QUEERING PERFORMATIVITY:

THROUGH THE WORKS OF ANDY WARHOL AND PERFORMANCE ART

by

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I never fall apart, because I never fall together.

Andy Warhol
The Philosophy of Andy Warhol: From A to B and Back again

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ABSTRACT

This thesis discusses how gender identity is (des)constructed through corporeal performances and how it is possible to subvert binary gender norms. Departing from queer conceptions that destabilize the category of the subject as fixed, I rely on post-structuralist theories, in particular Judith Butler and Michael Foucault, both of whom have been influential in queer theory. In order to argue for possible ways to subvert normativity, I explore two case studies – Andy Warhol and performance artists, in which the corporeal performance of the artist's body - the deviant body - is located outside of the mainstream production of art. I combine one of Foucault's theories of power relations with Butler's framework on performativity and performance to open up potential routes of empowering the sexually deviant body.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Departing from the attempt to comprehend the reemergence of the body as a platform for conveying meaning in contemporary art, justly, in an era of latent disembodiment in cyberspaces, militarization and terrorist actions[1] - where the body has apparently lost its values; since 1990's many artists have been using bodies as a medium to inscribe and, or renegotiate subjectivity. This is perhaps unsurprising given how technological disembodiment in cyberspace, militarization, and terrorism, for instance, have undermined traditional ideas about corporeality. These political shifts coincide with post-structural, postmodern, and feminist theoretical challenges to embodiment and subjectivity over the past fifty years. Consequently, the body can no longer be read as merely an (unproblematic) platform or surface for conveying meaning in contemporary art.

The aim of this thesis is to show how performances of the body are connected to queer conceptions and practices of arts. I look particularly at corporeal performances as they are located on the margins - outside of the mainstream center of production - in order to explain how these performances subvert sexual gender norms. The choice of investigating bodily performances Art plays an important role in the process of understanding, criticizing and representing social relations, s Howard Morphy explains: "Art is associated almost equally with the two senses of the world culture - culture as a way of life or body of ideas and knowledge, and culture as the

[1] The disembodiment in military and terrorist actions is affected by the discourse of devaluation of the body as the carrier of the human – separates the human sphere from the body sphere. The deaths in terror wars are not consider as such, but causalities of the necessary process of transition in which the war is justified.

metaphysical essence of society, incorporating standards by which the finest products of society are judged" (2006:1,2).

I support my argument by bringing in two case studies for analysis: Andy Warhol's artworks performances from various artists whose works were exhibited and enacted at alternative venues, outside of the official museums and art institutions, during the 1960's and 1970's. Queer theory, performance art, and Warhol's oeuvre are shaped by the idea of bodily performance; specifically, I will examine the way in which all of these intellectual and creative engagements address subjectivity as fundamentally unstable and how they question social / power relations and societal ideas about normativity.

I will give a short exposition of queer theory in order to highlight queer conceptions that are relevant for this thesis. I rely mostly on Nikki Sullivan's analysis, presented in her book *A Critical Introduction to Queer Theory*. Rather than defining queer, since it has been (ab)used – as a pejorative term for homosexuality, madness, and also denoting difference in a positive way[2] - Sullivan's intention is to provide an understanding of the use of "queer theory and the extensive range of ways in which notions of sexuality and gender impact – at times implicitly – on everyday life" (2003:vi). Sullivan's refusal to address queer within a narrow definition of sexual practices of same-sex relation could be understood through a queer project that rebels against norms, deconstructing not only sexuality as natural and given, but also assuming that sexuality takes precedence over other aspects of identity, including race, class, location and age. Although Sullivan approaches queer theory in a broader sense claiming that the same-sex desire is one of the aspects concerning sexuality that is perceived outside of "normal", it is relevant to note here that the very idea of being outside of "normal", in which queer theory is embedded, came from the

segregation of homosexuality. Ambiguously and simultaneously it imposes on homosexuals “compulsory and forbidden disclosure” (Kosofsky-Sedgwick, 1990: 70).

