18th century, wealth increases and with it the buoyancy of the bourgeois classes. The urge to enter the elite classes, or at least to imitate them, increases. Church circles in particular also become popularisers of courtly customs. The moderate constraint and restraint

of affect, the rules and forms of behaviour, accommodate certain directions of the ecclesiastical tradition of behaviour. (Simmel., G. 1991, pp. 69- 76) The church, as is so common, proves to be the most important organ of transport for models downwards.

In the next paragraphs I go into more detail about eating habits and table manners. A few examples of how everyday eating rituals have been formed is shown by the democratised commandment that no bread is cut at the table, but broken, or it is shown in the way one drinks a coffee. There is a wealth of national and social variation in table manners. But the basic essence of what is required among people in civilised society, the standard of eating techniques, the way in which knife, fork, spoon, plate, napkin and the other eating utensils are to be used, these remain unchanged in the essentials. (Elias, 1997, pp. 231- 236) There are, however, changes in the differentiation of utensils. On many occasions, not only are the plates changed after each course, but also the eating utensils. It is not enough to eat with a knife, fork and spoon instead of the hands. Instead, one follows the upper class, where each type of food is assigned its own utensil. Soup spoons, fish knives and meat knives are placed on one side of the plate. Forks for the first course, for fish and meat on the other. Above the plates are forks, spoons or knives for sweet dishes. All these utensils are differently shaped and equipped. Some are rounder, more pointed, smaller, larger. They are variations on the same theme, differentiation within the same standard (Elias, 1997, pp. 255- 265).

Up to the time of the 15th century, the standards of eating technique, such as people's behaviour towards each other and themselves, remain pretty much the same in their essential features. However, there are still fashions, fluctuations and regional and social variations. The transitions from techniques are fluid. The faster movement sets in more quickly or earlier, depending on the region. (Elias, 1980, pp. 141-) The Middle Ages, with a peak in the chivalric-courtly period, is characterised by eating with the hands. In the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries, there is a more rapid movement and change in which the compulsions to shape eating behaviour are pushed in one direction. The basis of social differences became more exclusively the possession of money than before. The reification, the achievements and products of people become more important. (Elias, 1980, pp. 142) In the Middle Ages, the prohibitions of affects do not yet play a major role. Social control is milder. Manners are more informal. Smacking, snorting, spitting, blowing into the tablecloth is accepted. 150 years later, the napkin, the handkerchief and the fork are indispensable utensils in the courtly class. The transformation of other habits and customs is similar. At the beginning, the soup is drunk, later it is written down to use the spoon for this purpose. Everyone gets their own spoon for eating the soup. Later, people no longer eat from a common bowl, but use their own spoon to take soup for their own plate. After all, one no longer wants to ladle from a bowl from which others have already dipped their used spoons. It is therefore necessary to wipe one's spoon with a napkin before dipping it into the bowl. Eventually, even this is no longer enough for other people, but there must be a new spoon for serving the soup. (Elias, 1980, pp.144) This illustrates how the ritual of togetherness is in constant flux. The sense of shame and embarrassment, the sense of pleasure and displeasure is modelled by pressure and coercion from outside and thus brought to a certain standard. It seems to the individuals as their most personal, as something that comes from within them, as if given to them by nature. The social standard into which the individual has initially been fitted from the outside, through external coercion, finally reproduces itself more or less smoothly through self-coercion, even if he does not wish it in his consciousness. In this way, the historical-social process of centuries takes place, in the course of which the standard of shame and embarrassment slowly advances. (Elias, 1980, pp.174)

Several artists through history explored the subject of table manners and eating habits within their work. The painting of Josef Danhauer (*Fig. 1*) shows one example of a representation of table manners of a rich man.



Fig. 1.: Josef Danhauser, *Der reiche Prasser* (detail), 1836, oil on canvas, Belvedere, Vienna.

2. Chapter II: Artistic References

While the focus of the second part of the thesis centres on three influential artists—Rebecca Horn, Yoko Ono, and Marina Abramović—it is essential to acknowledge the significance of Alison Knowles and Gordon Matta-Clark as important references. Their contributions to the Fluxus movement provide a contextual backdrop for understanding the experimental nature of food-themed art and its resonance with the artistic explorations of the era. The performative arts of the Fluxus movement, exemplified by seminal works such as Alison Knowles' *Make a Salad* (1962) and Gordon Matta-Clark's *Food* (1972), played a pivotal role in shaping the experimental landscape of the era. The performances of Knowles and Matta-Clark exemplify this ethos, as they engaged audiences in the act of creating and interacting with food, blurring the lines between art and everyday life. In the 1970s Gordon Matta-Clark organized art and performance events in a restaurant in SoHo. It served as a social space and meeting ground for ongoing projects. Where food plays a central role (Bar Laika, 2019). The event score *Make a Salad*, by Knowles suggests creating a salad, blending musical arrangement with a participatory performance. Participants engage in preparing and tossing large quantities of vegetables in dressing, serving the final result to attendees (Fiore, 2018). In the context of the Fluxus movement, where artistic boundaries were pushed to explore new realms of expression, the food-themed artworks of Knowles and Matta-Clark provide valuable references. Their performances, rooted in the Fluxus spirit, underscored the movement's commitment to experimentation, audience engagement, and the incorporation of everyday elements into artistic practice. This exploration of food-themed art within Fluxus not only influenced contemporaneous artists but also resonates with the work and era of Yoko Ono.

In the following pages I introduce Yoko Onos, Rebecca Horns and Marina Abramović, who work in the realm of performativity, body and space. Onos work is based upon ideas, the non-material and the power of imagination through words. Rebecca Horn created sculptural extensions for her body which transformed her simultaneously into a tool and an expansion of herself. Marina Abramović explores the limits of body and psyche in the presents in the frame of performances. In the next subchapter, I aim to give insights into the main aspects of how these artists shaped the creation of my work.

2.1 Yoko Ono: The Fluxus Movement and the Art of Instructions and Game

The following subchapter takes a closer look at the work of artist Yoko Ono. The paragraphs deal with her upbringing, her background and her artistic influences. With the main emphasize on her work and her connection with the Fluxus movement.

Yoko Ono was born in Tokyo in 1933, due to the work of her parents, she travelled a lot between San Francisco, New York and Tokyo. She grew up bilingual and received early classical music lessons. Being seen as an American in Japan and being read as a Japanese in America, she often feels like an outcast and a hybrid of both cultures. Due to her upbringing, she struggles with her identity. She is influenced both by the Japanese and the US-American culture. (Skrobanek, 2013, pp.124). As she was brought up in an intellectual artistic surrounding, the language of art accompanied her since very early. Due to the second world war, she experienced a loss of stability and suffered from hunger growing up in Japan. Shaped by these events in her early life, art became a way of escapism in her youth. She describes using solely her mind to transform her surroundings into a more delightful place. (Pfeiffer, 2018, pp.23) This approach stayed present throughout her whole artistic practice. Yoko Ono's work of art is based on ideas and verbal orders to do utopian or executable actions³. Music,

³ Occasionally she produces haptic art objects, but most of her work takes place in the imaginary, the non-material sphere. Her ideas are poetic, smart, and sincere. Some of them in body a subtle humour, some are a critic against

language, and philosophy are the fundaments of Yoko Ono's oeuvre. Her works tend to be ephemeral. Especially her early works consisted of industrial and found materials, which were not usually used for art works. It was more about the poetical, ambiguous form/ instruction than its other appearance. Only if the observer witnesses the piece mentally, the piece is complete. (Pfeiffer, 2018, pp.26). Writing instructions that the reader can either carry out in the mind or in the physical form is a big part of her practice. Her Instructions work mostly with a silent tone and poetical language. Her texts are demanding and literary. She often uses metaphors and poems. Her aim is the confrontation with self-reflection and with her work she wants to inspire others to do so as well. (Pfeiffer, 2018, pp.35) She prefers the use of non-material works as her artistic language⁴. Her works are hybrids, mostly with two different characteristics. Words and language are an important aspect of her work. In the 1950s she created so-called Event Scores, where she captured words, not music scores, which invite physical actions. The senses of touch and action are reoccurring themes of her work. Such as Touch Poem, which is a poem to touch, canvases which were placed on the floor to walk on (Painting to Be Stepped on) or usable sculptures (Air Dispenser). She uses these hybrid works to unlock new habits of perception and to sensitize the viewer for new forms of sensory impressions. (Skrobanek, 2013, pp. 123) For those instructions she experimented with haiku and zen-like language and transmitted these forms into art.

'...artists must not create more objects; the world is full of everything it needs. I'm bored with artists who make big lumps of sculpture and occupy a big space with them and think they have done something creative (...)' (Ono, 1971, Film Festival Cannes)



Fig. 2.: Yoko Ono, *Morning Piece*, 1964, Performance, New York.

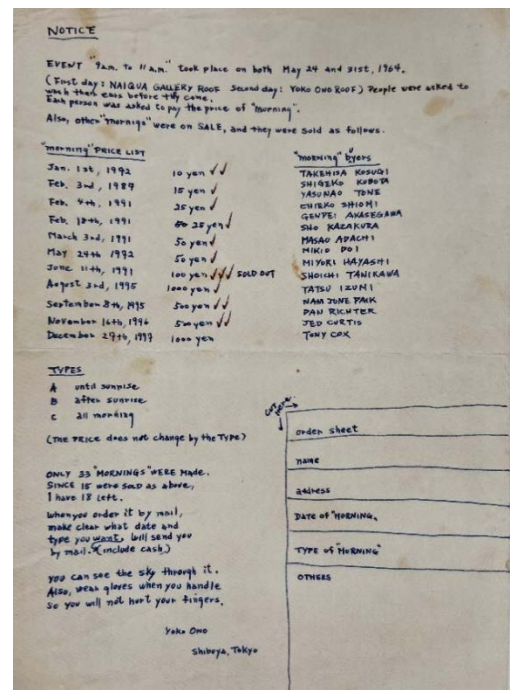


Fig. 3.: Yoko Ono, *Morning Piece (Notice)*, 1964. ink on paper, 29,5 x 21 cm.

society, they are political and feminist. She is a protagonist of the socio-political oriented art of the 1960s, she is an artist who significantly shaped the performance and conceptual art. Moreover, Yoko Ono is still a relevant artist of our time. Most of her current contemporary work is based on her earlier concepts. (Pfeiffer, 2018, pp.23)

⁴ Yoko Ono's artistic production moves between several art genres. She works in the literary and musical area, made paintings and sculptural installations and video works.

Yoko Ono's work is also part of the Fluxus-Movement. The movement was formed in the 1960s, a decade of change. The era was a time of social riots -european colonial empires fallen apart, demographic changes after the second World War and violent conflicts by racism and the Vietnam war. (Baas, 2011, pp.9) George Maciunas founded Fluxus with the intention to free the world of the 'bourgeoisie sickness', from the intellectual, professional and the commercial culture. His aim was to support the lively art, the anti-art, the non-artistic reality. Although Ono didn't have a close relationship with the fluxus group, she participated in organised actions of George Maciunas and influenced the ideas and work approaches of the movement. (Pfeiffer, 2013, pp.23) Yoko Ono organised in New York Fluxus Concerts and Happenings. She collaborated with the founder of the movement, Maciunas, as he struggled with money regular, Yoko Ono organised a performance with the title *Morning Piece* (1964) (Fig. 1- 2). The Performance took place 1965 on the roof of the house of Yoko Ono in New York. The theme of the piece deals with Future beginnings. Yoko was selling 'Mornings' in the form of broken glass from the ocean where the edges were softened by the water. Each of them was provided with a date of the past and the future. (Hendricks, 2013, pp.55)

The instructions or event scores also play a part within the Fluxus-movement. It originated in the surrounding of the composer John Cage. What was important for them was the experience at a certain moment of time and place. The recipient should experience the moment with all senses. The focus of the artists and the audience shifts from the material production to the multisensorial perception- between artist and the audience arises a certain spirit (Skrobanek, 2013, pp.125). The term 'Intermedia' is an important keyword of this interaction. It is an ephemeral experience, which can only be witnessed in the moment and not possible to capture. (Bech, 2008, pp.9) In 1963 Maciunas wrote a Manifesto about his definition of Fluxus (Fig. 4). He had several other Fluxus-art plans, such as creating a Fluxus Festival in an old mansion with horse stables, where he wanted to originate a new Fluxus-Bauhaus movement on the countryside. He envisioned affordable apartments and premises for artist. In July of 1977 he also planned a Flux fest with a concert by Yoko Ono and John Lennon; Exhibits by Yoko Ono and John Lennon and a food event featuring edible clothing fashion by John Lennon and films by John Lennon and Yoko Ono. But barely a year later Maciunas died of cancer and the fluxus-movement with him, and his planned events never saw the light of day. (Hendricks, 2013, pp.59)

'(We must) open our eyes and ears each day (to) seeing life as excellent as it is... To accept whatever comes regardless of the consequences is to be full of that love which comes from a sense of at-oneness with whatever.' (Cage, 1967)

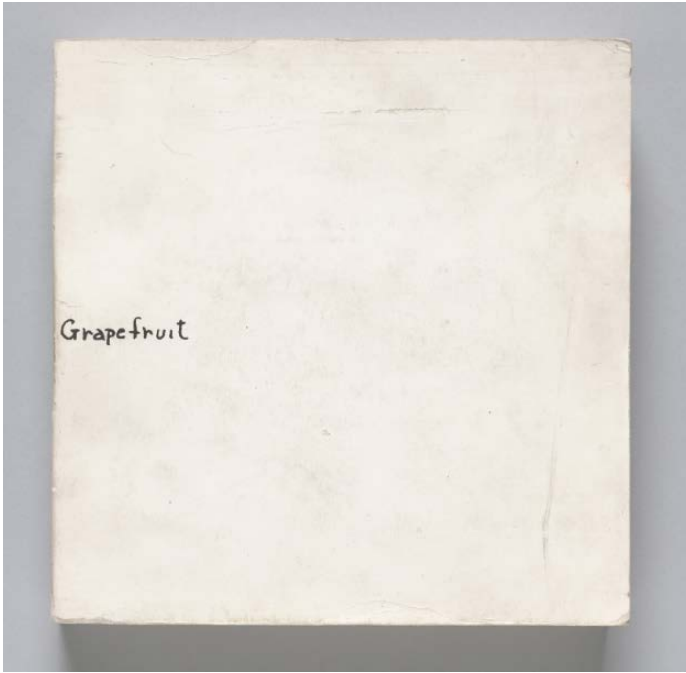


Fig. 5.: Yoko Ono, *Grapefruit*, 1964, Artist's book, offset print, 13.8 x 13.8 x 3.2 cm.

City Piece

Walk over the city with an empty baby carriage

1961 winter

Fig. 6.: Yoko Ono, *Grapefruit. A Book of Instructions and Drawings*, 1970, New York.

Air Talk

It's sad that the air is the only
thing we share.
No matter how close we get to each other,
there is always air between us.

It's also nice that we share the air.
No matter how far apart we are,
the air links us.

Fig. 7.: Yoko Ono, *Grapefruit. A Book of Instructions and Drawings*, 1970, New York.

2.2 Rebecca Horn: Body Extensions as a Tool

The second artist which influenced my work process is Rebecca Horn, born in 1944, in Michelstadt, Germany, has created various performances, intimate drawings, and poems, but also video works and feature films. She is best known for her fantastic body prostheses. (Tacke, 2011, pp.53)

The artistic work focuses on the body and its movement. The relationship between space and the body is constantly being re-explored and redefined in her scenarios. In a poetic way she moves in isolation between the walls of her studio, but also in the cultural, public space, among others with site-specific, sculptural room installations. In a sensual, sensitive, and often fragile way she appeals to the senses with her works. The body instruments are becoming more and more detached from the artist. It seems as they transform into independent kinetic sculptures. Although through the mechanical moving of one's body, they nevertheless seem to be subject of human sensations. Especially today, in connection with the new media, the incarnate human forms body, with its mysteriousness, its mortality, a kind of antithesis to that disembodiment and virtualization of art. The room is also transformed in the connection with digitization to an extent that is not firmly delimited. In the following, based on various works by Rebecca Horn, the relationship between body to the different spaces, their mutual influence, and the resulting transformations, are examined in more detail. How Rebecca Horn negotiates space in connection with body (movements) should be examined using individual examples of their work. (Jones, 2005, pp. 53)

“The body is where identity is created and acted out, 'as the seat of one's own personality as well as a place where the public space meets the private sphere and that social life is negotiated, created, and given meaning.’” (Tacke, 2011, p.53-54)

According to this definition of the body as a place, it can also be seen as a space or shell, which encloses one's own personality. The body is always a current topic. Throughout history, the body had a relevance in different shape of form. The body as a model, as a work, as a medium or material. Along with the second women's movement in the 50's and 60's, art forms such as performance and body art developed (Schneede, 2002, pp.8). Here the works create bodily experiences and dealing with the body as a political necessity. The body thus becomes the place of action and negotiation of identity and gender (Schneede, 2002, pp.8). Rebecca Horn is also one of the representatives of body art. Her body prostheses extensions are made with different materials, which serve as an extension and as a delimitation of the serving their own body, measuring the space around them and thus attaining “one immediate physical transgression of one's own dimensions as well as one's own ranges in space.” (Drathen, 2011, pp.53) The artist describes her early performances as 'Personal Art' because they are intimate works in which it is primarily related to the experiences of one's own body with the body extensions, hardly took place in front of an audience. In the “one-time events” it was much more about the (self) experience between the wearer, the instrument, and the room. (Drathen, 2011, pp.56) Here the human body is treated as a condition for all experiences and not as one object viewed in space.

The prosthetic body extensions, the tailor-made instruments lead to a changed body situation and thus require an adjustment of the artist's motoric skills. In dealing with the limits of the body and its sensual, tactile perception, expanded self-awareness plays an important role. This is observed, for example, in the work *weißer Körperfächer* (White Body Fan) (1972) (Fig. 8) Two semi-circular wings made of white fabric are attached to the actor. Through the raising of the arms, they are unfolded, and movement patterns emerge, such as opening and closing, shaping of revealing and hiding. The body is trying to maintain control of the wings in the wind. (Horn, 2019) The changed body situation due to the prostheses requires concentration and it develops a focus on the movement influenced by the instrument. So also, in her work *Handschuhfinger* (Finger Glove) (1972)

(Fig. 9) and *scratching both walls at once* (1974 – 75) (Fig. 10) The palpation of the hand is carried out isolated and precisely. Rebecca Horn herself describes her experience as follows:



Fig. 8.: Rebecca Horn, *White Body Fan*, 1972, fabric and metal, 70 × 13.4 × 6.8 cm.