Further, queer theory aligned with post-structuralism, questions identity as unified, stable and fixed. Consequently, the dichotomy heterosexuality / homosexuality, which reinforces rather than contests normativity, is left behind. “[It] does not simply develop new labels for old boxes, but rather carries with it the promise of new ways of thinking and acting politically” (Duggan, quoted in Sullivan, 2003: 43). For instance, Cathy Cohen challenges queer theorists that leave out heterosexual women on welfare, single mothers and/or women of colour from their account, [women who], whilst being heterosexual, do not fit the ideal image of heterosexual femininity [norms]” (ibid: 49).

“The new way of thinking and acting” suggested by Lisa Duggan – that will be shown in the case studies – is how to use parody, to twist, to play with the norms, the law, and the original. Moreover, Janet J. Jakobsen suggests a “[re]think of queer as a verb (a set of actions), rather than a noun (an identity, or even a nameable positionality formed in and through the practice of particular action)” (ibid, 50). Although, I am aware of the dilemma produced by queer identity as a way to build a community and its politics, I have chosen to leave this discussion out of the study.

The notion of queer for the sake of the study will be based on the following statement by David Halperin: “Whatever is at odds with the normal, the legitimate, the dominant. There is noting in particular to which it necessarily refers, it is an identity without an essence” (quoted in Sullivan, 2003: 43). What I will argue for is the presence of “queer” as an identity, rather than only a sexual identity. Sexuality is neither stable, nor it is the only characteristic that shapes our identity - in fact our fluid and unstable identity is shaped by temporary performances and power relations. In

2 P.G. Wadehouse (1919), Robert Ownen (1928) and Brendan Behan (1958) – all quoted in Sullivan 2003: preface v, vi)

this thesis I will mainly refer to the theories of Michael Foucault and Judith Butler – two queer theorists - for the political and philosophical understanding of queer that it has sketched up above.

In order to comprehend how power relations function in the process of constructing subjects, I will address Foucault (chapter 5). Although Foucault has provided poststructuralists and structuralists with different understandings of power: On the one hand he asserts that power is a result of institutional forces, in which there is "no ground for resistance or social change, [. . .] for making any evaluations and comparisons between practices and regimes" as his critics point out (Phelan, 1990:422). On the other hand, he argues that power is also a system of relations and not only a model of a single source of repression, as he explains in his book *The History of Sexuality* Vol. 1:

> Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet or rather consequently, this resistance is never in position of exteriority in relation to power [. . .]. The existence [of power] depends on a multiplicity of points of resistance: these play the role of adversary, target, support, or handle in power relations. These resistances are present everywhere in power network. Hence there is no single locus of great Refusal (1990: 95-96).

The ambiguity in Foucault's theories of power relations is neither a consequence of chance, nor does it mean that his concept of power has changed, but, rather that the economy of power is created within different positions: one does not eliminate the other; indeed they co-habit a matrix of relationships on different levels. However, what is interesting for the currant study is how power, primarily perceived as an institutional source – "a monarchic power" – can be subverted and located on what Foucault calls "points of resistance" (1990: 87, 95). Those points that defy the institutional power, which do not accept the norm, form the theoretical focus of this thesis.

Followed by a theoretical approach on subculture formation (chapter 4) and the concept of deviants (chapter 5), we will see how those "points of resistance" are

embodied through the two cases studies presented: The ways in which performance artists use their bodies as a medium, enduring the limits of the flesh and mind and overexposing themselves, as Marina Abramović's performance *Rhythm 0 (*1974) shows (chapter 7). This performance could be claimed to bring issues of woman's body objectification to light. Abramović in her work stayed passively for six hours, while an audience used her body as they wished. Later in an interview she declared: "I felt really violated" (Daneri, 2002:29). The other case study explores Andy Warhol's oeuvre and dispersonification – The removal of his bodily identity from his work and his desire "to be a machine" - can bring about agency for a homosexual artist in a homophobic art world (chapter 8).