Fig. 9.: Rebecca Horn, *Finger Gloves*, 1972, fabric, wood and metal.



Fig. 10.: Rebecca Horn, *scratching both walls at once*, 1974 - 75, 16 mm (digitized), Berlin.

“The glove fingers are made of such light material that I can move fingers without straining. I feel, touch, grasp with them and keep a fixed distance to the objects, I touch. The lever movement of the altered fingers increases the sense of touch in the hand. I feel my touch, see my grasp, and control the distance between the objects and myself at a self-chosen distance.” (Horn, 2019, pp.127)

In addition to the aspects of expansion through the prostheses, the concept of subjugation, and its restriction goes along with it. While the instruments of the wearer have been adjusted, also the instruments in terms of its movement behaviour must be adapted. This leads to the ambivalent character of prostheses. On the one hand, these prostheses give power by motor -, sensory - or also expanding perception abilities, they stand for a "covering of a deficiency". The prosthesis is compensation, a substitute. It is also closely involved with the technical, medical, and erotic (fetish function) discourse interwoven. Rebecca Horn's prostheses, frames, apparatus, and antennae carry these connotations with them. The extensions not only over shape the body, but they also constrain and pose it thus, in its fragility and inadequacy. Rebecca Horn's prostheses are common dysfunctional and restrict the mobility of the body, sometimes even make it impossible quiet. This is how the human body becomes a body sculpture. (Tacke, 2011, pp.70)

“My performances started with body sculptures. All exit movements were movements of my body and its extensions.” (Horn, 2019, pp.9)

The reshaped body becomes a body sculpture that enters a dialogue with the environment. The sculpture moves in natural and urban park landscapes, where spatial boundaries, distance, direction, and dimension are clearly perceptible. An example of such an expansive body sculpture is the film performance *Einhorn* (Fig. 11) from 1970. The long, pointed head extension transforms the wearer into a unicorn and compels the actor to a majestic, upright walk. The prosthesis attached to antennae or antennae is reminiscent of reduced, medical-looking, white bandages on the attached to the naked body. In this gait, the performer moves in a naturalistic setting - first in the forest, then in a wheat field. By the Mythologizing - The image of the poetic mythical animal, the female protagonist as a unicorn in a natural setting, functions here not only because of the interpersonal perception, but also have a clear narrative. (Horn, 2019, pp.16)



Fig. 11.: Rebecca Horn, *Unicorn*, wood, fabric and metal, 1970.



Fig. 12: Rebecca Horn, *Measuring Closet*, lacquer, aluminium, steel, 90 cm x 90 cm x 200 cm, 1970.

Finally, one can also recognize the human body itself as space. Rebecca Horn uses it as a space of experience and perception and even transforms it into a sculpture. With her prostheses, she expands the body and thus creates an artificial one additionally. In her work *Messkasten* (Measuring closet) (1970) (Fig. 12), this body space is measured and finally appears as 'empty space' after the measured person steps out of the object. The body as a space, like the imaginary spaces, is strongly influenced and defined through the respective society (e.g. time-bound ideals of beauty). Just in connection with emancipation, the female body in particular

experiences a new sociological and political importance. Rebecca Horn's body extensions become a tool of which are protecting her and simultaneously are reaching out to the outside world.

2.3 Marina Abramović: The Art of Presence in Performativity

The final source of artistic reference which I present in this chapter is the artist Marina Abramović. She impacted me on the outcome of my work, due to her essential and existential questions she deals within her oeuvre.

Marina Abramović established herself as a well-known performance artist, who is overall mostly celebrated for her long durational performances. Born 1946 in Belgrade, Yugoslavia she attended the academy of fine arts in Belgrade. She pioneered to use performance as a visual art form. (Obrist/ Abramović, 2010, pp.189). Her childhood is shaped by her strict parents who expect her to excel high performance in school and in the household. She grew up in a very disciplined and controlled household. Her father and her mother giving her strict rules to follow. From a very young age she was restricted to fulfilling tasks and checking off lists. When M.A. was a child, her mother was obsessed with instructions. She started to write lists from a young age, with sentences such as: drink milk and take the vitamins, learn 10 sentences of French. Even during night-time, her mother would wake her up, during her sleep if she would mess up her duvet. (Obrist/ Abramović, 2010, pp.49) She had lists of what she had to do. There were always regulations on lists and everything in her young life was about discipline. The list became a classification. She woke up and wrote a list in the morning and then she followed the list. The list transformed into instructions and instructions transformed into performance. With the list she knew exactly what to do. She knew her premises. (Obrist/ Abramović, 2010, pp.49) Never receiving any physical affection, she learned to restraint her emotional and physical needs. The effects these early circumstances had on her while growing up can be witnessed in her work. Although she rebelled against these strict corsets in her own life, within her work she started building instructions for herself. Every work of her is based on certain instructions and a specific place. Instructions frame her work. (Obrist/ Abramović, 2010, pp. 128) Thus, she comes from a military family, she is also fascinated by uniforms. Uniforms are an essential for her. In her performances people need to wear a uniform. All clothes must be the same colour, very simple. Everybody needs to look the same. (Obrist/ Abramović, 2010, pp.99)

'(...) Wearing a uniform is similar to wearing a mask on your face. You can relax better, be more self-conscious than in your personal clothes. The uniform is essential for the drill. (...) there are three institutions that I just adore: sanatorium, prison and monastery. All these three institutes have regularities on the body. In a uniform, the body behaves, and your mind is free. In these institutes your body is taken care of. Food is regular. You don't have to be concerned with your body. It's so necessary. (...)' (Abramović, 2010, pp.99)

Due to her upbringing, her work of art is characterized by self-discipline and self-control. Her body is both subject and medium of her work. She is interested in spiritual practices, especially in the Buddhist philosophy and other religions which deal with ascetism. (Meier, 2008, pp.60) Furthermore, time and presence are an important aspect of her work. Presence is a term, which is applied in many different disciplines: in the theology, the philosophical aesthetic, in the literature, -art and cultural science and in the performance theory. (Dehm, 2013, pp.229-233). Marina Abramović long durational performances deal with the matter of presence which are intertwined transdisciplinary aspects, such as cultural and art scientific themes. Moreover, she addresses neuro medical knowledge, focussing on the relaxation medicine. (Meier, 2008, pp.13) In the context of time and presence, the artwork has the possibility to expand and grow in its dimensions. This creates space to explore themes beyond human existence. Long durational performances have the characteristic of taking time, and the

artwork can step out of time. This allows the audience to reflect on the most universal and profound questions, which are constantly renewed in the present. In performance, the performer is also transformed and ever-changing by this experience. (Abramović, 2013, pp.6) Time is such an important aspect of her work because it becomes more and more valuable because in our fast-paced world we have less and less of it.



Fig. 13.: Ulay/Marina Abramović, *Breathing in / Breathing out*, 1977, photography, 47 cm x 59 cm.

A performative work by Marina which influenced my creation process is the piece 'Breathing in, Breathing out' (1977) (Fig. 13). It took place in Student Cultural Center in Belgrad. The performance was conducted simultaneously with her partner and lover Ulay. It deals with the subject of duality and its limits. The instruction was to sit in front of each other and press their lips together to share their oxygen. To avoid breathing through their nose, both nostrils are filled with cigarette butts. By every breath the oxygen gets less and less. Through a microphone, which is attached to their throat, the audience can hear their difficulties they have with breathing. Due to the lack of oxygen the performance is discontinued and instead of 22 minutes the performance takes 19 minutes.

Abramović's work explores the profound universal questions of life and existence. The core of her work stands often in relation to ancient philosophy and its practices. In the book 'Marina Abramović Institute: dedicated to human beings' written by Abramović, she mentions her text, 'Reflection on the Mental and Physical Condition of the Artist' (1989). In this text she writes about an ancient ritual, where artists, poets, philosophers, and builders would climb on the top of a mountain and would embark themselves into solitude. This confronts them with the

Qi energy⁵. By this the mind and body are reduced to a single point of concentration. After she entered this state of mind and body the artist would come out with new work. Also, in the Renaissance, preparations as such were advised before the artists would start their work. In the book 'Libro dell'arte' written in the beginning of the 15th century by Cennino Cennini, he writes about how to prepare the artist to paint the cupola of a church. Three months before starting the work the artist should stop eating meat, two months before stop drinking wine, one month before, restrain from sexual desires. Three weeks before starting the work, the artist should put his right arm into plaster, the day he starts work, he should break the plaster, take a brush and be able to make a perfect circle with a free hand (Cennini, 1859) (Abramović, 2013, pp.20). Brancusi states that; what you're doing is not important, what really is important is the state of mind from which you do it.' The preparation for the state of mind during the moment of performance is, likewise, essential for Abramovic (Abramović, 2013, pp.20). The preparation before the execution of the work is form great importance to Abramovic. In her theory she recognizes the body as a house we life in and which need the same kind of cleaning. The aim of the workshop is to teach the participants endurance, concentration, perception, self-control, willpower, confrontation of mental and physical limits (Abramović, 2013, pp.20-21).