The two case studies use different techniques in their modes of acting through (dis)embodiment: Warhol's intention to escape and deny his persona, and Abramović's mental and physical overexposure. In order to provide a better understanding of embodiment / disembodiment, two subcultures – cyberpunk culture, and body modification subculture - will be discuss. The former claim its subjectivity through "leaving the meat behind", as an attempt to dematerialize the body. The latter practices tattooing and piercing is as an attempt to bring agency through visibility (chapter 3). Although Warhol and other performance artists have an odd approach to dealing with their subjectivity though their bodies, both forms of performance are perceived as modes of resistance, questioning the "norm" and they succeed in their aim of subverting institutional power.

To conceptualize performance and the performativity of the body shaped by homogenic power and its relations, I will address Judith Butler's theoretical conception of the subject found in her books *Gender Trouble* (1990) and *Bodies that Matter* (1993), in which she claims that performativity is the pre-condition of the subject's existence (chapter 6). The performative process is seen to form an

individual identity rather than being the product of individual will or choice (1993: 24). As Timothy Sheie observers: “[For Butler] all gendered identity is performance, and specifically calls into question a dramatic performance’s capacity to subvert fixed gender categories” (Sheie, 1994:31). Taking Butler’s theory on performance and performativity, I will analyze the ways of subverting sex and gender assumptions as normal categories of human nature in the two case studies. The first case study concerns the use of the body in performance art as an instrument to shock and provoke, while during the second case study, we will see how Andy Warhol’s bodily attitude and artwork is used as strategy for escaping normativity.

CHAPTER 2

BRINGING THE BODY INTO FOCUS

A new trend among young contemporary artists has been the reemergence of the body in art through the recall of what Ruben Fowker calls the “art of the 70’s” in his article "Indie Art and the Seventies” (2006). “The intensity of the search for the legacy of the Seventies is evident in the many actions and events that are currently taking place”, as we will see later. The art of the 70’s was a range of interdisciplinary art movements such as Beat Art, Neo-dada, Happening, and performance art, and in fact started a decade earlier. Its main concern was its engagement in the social and political sphere, blurring the boundaries between art and life.

The use of the body in performance art had its golden age during the 1960’s and 1970’s, influenced by the effervescent political moments, such as the student movements in the USA, Germany, France, England, Brazil, Argentina and other countries. The students’ political interest and revolts contributed to the rising of a counterculture, in which the working class was configured at the heart of “popular struggle” against political conservatism and the military and sexual authority of the state (from the Vietnam War to the sexual revolution, which requested more freedom for women, gays and other minorities).

Although performance artists and Andy Warhol differ in their approach as mentioned, their impetus for new experiences in common with others, were opposite to the current modernism embedded in the Abstract Expressionism – the dominant aesthetic style at the time, in which meaning comes from the artist’s intense interior emotion disconnected from social (reality), as can be observed by the

reinterpretations of Jackson Pollack's *Action Painting*[3] allowing his instincts to direct his body's movement.

In March 9th, 1960 at the *Galerie International d' Art Contemporain* in Paris, Yves Klein reinterpreted Pollack's Action Painting pictures by placing his canvas on the walls and on the floor and conducting an orchestra, as well as 3 female models, in which their bodies functioned as paint brushes. The performance was accompanied by Klein's own music *Monotony Symphony,* where only one note was played for twenty minutes intercalated with twenty minutes of silence. (Dempsey, 2003: 188-225). Warhol also stretched his canvas on the floor, from 1963 on he produces his paintings through a silk-screen process, but instead of doing the performance himself, he directed his assistants to do most of the work, as he states during an interview for *Bay Times*. When the reporter asked: "Are you drawing for yourself to express your individuality more fully or because you are so well paid?" And Warhol replied: "Well Gerald [Malanga – his assistant by the time] does all my paintings" (Goldsmith, 2004: 119). While Pollack's painting is a lonely act emerging from within, presuming an interpretation of the uniqueness of the artist, and Klein's work focuses on art and social criticism - conducting the naked women's bodies to produce an artifact created by a man and later commercialize which could be seen as a critique of objectification of the female body (Ferguson, 1984: 108); Warhol leaves others to produce his work and declares this openly; this can be perceived as a critique of the art milieu - focus on the geniality and masculinity of the artist.