The audience plays has an important aspect in her creation, as it influences her performances. She describes the relation between the observer and the artists as an 'energy dialog'. (Meier, 2008, pp.215). Without the audience the work does not exist. (Obrist/ Abramović, 2010, pp.145)

(...) Art is made for the audience, we are here to serve the society and we are here to make a bridge between nature and art (...) art never exists in nature for me, because nature is so perfect without art (...) Art really serves society. We have to go somewhere in order to get the knowledge and then we come here into the city. The city needs art, not the nature and we're here to serve it.' (Abramović, 2010, pp.145)

Therefore, Marina Abramović invented a method which trains not only the performer but the audience with skills to observe long durational performance. It is called the Abramović Method, and its aim exposes the mind-set of the performer to the public. Conducting the method, the participants heighten the physical and mental experience of the participant. (Abramović, 2013, p.42)

'Long durational performances have the power to create mental and physical transformation for the performer as well as for the viewer. For this reason, I would like to give the public the possibility to experience and to reflect upon emptiness, time, space, luminosity and void. I have created an installation of objects for human and spirit use the public can interact with in three basic positions: standing, sitting, and lying down. In doing so, the public becomes part of the work.'

The viewer will function as a mirror to the public, participating in the installation. During this experience, I hope that the observer will connect with themselves and with the present- the elusive moment of the here and now' (Abramović, 2013, pp.43)

The method, such as the workshop, consist of basic instructions, which the participants are invited to follow. They consist of physical exercises such as movement exercises for arms, eyes, ears, mouth, nose, and breath.

⁵ The concept of Qi has its origin in the Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and Martial Arts. Qi is described as the life force of each individual, it is the energy that flows through everybody and everything. (Engelhart U., G. Hildenbrand, C. Zumfelde-Hüneburg, 2014, pp.8)

The exercises are small instructions which are accompanied by minimal drawings, showing how they should be carried out. Other instructions are based on the interaction between the surrounding and the body. Following instructions such as stepping on the ground exercise, the jump exercise, water drinking, breathing, running, walking, crossing fences, measuring the river, stopping anger, slow motion exercises, winter swimming, energy feeling, making a golden ball, looking at colours, listening to sound, remembering exercise. (Abramović, 2013, pp.42-61) (*Fig. 14*). Marina Abramović believes that the society craves for sensory experiences, moments of silence, pausing, retreat and reflection. With the performance work Abramović wants to fulfil the needs of the society. Her work is about the people, about humility and entirety. For her it's to change consciousness together and thereby change the world (Meier, 2008, pp.215). For her it is the non-material art form, such as performance and music which is her main source of interest.

Exercises

Water drinking

With your hand, hold a glass of pure water
Wait and look at the water. In slow motion, bring the glass to your lips
Drink in small sips as long as you can. Put the glass down and repeat this activity throughout the day a minimum of 21 times.

(Abramović, 2013, pp.28)

Breathing

No. 1

Sitting on the ground
Close the left nostril with a finger and
Breathe in air deeply through the right
Nostril nine times
Repeat the same exercise with the left
Nostril, and then breathe in air nine times
With both nostrils open.

No.2

Lying on the ground, press your body against the floor, as forcefully
As possible without breathing.
Keep this position as long as you can,
Then breathe deeply and relax.
Repeat 12 times.

No.3

Standing
Breathe through your mouth only,
Suck in the air as forcefully as possible
1 time in 1 time out
2 times in 2 times out
3 times in 3 times out
4 times in 4 times out

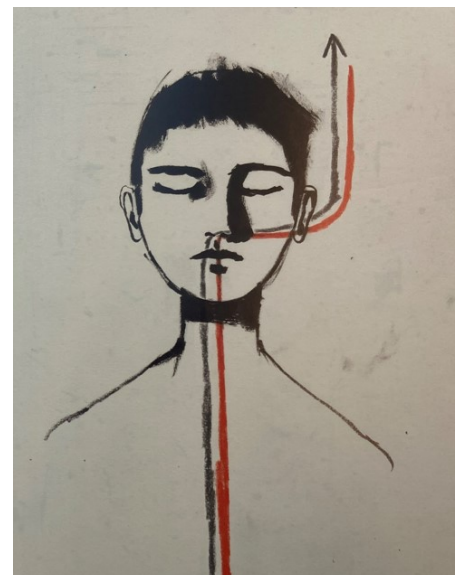


Fig. 14.: Marina Abramović, Breathing Exercise, Drawing, 2013.

5 times in 5 times out
6 times in 6 times out
7 times in 7 times out
8 times in 8 times out
9 times in 9 times out
10 times in 10 times out

(Abramović, 2013, pp.29)



Fig. 15.: Marina Abramović, *The Artist Is Present*, 2010, Performance, MoMA, New York.

Her most influential work, which made her into an internationally well-known artist, synthesises all the main characteristics of her creative work. It contains the factor of time, presence, and the audience. The work is called 'The Artist Is Present' and was performed in spring 2010 at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) (Fig. 15). The aim of the artist was to make her and the audience experience presence over a total time of 736 hours. The set up was simple; Abramović was sitting on a chair in the Museum and opposite of her a volunteer member of the audience could choose to take a seat in front of her. The instruction was that they sit opposite to each other and look each other in the eyes. Through this implementation she wanted to make her presence perceptible and make the public aware of the moment (Meier, 2008, pp. 17). In her view, no objects should be between the artist and the audience. She sees a necessity of creating a moment of time and space (Meier, 2008, pp.19).

Abramović assumption is that in the moment of presence other phenomena appear. Terms such as atmosphere, aura, evidence, energy, liminality, occurrence, in-between-spaces, and room of experience are untraceable

factors which occur in this frame (Meier, 2008, pp.19). It is of her value that the visitor doesn't consume the performance passively. The engagement between the spectator and the viewer are key elements of her work. The body and the mind are the central role, since through these factors' presence is experienced. Her works are thriven by crossing the boundaries and reaching the limits of the human conditions (Meier, 2008, pp.54-55).

3. Chapter III: Personal work

In the last chapter, I introduce my artistic process and how it developed over the course of the last three years. This chapter is divided into two parts, the first part deals with the question of conservation of our natural environment and the creation of an archive. The second part focuses on the anthropological aspect and is based on the question of human needs and creating possible methods on how we as individuals can find ways to satisfy our basic psychological and physiological needs. The hypothetical idea is that by covering these needs and finding compassion within each other, this would consequently lead to more protection and caring for our natural environment.

3.1 First part: Conservation of Nature by creating an Artistic Archive

The starting point of my artistic work began with the question of; what if in the dystopian future our natural environment disappears and all what is left is an archive and a database of collected information of what nature once was? The first part of my artistic practice is an approach to such an archive and possible methods of documentation and conservation of the biosphere. The biosphere is the entirety of all layers of the earth inhabited by living beings. It includes both the uppermost layer of the earth's crust, the lithosphere including the water, the hydrosphere and the lowest layer of the atmosphere, the so-called planetary boundary layer (Ratty 2006, p. 3). For the artistic practice, I choose the tree as a representation of the biosphere. Because of the disappearance of the trees, due to deforestation, the climate is affected. Trees are an important part of our ecosystem. The forest gives us fresh water, clean air and holds the earth to the ground. Our forests are severely threatened by climate change. Our forest themselves are important climate protectors. With their needles and leaves, they filter the climate-damaging carbon dioxide from the air and split it into oxygen and carbon which they then release the oxygen back into the air.

My artistic work began out of curiosity for the natural environment I was surrounded by when I moved to Portugal, in the autumn of 2020, to begin my Master's degree in Fine Arts at the *Faculdade de Belas Artes* at the University of Porto. Due to the restriction of the Covid 19 pandemic everyone was forced to stay within their personal space and limit themselves to their essential duties. Reduced by this circumstance my personal contacts were limited. To compensate the feeling of isolation and loneliness I found retreat in the old parks of Porto. There, I was captured by the smell and gigantic scope of the old eucalyptus trees, which were growing in these gardens over a long period of time. I was mesmerized by their surface and story these trees inhabited. For me these trees gave me a place to rest and grounded me. It started to become a routine to visit them almost daily. Over this period of time I began to have a sort of relationship with them. Consequently, the question of transience started to become a key question for me; during this time of isolation, due to a global crisis, suddenly the very ordinary things and beings became much more precious. We were not only facing a global pandemic, but we are also left with the question on how we treat the resources of our natural environment. It was evident for me that the nature I was surrounded by during those time was my only place to find refuge and calmness. This realisation and gratitude gave me the impulse to create an archive of our natural spheres and to document the information of the surfaces of the trees and stones I was surrounded by in the perimeter of my home in Porto. I found the eucalyptus trees, which I choose to document, in old parks, such as the *Parque de São Roque* and the *Parque das Águas*. The criteria by which I selected the tree was based by a merely intuitive decision. Walking through the park I encountered a variety of eucalyptus trees. The trees which finally found their way into my archive book spoke to me through their striking feature such as their gigantic scope, height or their unique meander shaped lines on their bark. On the path of observing and documenting the parks of Porto, I was not only drawn solely by its scent of the Eucalyptus trees, but it was also the gigantic scope of the tree trunk which made myself get closer. The appearance of the bark of the tree is smooth and displays a wide variety of colour shades such as brown, greenish-yellow and red. I am aware that eucalyptus trees don't have the best

reputation in Portugal, as they are neophytes and are cultivated in masses to produce paper. Being torn apart between these two aspects - on one side the old eucalyptus trees in the parks, who had the capacity to grow into its enormous scope and on the other side the large land areas which are used to cultivated masses of eucalyptus trees for the paper industry - I created my art work based on this contradiction.