[3] Pollack became an icon of Abstract Expressionism after a profile published at *Life Magazine* on August 8th, 1949, in which a series of his photos showed his performance dripping the paint around a stretched canvas on the floor. It is worth noting here that Pollack's uncontrolled temper, alcoholism and rudeness, aligned with the idea that his art was the expression of his personality, helped to create the myth of the macho abstract expressionist artist (Naifeh and Smith, 1989, Warhol, 1980).

1. Jackson Pollack
Lavender Mist: Number 1, 1950
Photographer: Hans Namuth4

2. Yves Klein
Anthropometries, 1960
Photographer: unknown 5

3. Andy Warhol
Banana silkscreen, 1964
Photographer: Bill Name6

During the 1960's and 1970's through Performance art, the body was largely used as a medium to deal with identity, sexuality and subjectivity, as we will see in chapter 7. However in the following decade - for many reasons, but mainly for economic ones - many artists "went back to the seclusion of their studios and started to produce things" at the beginning of the 1980's. "There was a demand from the market to have something to sell, because in performance, there was nothing", as Marina Abramović stated during the interview for *Art Journal* (Kaplan, 1999:8).

The reconsideration of the body in art started timidly towards the end of 1990's through sporadic and isolated performances in galleries and cultural spaces, and more significantly through alternative festivals, such as the first *7a*11d International Performance Art Festival in Toronto*, Canada (1997) and the first *International Performance Festival Odense, Denmark* (1999). Already in the 2000's, essential

events have taken place around the world as indications of the reconsideration of the body as a medium. In Amsterdam, the foundation of the *IPG - Independent Performance Group* in 2003 started by Abramović – one of the pioneer performance artist from the 1970's and her students, followed by PERFORMA – the first *Biennial of Performance Art in New York* (2005); Abramović reenacted six seminal works from the 1960's and 1970's at the Guggenheim Museum and also the *International Festival of Electronic Art in Sao Paulo* in 2005, which in its 15th edition was dedicated to Performance art.

Although the reemergence of body through Performance art has brought innovations in the field (for instance photography and video, which are no longer used for solely documentary purposes, it is the artist's interaction with this technology, and /or the media in which the performance is reproduced), the body is still used to claim agency, provoking shock and bringing subjectivity into light, on the same modes of performance enacted during the 1960's and 1970's. This leads us to the reason for my interest into performance: Why has the body, as a medium in contemporary art, returned to an era of disembodiment in virtual spaces, militarization and terrorist actions, where the body has apparently lost its value?

4 Jackson Pollack Action Painting, 1950, photographer: Hans Namuth, source: http://www.artnet.com last accessed: May 18th, 2008

5 Klein Monotony Symphony,1960, photographer: unknown, source: http://www.eyewithwings.net/ last accessed: May18th, 2008

6 Andy Warhol silkscreening banana and self-portrait, 1964, photographer: Bill Name source:http://ovoworks.smugmug.com/gallery/664768_WhPjT/1/29266559_D6Lvz/Large last accessed: May 19th, 2008

CHAPTER 3

XXI CENTURY: ERA OF (DIS)EMBODIMENT

> Once I feel myself observed by the lenses, everything changes: I constitute myself in the process of posing, I instantaneously make another body for myself, I transform myself in advance into an image. This transformation is an active one: I feel that Photography creates my body or mortifies it, according to its caprice.
>
> Posing in front of the lens, I do not risk so much as that. No doubt it is metaphorically that I derive my existence from the photographer. But through this dependence is an imaginary one (…), I experience it with an anguish of an uncertain filiation: an image – my image - will be generated: will I be born from an antipathetic individual or from a "good sort"? (…) I decide to let drift over my lips and in my eyes a faint smile which I mean to be indefinable (…) What I want, in short is that my (mobile) image, buffeted among thousand shifting photographs, altering with situation and age, should always coincide with my (profound) self, but it is the contrary that must be said: myself never coincides with my image, for it is the image which is heavy, motionless, stubborn (…), and myself which is light, divided, dispersed. (…) If only Photography could give me a neutral, anatomic body, a body which signifies nothing! (Barthes, 1984: 10 -12)

Roland Barthes's reflection, quoted above illuminates the struggle between identity and the body, image and self – its possibilities and limitations – in order to communicate one's self, in which the body, that had not been chosen, denunciates something that it is not always one's identity.

How do I perceive myself and how do others perceive me? How much does my body tell people about who I am? This set of questions seems to be unanswered and problematized across different cultures. In the following subchapters, we will see how two different subcultures insert in postmodern life deals with embodiment / disembodiment to claim agency. Firstly we will see how cyberpunk culture intends to dismiss the body in order to recreate its own self. Secondly, we will see how subculture of body modification over-valorizes the body as a site for displaying uniqueness and visibility, and also as a way of claming agency.

Disembodiment in Virtual Spaces

The uprise of subcultures in cyberspaces in a posthuman frame – a way of life that goes beyond the biological constraint of humans, combining technology and determinism, in order to seek for evolution of intelligence - questions the role of the body in the process of self definition. As was shown in the forum entitled "Is the body obsolete?" published on *Whole Earth Review* – 1088/9 – it was one of the first signals of the possible resurgence of the theme (Terranova: 2000:270-273).

Through this framework, cyberpunk subculture emerged centered on the "dematerialization" and "reconfiguration" of the body. The proposal "leaving the meat behind" was a solution to the clash between image and identity. The meat represents the limitated aspects of Real Life, such as class, race and sexuality (Bell, 2000: 562). The infamous cyberpunk writer William Gibson wrote in his 1984 novel *Neuromancer*, about the desire for disembodiment through a process called "jack in" - downloading the consciousness into a global processor and separating it from the body - transforming the entity into data and consequently allowing it to be reconfigured. While Gibson's idea, a kind of "utopia" cannot be derived directly from his book, cyberspace users are in the hunt for ways to liberate identity from real through complete self recreation, or the reshaping of bodies, personalities and emotions.

The delusion of virtual communities as reality is based on the assumption of a complete self creation that is found in the liberal humanist discourse, in which the idea of an individual as an independent and autonomous self corresponds to an individual's acts and morality codes, as Nigel Clark points out:

> [C]yberspace offers freedom from the physical, corporeal constraints and limitations of the lived body, offering up the opportunity for 'identity play', for reinventing the self – perhaps,

> then as the flipside to anchoring the postmodern self through modification, this represents the liberation of the self from the body (Clark, 1995: 124, quoted in Bell, 2000: 560).

Although it is tempting to imagine the possibility of creating and recreating your entity and play identity games, it seems to be a shared illusion for disembodiment, as many critics have pointed out, such as Ana Balsamo. She claims that the attempt at disembodiment in high-tech subcultures in fact "requires a willful repression of the body materiality" (quoted in Bell, 2000: 560). The cyber body, apart from its wishes to be shaped by, the repetitive use of the body, for instance the amount of time spent in front of a computer, will affect the body directly: neck sore, pale skin, soft muscles. In additional, the case of cybersex – although described as virtual sex, could involve the physical body as well through the practice of masturbation. In saying that, there is no way to leave the body out of the virtual spaces, as Allucquère Rosenne Stone points out: "Even in the age of the technosocial subject, life is lived through bodies" (ibid).