Eucalyptus Diptych Series

This haptic and visual component gave me my first idea for my artistic practice. With black and blue carbon paper I applied the frottage rubbing technique on the tree's bark and the wax and coal of the paper left the rectangular shape with the A4 dimension of the paper on the bark. By rubbing two carbon paper sheets onto the bark next to each other the shape of a diptych was the result. (*Fig. 16*). First, I took a photograph of the tree and saved its location using its coordinates. Then I measured their scope, always one meter above the ground, to achieve comparable results. Lastly, I would apply the frottage technique using vegetable paper and thin academic paper (*Fig. 17- 21*). Those trees, which had a particularly beautiful bark drawing, I archived its featured by rubbing two sheets of black or blue carbon paper next to each other on the bark. Applying those artistic methods, I would not only have the information of its bark sample on the carbon paper, but the wax and the coal of the carbon paper would also leave a diptych shape of two blue or two black rectangular squares behind (*Fig. 22- 24*). To duplicate the tree diptych frottages I choose the technique of intaglio printmaking. Therefore, I applied soft ground on prepared zinc plates and printed the carbon paper with high pressure of a printing press onto the zinc plate (*Fig. 25*). Through this process the carbon sheet released its information onto the soft ground and very tender lines appeared on the plate. Afterwards the zinc plate went to an etching bath for not more than four minutes to etch out the surface. As a result, the negative bark drawing appeared, almost invisible, onto the metal plate. The process of printing the plate onto paper was very time consuming, as it required sensitive handling of the ink. Using this technique of multiplying the information of the tree I recreated and imitated the surfaces of nature. The goal of this gathering of information was to create a data bank in form of a book to bring awareness to the mass cultivation of eucalyptus trees and the environmental damage that comes along with it. The bigger artistic vision that lies within this documentation indwells the imagination and hope that one day the mass eucalyptus cultivation will be contained, and the land will be reforested to its natural and native state. This way the only hypothetical possibility to encounter the species will be through a book which contains the visual and natural science information of the eucalyptus tree.⁶ The scientific method to gather information intertwined with the artistic practice. The use of the navigation system combined with the photograph, is a methodology which former artists practiced when the satellite-supported navigation system was introduced. In 1973 the transmission, positioning and use of the satellites in space for surveying purposes began. In 1995 it has been made publicly accessible worldwide - since then every vehicle, including every camera, has been able to determine its journey and recording position with centimetre precision using extrapolation algorithms (Sachsse 2010, p.164-167). The use of the digital image recording paralleled with the coordinates became an attractive creative method for artists. One of the supposedly first ones who applied the scientific tool as an artistic output, were the artists Michael Ruetz and Michael Schuster. Their work stands for the replacement of the image by means of photography, from the fixation of time and space in the act of photography that has been proclaimed since the invention (Sachsse 2010, p.164-167). This methodology inspired me to apply the combination of photography with coordinates. With this proceeding everyone can locate the trees on a map and can find its way to them, either digital or analogue. With this action the location

⁶ The final work can be found in the Catalogue.

of the tree will always be saved. This way the data of the trees will always remain and stored in an archive which could survive its existence. The aim was to take as much information as possible from the species without rebuilding the actual shape of the tree. By collecting the data of the tree into a book the tree gets a memorial character. The book is displayed open on a wooden bench in the middle of the room, which is lightened by a low-hanging lightbulb. The open pages are only recognizable in detail if the viewer is kneeling to the bench, like doing a prayer. The bench is surrounded by a cycle of a thin string. The cycle represents the actual scope of the tree which is displayed in the book. The reason why the tree is displayed like this, is because it describes the accurate way of how our earth is being abused by us. In the end, all what is left of the tree is a body of data.



Fig. 16.: Process images of the making of the *Eucalyptus Diptych Series*, frottage on carbon paper, 29,7 cm x 42,0 cm, 2021, Parque de São Roque, Porto.



Fig. 17.: Process images of the making of the *Eucalyptus Diptych Series*, 2021, Parque das Águas, Porto.



Fig. 18.: Process images of the making of the *Eucalyptus frottages series*, 2021, Parque das Águas, Porto.



Fig. 19.: Process images of the making of the *Eucalyptus frottages series*, 2021, Parque das Águas, Porto.



Fig. 20.: Process images of the *Eucalyptus Diptych Series* ($41^{\circ}9'30''N$ $8^{\circ}36'2''W$), 2021, graphite frottage with vegetable paper, 29,7 cm x 42,0 cm, Parque de São Roque, Porto.



Fig. 21.: Process images of the *Eucalyptus Diptych Series* ($41^{\circ}9'30''N$ $8^{\circ}36'2''W$), 2021, graphite frottage with vegetable paper, 29,7 cm x 42,0 cm, Parque de São Roque, Porto.

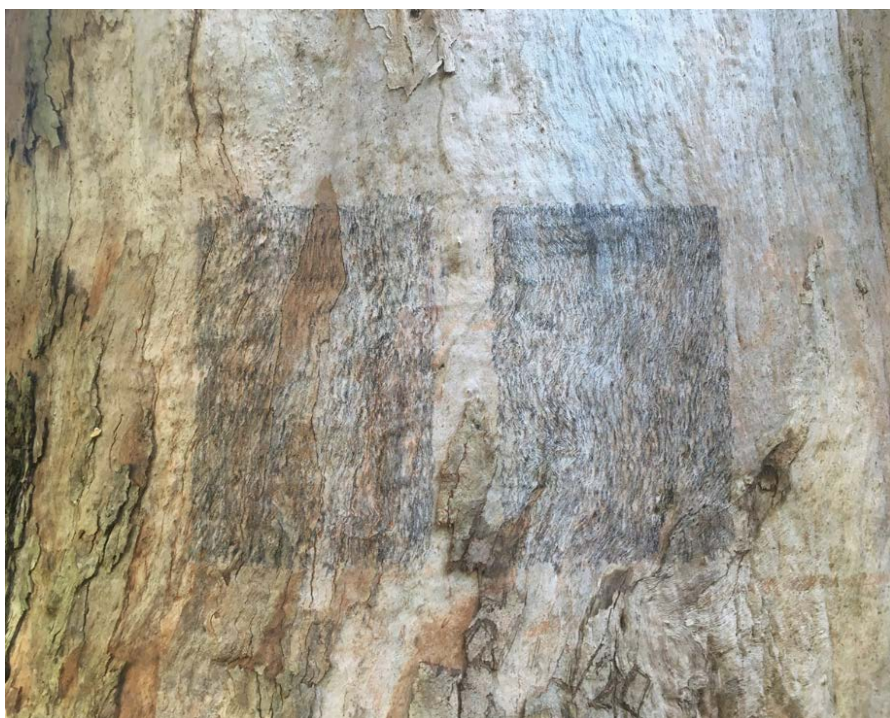


Fig. 22.: Process images of the *Eucalyptus Diptych Series* (41°9'30''N 8°36'2''W), 2021, graphite frottage with carbon paper, 29,7 cm x 42,0 cm, Parque de São Roque, Porto.



Fig. 23.: Process images of the *Eucalyptus Diptych Series*, 2021, pencil on paper, 29,7 cm x 42,0 cm, Parque das Águas, Porto.



Fig. 24.: Process images of the making of the *Eucalyptus Diptych Series*, 2021, Parque de São Roque, Porto.



Fig. 25.: *Eucalyptus Diptych Series*, 2021, soft ground etching on paper, 29,7 cm x 21,0 cm, Porto.

Without Hydrosphere

The work *Without Hydrosphere*, 2021 (Fig. 26 – 28) is an art installation which is addressing the similar issue as the work *Eucalyptus Diptych Series*. It is a reference to the environmental state and the impact humans are having on it. The key material of the art work is glass. Glass is made out of sand (silicon dioxide, or SiO_2), limestone (calcium carbonate, or CaCO_3), and sodium carbonate (Na_2CO_3) (Augustyn, 2023). As sand needs water to be created, I used glass as a symbolic representation of water and its inhabitants. The concept of the work *Without Hydrosphere* was to create a pieces of glass elements with the shape of sea oysters which are hanging inside fishing nets. The fishing nets are a reference to the local fishing industry in Portugal. The fishing nets are hung up parallel to the walls with fishing hooks. The installation is raising the question of the consequences of water overconsumption and overfishing.

To produce the glass oysters, the glass was, firstly, cut out from a window glass into an several oval shapes, to achieve the form of an oyster. Secondly, the glass pieces were placed on top of a mould. This mould was produced by applying the slumping technic by combining silica and plaster together (Fig. 26). To make the glass pieces, the mould with the glass was put inside the kiln for 8 hours at a temperature of 830 degrees. (Fig. 27) This process was repeated three times till I had an amount of 12 glass oyster shells (Fig. 28).



Fig. 26.: Process image of plaster and silica mould, 44,5 x 87 x 4- 13 cm.



Fig. 27.: Process images as the glass is put out of the kiln, 2021, *Faculade de Belas Artes do Universidade do Porto*.



Fig. 28.: Process images of the glass oysters, the nets and the silica and plaster mould, 2021.

3.2 Second part: Conserving Moments of Caretaking and Togetherness

After completing the aim of the beginning of my artistic practice I was still left with the question of how to conserve the natural environment and protect it from its anthropogenic influences. This is why in the second part of my artistic process my focus shifted from the method of conserving and caring for nature into how to conserve a moment of caring and connection between humans. My starting point began with the question of how to care and connect with other individuals. Thriven by this question I tried to find ways to capture as much information of caring and connection as possible. How do we remember and conserve what surrounds us? Experiencing our surroundings with the entirety of our senses generates a memory. Therefore, creating a sensorial experience became the main objective of the second part of my work. The aim of my work is motivated by creating scores and tools for a moment of caring and thereby create a moment of togetherness. With my work I want to create interactive experiences which reconnects us to our psychological human needs of a bonding (Grawe, 2000, pp.395- 411) to feel more connected. Through these experiences I want to generate a collective memory by using the entirety of our senses. Another essential part of my work is the 'hierarchy of needs' theory by the American psychologist Abraham Maslow (1908-1970). His theory is represented as a pyramid, with the more basic needs at the bottom. The needs are divided into the term's physiological needs, safety, belonging and love, social needs, esteem, self-actualization and transcendence. These terms describe the patterns through which human needs are generally motivated by. According to his theory, this means, that to arise to the next stage, the prior stage must be satisfied by the individual. The levels contain a certain amount of internal sensation that must be met in order to achieve a state of fulfilment (Maslow, 2008, pp.62-72).

For my research I was especially focusing in combining the psychological needs of belonging by the theory of Grawe⁷, with the theory by Abraham Maslow about the physiological needs. According to Maslow's theory, humans must first satisfy their physiological needs to pursue a higher level of intrinsic satisfaction. The physiological need includes: clean air, clean water, food, urination, excretion, heat, clothes, shelter and sleep. Moreover, the works by the artist Rebecca Horn (1944) gave me an impulse to create body tools. As the artist herself explored her body in relation to the room/space and therefore created body prothesis, as she calls them (Tacke, 2011, pp.53)⁸ Adding my main objectives together with my aim I created objects for the body which combine the psychological needs with our basic physiological needs. The aim was to create tools for the body which can be used simulations with another person to satisfy the need of belonging and at the same time satisfy the physiological need of eating. With these tools I aspired to create an interactive sensorial sensation which not only creates a moment of sharing but also leaves a trace of this moment and generates an object of memory. I wanted to recreate a tool which we are familiar with in our daily life but change its meaning by transferring its use.

⁷ I wrote about the theory of Grawe in more detail in the first chapter of my thesis.

⁸ In the second chapter of my thesis I write in more depth about Rebecca Horns work.

Pair Pieces Series

The first artistic series I created has the title *Pair Pieces Series*, 2021. It contains a selection of four small sculptural works, which are a double wooden spoon, a double drinking glass, a double metal spoon and double metal stairs. Each of them represents the need for togetherness and the desire of sharing a meal together. They are an invitation for an interactive experience. But they also work as a sculptural work on their own, without needing the interaction with people. To create this works I applied a variety of artistic technologies. For the double wooden spoon, I learned the technique of wood turning with bay leaf wood which grew on the campus of the *Faculade de Belas Artes da Universidade do Porto* (Fig. 29) For the double glass, the technique of glassblowing was applied. The double glass was made during the glass blowing workshop at *Marinha Grande, Aveiro*. The double metal spoon, the technique of metal welding was used. It was made at the metal workshop at the *Faculade de Belas Artes da Universidade do Porto*. And for the double metal stair, the method of metal casting was applied. The metal stairs were created during the metal casting workshop at the *Faculade de Belas Artes da Universidade do Porto* (Fig. 30). Using a variation of diverse technics helped me to work with several different sculptural technologies and understand how they are used depending on the artistic material. The *Pair Pieces Series* are the starting point of the second part of my artistic research. As they can be understood as a symbolic and metaphorical representation for my artistic aim.



Fig. 29.: Process images of wood turning with bay leaf wood, 2022, *Faculdade de Belas Artes da Universidade do Porto*.

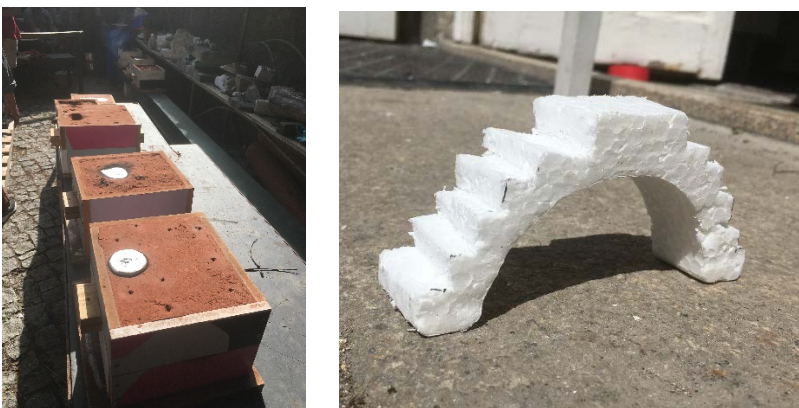


Fig. 30.: Process images of metal casting, 2022, *Faculdade de Belas Artes da Universidade do Porto*.

I ate your weight in cherry seeds (Kirschkernkörper)

After finalizing all pieces of the *Pair Pieces Series*, I had the desire to create an interactive experience, where I again, would apply the theories of Grawe and Maslow. For the start of the interactive experiences the cherries became the inspiration and initiation for my interactive performance *I ate your weight in cherry seeds (Kirschkernkörper)*, 2022. In which the cherries became the main act. The aim of this work is to implement the idea of fulfilment of the human need of attachment with the need of eating. However, as the work should not merely serve as a symbolic representation, but should implement interaction, I created a score. With this score the participants are instructed on how to use the piece. The cherries are the main material for the work. I selected the cherries for this performance because the cherry fruit always comes with a pair (*Fig. 31*). Due to this, I find that the cherry fruit is a delightful food to share together. The aim is that the participants are instructed to collectively eat the cherries together and share a moment of togetherness. Meanwhile the seeds are collected, which afterwards serve as a leftover memory of the experience. These seeds can be afterwards put inside a bag and can be heated inside an oven. The idea is to heat yourself up with the seeds you shared with others, to recreate a feeling of warmth and togetherness.

Score:

eat cherries with others

collect the seeds of the cherries

heat up the seeds that you collected

warm yourself with the seeds of the cherries you shared with others

The idea of creating an instruction for my piece came to me after dealing with the work of Yoko Ono and the Fluxus movement. Scores, instruction, happenings and game are a key element of their work.⁹ The specific references which influenced me for the work *I ate your weight in cherry seeds (Kirschkernkörper)*, are *Grapefruit* (1964) by Yoko Ono and the texts ‘*Order! Conceptual Art’s Imperatives*’ (2005) by Mike Sperlinger and ‘*Do It. Volume I.*’ (2004) by Hans Obrist. Obrist writes in his text ‘*Order! Conceptual Art’s Imperatives*’ about Instructions which were proliferated during the years of Fluxus and early conceptualism. These were incredibly varied and they served as a kind of short version to foreground authority. (Sperlinger 2004, pp.7). The notion of Instruction therefore is at least as old as the conceptual art itself. He states that part of conceptual art is its performative playfulness and assumed authority. In this context Yoko Ono probably explored the variety what an instruction might inhabit more than any other artist. The presence of poetry in her work and the injunction to perform the impossible and imagination are beautiful features of her work (Sperlinger 2004, pp.8). Her work invites to unlimited dreaming. I especially resonate with this quote in her Interview about her book *Grapefruit*:

⁹ In the second chapter, I wrote in more detail about this movement and the work of Yoko Ono.

“(...) challenge to create a sensory experience isolated from other sensory experiences, which is something rare in daily life. At this point, what art can offer (...) is an absence of complexity, a vacuum through which you are led to a state of complete relaxation of mind (...).”

(Ono, 1966, *To the Wesleyan People*, pp.10)

Furthermore, I found great resources in instructions by other artists in the book *Do it!* by Obrist. *Do it!* is a series of publications that bring together instructions by artists. The *Do it!* instructions need to be followed by strict rules. Such as: everyday actions and materials serve as the starting point for performances. The realization occurs as an activity in time and space. The activity is imprecise and can be located somewhere between permutation and negotiation. The meanings of the act have various interpretations. (Obrist 2004, pp.13). I especially enjoy the idea that the audience are also asked to do the work of completing the performance and disallow the passive viewership. The viewers needed to ‘work’ for their art. By doing so the lines between traditional boundaries and work are blurred. The artists were becoming service providers as opposed to object makers. Historically, the artist was the inventor and the fabricator. Now, high value is focused on mental labour, which allows the artist to no longer be involved in the fabrication of the object (post-studio art). (Obrist 2004, pp.156). This shifted the artists to engage in performative acts and the exploration of the process. (Obrist 2004, pp.168). I appreciate the idea that the instructions work like a formula in the imperative mode and that the recipient is included as a participant in the work.

The performance *I ate your weight in cherryseeds (Kirschkernkörper)* was performed in two occasions. Once on the 2nd of June at the *Faculdade de Belas Artes da Universidade do Porto* at the *Arena Art Space* event as part of the collective performances *Cassiopeia* with the artists Sofia Rocha, Iza Szedel, Angelika Czubasiewicz, Lina Zegrani-Monro and me. And a second time in a private setting at the campus of the *Faculdade de Belas Artes do Porto* (Fig. 32). In both occasions it became a sharing experience with everyone involved. Furthermore, I started to put cherries in the kitchen and collect the seeds from everyone who was eating from it. This led me to a simple but meaningful collection of seeds which I will always remind me of a special moment of eating together.