Embodiment Through Body Modification

Paradoxically, in an opposed direction of disembodiment in virtual spaces, there has been a growing propagation of body-modification among the young - an expropriation of the western idea of the "primitive nonwestern culture".

> A burgeoning underground of urban aboriginals has revived the archaic notion of the body as a blank slate . . . .a groundswell of interest in do-it-yourself body modification has swept taboo practices out of *National Geographic* and into youth culture (Dery, quoted in Bell, 2000: 556).

Contemporary subcultures of body modification, such as practitioners of tattoo and piercing have been "reclaiming and recovering the body, which is otherwise experienced as lost in the disorienting whirl of postmodern life" (Pitts, quoted in Bell,

2000: 557). Body modification attempts to bring visibility, “the near-irresistible object of the gaze”. Through the subculture of tattoo and piercing, the body becomes the site for communication that provokes, resists, identifies and excludes (MacKendrick, quoted in Bell, 2000: 557).

Subjects that claim agency through tattoo and piercing use ornaments as permanent marks, as symbols of an identity. In exhibiting those ornaments, the subject emerges through visibility, which leads to a visual statement: I’m here and you have to notice me. The problem of visibility is that it always operates in the level of representation. If on the one hand it declares ownership over one’s own body, claiming agency, on the other hand it represents “the other”, which is constructed in opposition to the “normal”. And “normal” in Erving Goffman’s definition is:

> Young, married, white, urban, northern, heterosexual, Protestant father of college education, fully employed, of good complexion, weight and height, and a decent record in sports (1963 :78).

Claiming visibility to assure an identity at odds with the “normal” brings consequences, as Peggy Phelan points out: “Visibility is a trap […], it summons surveillance and the law; it provokes voyeurism fetishism, the colonialist/imperial appetite for possession” (Phelan, 1993:6).

Visibility poses a challenge to the notion of a non-fetishized body identity. The “normal” body is always the one that is unmarked, because stigmatization / difference works by creating the deviant by marking those bodies that are not “normal”. Although the “normal” body is unmarked, he is not invisible / nonexistent, rather because he is the subject; he has the privilege in relation to whom the others appear marked. The deviant can be visibly marked and bear the consequence or be closeted, appearing to be normal, his difference remains invisible. The project of

visibility consists of legitimizing visibility difference. The impasse of visibility is also interrogated in the queer politics of the closet. Nevertheless, what is relevant for our study here is to understand that the disembodiment / embodiment, visibility/ invisibility of bodies is a complex and unsolved problem concerning identity, as will be shown in the case studies, in which Warhol seems to leave his body presence out of his work, while performance artists push their bodies to the edges of pain and exhaustion through their work. In this sense, this remains a question to be answer, in which the cases study analysis can help: Is there any place between visibility and invisibility, embodiment and disembodiment?

My intention in this chapter is to discuss how contemporary subcultures deal with the body in the process of constructing their subjectivity. It seems that the two subcultures presented in this chapter are opposed to each other - on the one hand cyberpunk subculture graves the disembodiment through a transformation of the entity in data and bytes, on the other hand body-modification subculture over exposes a decorated body seeking visibility. In fact, however, those subcultures are not totally discordant; they are discourses concerning the body and its representation in connection with one's identity. And more importantly they are in their own way an attempt to claim ownership, and rebel against what is represented by the "normal".

Cyberculture and body modification subculture are not shaped by normativity attributes, instead their identities are concerned with other attributes already discussed here, and in this light, they urge for a space to negotiate their identities.

CHAPTER 4

SUBCULTURE: RESISTING ADJUSTMENT

In Albert Cohen's article "A General Theory of Subculture" from 1955, he argues that subcultures materialize in a population when a certain group has problems achieving the dominant norms. Dissatisfaction, frustration and hopelessness lead these members into collective action, which materializes into a new subculture providing them with a replaced social value system (Cohen, 1955:51).