Fig. 31.: A pair of cherries, 2022, Porto.

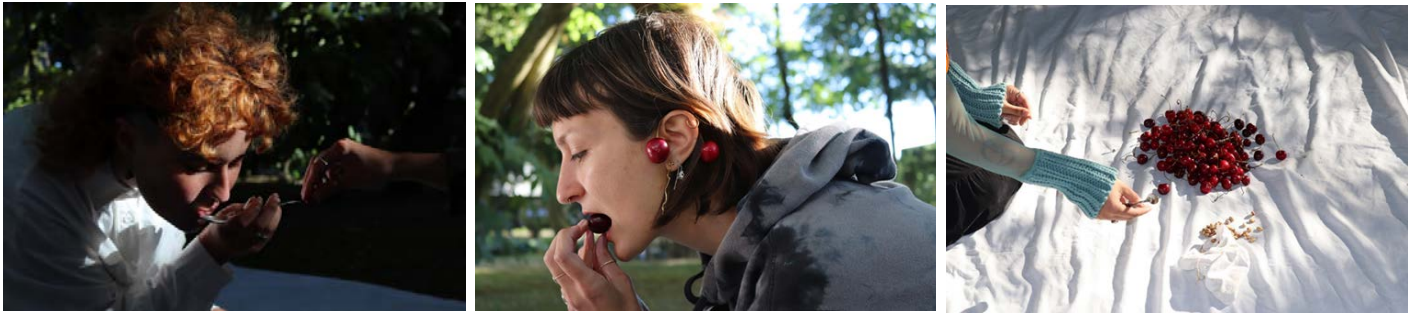


Fig. 32.: Documentation of the work *I ate your weight in cherry seeds* (*Kirschkernkörper*), 2022, performance, 0'12'', Porto.

If you fall, I fall

The work *If you fall, I fall* (*gentle dependency*), is, again, based on the theory of the psychologist Klaus Grawe, and his theory of attachment and autonomy. With this textile work I explored the duality and dependency between platonic friendships. I sewed these two costumes in black and white colour in reference to the yin and yang structure (Fig. 33) The bottom of these dresses is attached together with metal hooks. The costume simultaneously is referring to the psychological need of belonging and physical touch and the physiological need of having clothes to wear. This piece is made for an interactive experience. By wearing these costumes, the participants need to face each other and therefore are obligated to have a conversation on how they move together through the space.



Fig. 33.: Process images of selecting the fabric and putting the pieces together, 2022, *University of Applied Arts*, Vienna.

Body tools for common use

The work *body tools for common use*, 2023, are everyday objects applied directly to the body (cutlery, toothbrush, tweezers, nail scissors, etc.). By duplicating the tools, they become auxiliaries for an opponent. The attached instructions for use indicate how the interaction with the counterpart and the tools is to be carried out. The objects were welded together at the metal workshop at the *University of Applied Arts*, Vienna (Fig. 34). The work is about communication, collaboration and overcoming loneliness in our everyday life. Moreover, the

work is another time, based on the theory of the psychologists Grawe and Maslow. The tools are referencing Grawe's theory about the human need of bonding and referencing Maslow with his theory of the physiological need of eating. Based on these two theories I combined them together and created these double tools which are simultaneously fulfilling the physiological need of eating and the psychological need of bonding.¹⁰



Fig. 34.: Process images of welding the metal pieces together, 2023, *University of Applied Arts, Vienna*.

Solve e coagula, An Expanded Eating Experience

For this work I wanted to expand the idea of an interactive togetherness and wrote a score for a three-course menu. The score implicates following instruction: one participant needs to choose a starter which reminds of their past, a main course which brings them into their present and a dessert which brings them into their future. The menu is then prepared together. For the eating scenario the double cutlery of the *body tools for common use* are used. These tools already indicate a behaviour and posture for the participants. As the tools can only be

¹⁰ The final works can be found in the catalogue.

used simultaneously the participants are forced to communicate about how the eating experience is taking place. For example, each of them needs to communicate how much and which food they want to have on their fork. This behaviour obligates them to be conscious and aware about their food intake. This performative action is inspired by the work *The Artist is Present* (2010), by the Artist and Performer Marina Abramovic. The instruction for this work was to sit opposite to each other and look each other in the eyes. Through this implementation she wanted to make her presence perceptible and make the public aware of the moment. (Meier, 2008, pp. 17). In her performance no objects should be between the artist and the audience. Abramovic sees a necessity of creating, in her work, a moment of time and space. (Meier, 2008, pp.19). Inspired by this performative work I implemented the instruction, that the participants need to look into each other's eyes while eating together. The sculptural works *body tools for common use* became therefore an invitation for an interactive experience. I began to make performative experience with other artists by using these tools. The name of the performative eating experience has the title *solve e coagula* which is translated from Latin into 'bonding and dissolving', which again is a reference to the human need of attachment and autonomy. The first *Expanded Eating Experience* took place in Katowice, Poland in 2023 with the artist Angelika who was my guest and co-performer. She chose the ingredients for her menu, which we prepared and ate together (Fig. 35) Through participating in these performances, I learned that each experience is different depending on the opponent, the time and the location. This work makes it evident for me, that human experiences and interactions are always shaped by each moment in time and therefore cannot be repeated. By the state of this thesis the performance was repeated on three more occasions with the artists Arina and Sofie. This work made me understand the fragility and strength in human interaction and our need for belonging. Food itself is such a nourishing source of energy. We are all depending on it. But as our environment is suffering through anthropological influences quality nutritious food becomes a desirable resource. This is why it is necessary that we learn how to equally share, care and communicate our needs with our opposite.¹¹

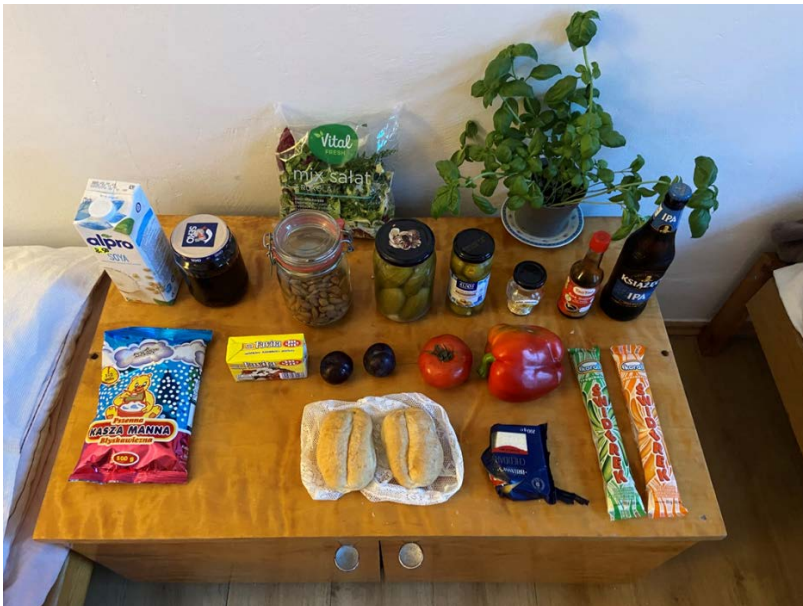


Fig. 35.: Documentation of *solve e coagula*, *Expanded Eating Experience* #1 with Angelika Czubasiewicz, 2023, food from her past, her present and her future, Katowice, Poland.

¹¹ The final works can be found in the catalogue.

Conclusion

The main motivation to delve into the artistic practice came from a place of yearning to conserve our natural environment, to document it and to archive it. Due to the global pandemic in the beginning of 2020, the awareness and appreciation of the earth's finite resources in the natural environment became much more evident on an individual level. Being enclosed in our homes and isolated from social contacts my sensibility raised towards the basic and essential needs of our own human psyche and body. Somehow, being restrained from the overstimulation of our daily routine and hectic social life, made me look inwards and made me aware towards my personal essential needs. During the pandemic I cultivated a daily routine of taking a walk into an enclosed natural environment; into parks or a forest. Surrounded by this natural environment I started to document and archive natural information by using various artistic techniques, mostly printmaking and photography. Due to the awareness and responsibility towards the destruction of our natural habitat, I felt the need to somehow archive natural information. But not until less than a year of following this practice I realized that archiving some bits of natural information didn't had the impact of spreading awareness towards this topic. Moreover, I felt overwhelmed and didn't feel fulfilled with my aim of conserving nature by merely documenting it. During the same period of time I read the book: 'Who we are. How we perceive, feel and love' by the German psychologist Stephanie Stahl. Even though, the topic of climate change and human psychology don't seem to be related in first sight, the book gave me a structured insight inwards our human psyche and psychological needs. Moreover, the author states in the end of the book, that almost all the problems we have in this world, such as social injustice, racism, sexism, violence, wars, the climate catastrophe are due to a lack of self-reflection of those responsible. The world lacks wisdom of self-reflection and compassion towards our social relationships. (Stahl, 2022, pp.357) Simultaneously, while reading this book, I was mostly alone in my apartment in Porto, feeling isolated and in need for social exchange. In regard to reading about this theory and my personal state, I developed simple small tools which could be applied for personal interactions. In the beginning, the tools served merely as an object which represented the idea of social interactions. But researching more about the artistic practice of performative art, I understood the impact which renowned performance artists, such as Yoko Ono and Marina Abramovic, Rebecca Horn, have on their audience. As performance art is always intertwined with the zeitgeist, it has the capacity to directly impact and question social relevant topics. In seeking to understand human relations and the need to transform social interactions, food became the main focus of my work. As food is our first and main resource which we rely on, it became a central aspect of my practice. Moreover, food is a highly political resource, due to unequally distribution, even more so concerning the climate crisis. Considering all those aspects, my aim was to create a work which had a social impact by using small and simple instructions while not making use of plenty of artistic material. During my work I developed the aspiration that the work should be ephemeral, immaterial and transported through ideas, scores and memory. Thereby, the Fluxus Movement gave me great inspiration. As the Fluxus Movement merely was driven by ideas, imagination and happenings. The social interaction and blurring the borders between audience and artists was a playful approach to question the hierarchy of artistic creation. Making use of all the theoretical and artistic research, while developing my own artistic tools, and applying them with other artist, I noticed how it fulfilled my own need for interpersonal exchange. Somehow, the art pieces themselves guided me into the realm of ephemerality of performative art. In conclusion, my artistic practice in the beginning of 2020, lead me towards multiple different artistic technologies, making use of several divers' materials, not being aware that I would finally end my artistic research by applying small, ephemeral art pieces for shared eating experiences. These artistic tools serve the aim of generating an inspirational practice which lead to a new approach for social caretaking and connections.

Catalogue



livro de oficina of an Eucalyptus Diptych, 2021, livro de oficina on wooden bench, 120 cm x 140 cm x 140 cm, Graz, Austria.



Without Hydrosphere, 2021, cotton yarn, glass, metal hooks, variable in dimensions, Porto.



Pair Pieces Series, 2022, turned bay leaf wood, soldered metal spoon, blown glass, casted metal staircase, Porto.





body tools for common use, cotton roll case with 8 metal objects, 2 wooden objects, 1 glass object, 1 waxed nylon thread, instruction manual, 46.5 x 29 x 0.7 cm, 2023.



If you fall, I fall (gentle dependency), 2023, jersey fabric, cotton thread, metal hooks, 170 x 47 cm, Katowice, Poland.



solve e coagula, Expanded Eating Experience #1-3 with Angelika Czubasiewicz, Arina Nekliudova., Ana Dumitrascu, 2023, Video- Stills., variable in time, Poland/Vienna/Bulgaria.



solve e coagula, Expanded Eating Experience #4-7 with Lin Rabia Wolf, Salphinah Savin, Clara Krieger, 2023, Video- Stills, variable in time, Vienna



solve e coagula, Expanded Eating Experience #3 with Arina Nekliudova, 2023, Video- Stills, 0'21'', University of Applied Arts, Vienna.



Bonding and Dissolving, Expanded Eating Experience Nr. 8 with Sofia Rocha, Performance, 0'7''25 min, Porto, 2023.

Video-Link: http://www.zt-mudri.at/i01/intern/EEE_Sofie.mp4



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Appendix

The thirteen Shaolin Principles

Shaolin, is the name of a small village in central China. More than 1500 year ago, a Chinese monk founded a monastery there. Over this period of time, the monks developed the art of Shaolin Kung-Fu. In the monastery they learnt about the art of fighting, to feel their body and to understand how to use it. It is their theory, thoughts have the power to either give the body energy or take energy from it. Thoughts have the strength to change the environment. Their philosophy is based on following thirteen life principles (Moestl, 2008, pp.7):

The first Shaolin principle is teaching to learn how to stand. This practice highlights the importance of the here and now and to be aware of the ephemerality. The moment is a precious part of our existence. (Moestl, 2008, pp.21) Breathing is one of the key exercises to enter the here and now. The Shaolin principle teaches us, that we cannot capture the moment. It does not matter what happens in the moment, but it does matter what we make out of it. The principle of the moment teaches us to do everything we want to do in the moment or to consciously waive. (Moestl, 2008, pp.29)

The second principle is the principle of mindfulness. Being mindful is being cautious. The path to mindfulness starts there were you begin to feel yourself. (Moestl, 2008, pp.38) Being mindful brings ease. The Shaolin principle teaches us that nothing is self-evident. We should welcome everything as special. Mindfulness brings deep insight and does not judge. It does not question how things are, but witness them as they are. In China the practice of mindfulness is embedded in the everyday life. The practice of non-judgement teaches us to be aware of our perception and our assessment. Approach people mindfully. Being attentive teaches us to be amazed, and through being amazed excitement arises. This mindful connectedness makes us invincible. (Moestl, 2008, pp. 47)

The third principle, is the principle of determination. Learn to do things all the way, or let it be. To want things without being determinate is a heavy burden. The principle of determination asks us to act instead of react. Ask yourself; what can I do now? (Moestl, 2008, pp. 57) This Shaolin principle teaches us, that the ones who act determine the course of the world and the lives of others. (Moestl, 2008, pp. 68)

The forth principle, it the principle of not wanting to possess. Desire makes you vulnerable, predictable and recoverable. The Asian lifestyle wants to free from the idea that you can possess anything. Greet makes faint. If you cannot take something, even the strongest opponent gets no power over you. (Moestl, 2008, pp. 76) The Shaolin principle teaches us that not wanting to possess does not mean giving up things. It is a change of will. It is about accepting things as they are. It means accepting the coming and the going. (Moestl, 2008, pp. P.82)

The fifth principle, is the principle of serenity. It teaches us that even deliberate inaction can be an effective means of defending ourselves. If we use it with the right determination. (Moestl, 2008, pp.91) another manifestation of nonchalance is anticipatory obedience, which can often get people into great trouble. (Moestl, 2008, pp.96) If you have your fear of your opponent under control, you have already won half the battle. (Moestl, 2008, pp.97) Provoke your opponent and he will betray himself and his intentions. Take away his composure and he will do what he does not want to do. It is better to fight without anger. (Moestl, 2008, pp.100) When you are angry you have no control over the situation and the consequences of your actions. You are responsible for how you feel. (Moestl, 2008, pp.102)

The sixth principle, is the principle of slowness. Life has become faster in pace. Our age is characterized by speed. Everything should happen quickly. Even our communication. In our society, slowness is seen as a shortcoming. Rest is often equated with laziness. The Shaolin principle teaches us that speed leads to mistakes. (Moestl, 2008, pp.111) Slowness is a principle of nature. Evolution does not make changes every hour. Good things take time. (Moestl, 2008, pp.113) To do a thing quickly you must learn to do it slowly. You must force yourself to slow down again and again. The Shaolin principle teaches us that slowness and calmness are very powerful weapons.

The seventh principle, is the principle of imitation. Although humankind is called the crown of creation, he is inferior to animals in most abilities. His ability is the conscious imitation. Nature, as the Greek philosopher Aristotle has said, always creates the best of what is possible. (Moestl, 2008, pp.126) A child learns by imitating the behaviour of the reference persons. (Moestl, 2008, pp.127) The need for imitation is deeply rooted in us.

The eighth principle, is the principle of opportunity. When life deems the time is right, it offers us the opportunity to realize our desires. He who has his gaze fixed only on his plan will not perceive the many possibilities. He knows no other time than the one determined by himself. (Moestl, 2008, pp.134) He who acts according to the principle of opportunity will make every effort to be able to act at any time when the right moment comes. The principle of opportunity is about patience. (Moestl, 2008, pp.150).

The ninth principle, is the principle of yielding. Inflexibility and power will not get you far; suppleness and tenderness will get you everywhere. The Shaolin principle teaches us that soft defeats is hard. Yielding is a form of defence and at the same time an attack that the opponent wields against himself. (Moestl, 2008, pp.171)

The tenth principle, is the principle of superiority. Superiority is the art of winning without a fight superiority is created in the mind. Superiority is winning the fight before you even enter the battlefield. (Moestl, 2008, pp.186) A supposedly weak fighter can defeat a strong opponent if he faces him without fear. True superiority is in the mind. (Moestl, 2008, pp.186) The truly superior does not have to fight to win.

The eleventh principle, is the principle of letting go. The eleventh principle teaches us to start from scratch in every situation. It teaches us to separate ourselves from supposed tried and tested procedures and from ready-made solutions (Moestl, 2008, pp.196) The world is mastered by those who let go. Letting go of what you cannot change. When you let go, everything happens by itself.

The twelfth principle, is the principle of self-knowledge. The shaolin principle teaches us that no one can judge us and no one can recognize us except ourselves. We are what we make ourselves to be. We stand where we put ourselves. Criticism is an important part of knowing ourselves better. (Moestl, 2008, pp.221) No one but ourselves can take responsibility for our actions. (Moestl, 2008, pp.222)

The thirteenth principle, is the principle of togetherness. It is the principle of leadership, presupposes the ability to lead oneself. Whoever wants to lead others must first be able to lead himself. He who wants to know others must first know himself. (Moestl, 2008, pp.228) Decide consciously, ignore influence, learn to fail, use intuition, never look back, be present, gain assertiveness. Accept that the only constant in life is change. Empty your mind, be mindful of yourself, overcome fear of loss, conserve your energy, meet at eye level, endure confrontation, give way to pressure, keep humility, and lastly go your way (Moestl, 2008, pp.228).