Although any value system can be created within a specific society, the American value system of "normal" pointed out by Goffman and described in the previous chapter can be distinguished as a coherent historical value system that has emerged in the western world. Indeed is it not surprising that many on the fringe of society cannot fulfill all the characteristics to be considered "normal", which according to Goffman, leads to alternatives ways of restructuring or creating a new value system.

The rise of subcultures depends on several factors, including individual aspirations - that direct subjects to experiment with a problem in different ways, with recourse to means and opportunities that are not available to everyone on the same level.

According to social theorists subculture emerges from dissatisfaction: frustration of a group of people that cannot fit into the mainstream culture; a frustration seems as "unnatural (Levi-Strauss, 1969), or "contrary to holiness" (Mary Douglas, 1967 - both cited in Hebdige, 1979: 121), the deviants or the stigmatized

self, as Goffman points out. (1963: 73). They usually “express forbidden contents” - conscious of the difference between class, sex and race – “in forbidden forms – transgressing the sartorial and behavioral codes, law breaking, etc. . . “ (Hebdige, 1970: 121).

Deviant behavior theories have shifted focus from the problem of adjustment to resistance and subversion, as Stanley Cohen points out in his article "Symbols of Trouble": “The delinquent changed from frustrated social climber to cultural innovator and critic”, but since 1980, subculture and deviance theories have been mainly concerned with investigating the process of an individual becoming a delinquent, rather than questioning naturalization assumption of normal behavior (157).

Nevertheless, Foucault had a different view about deviants as he presents in *The History of Sexuality* Vol.1, he reallocates the study of deviants not from the perspective of the “normal”, but rather by questioning normalization and bringing to light the history of sexuality of how bodies became gendered as deviants. Foucault claims that the very idea of deviant is necessary in other to contrast with the idea of “normal" and conceptualize its term. In this sense, the concept of normal is socially constructed; there is nothing to which it refers.

CHAPTER 5

SEXUALLY DEVIANT BODIES

According to Butler, our bodies are gendered at birth, and its confirmation comes from the doctor's claim in that moment. This announcement reallocates the status of the infant "it to, he or she": It is a girl or boy. In order to become a human body, it has to be either one or the other, and it brings pre-conditions and established behavior patterns that must be followed to be accepted as a social being within the confines of a sexually binarized society.

Moreover, the doctor's statement is not innocently announcing anatomical sexed body of the infant, but brings it into linguistic implications of the social sphere and its signification. Being marked as a male or a female body is delimited by the discourses of power that reinforce those gendered marks, in which what is called biological difference has no meaning outside of language. Those marks, conditions and patterns are social constructions of sex and gender, as Butler points out: "Sex is a political and cultural interpretation of the body, there is no sex/gender distinction along conventional lines; gender is built into sex, and sex proves to have been gender from the start" (Butler, 1990:113).

Contrary to this claim, one could say that the biological body is visibly distinguished through the differences in the male and female bodies and they are needed for reproduction purposes. For reproduction maybe (taking in consideration alternative processes), but surely not concerning sexuality. Indeed, sexuality could be closer to pleasure and subjectivity, rather than to reproduction in the Western society. Further we can not discuss subjectivity without taking into consideration that we are sexed subjects and our presumed identity can be connected to our sexuality,

although this identity is not always coherent. But what queer theorists and Butler especially argue is that the meaning of those bodies is a social construction in the poststructuralist sense – being female or male is completely assembled through culture, there is no pre-cultural "I".

In *History of Sexuality – Volume 1*, Foucault scrutinizes the process through which discourse conjures up sex as if it was pre-discursive. Intending to suppress and rule out sex for reproduction, discourses on sex become relegated to the status of a secret and sex itself, a taboo, as Foucault points out:

> Discourse, therefore, had to trace the meeting line of the body and soul, following all its meanderings: beneath the surface of the sins, it would lay bare the unbroken nervure of the flesh. Under the authority of a language that had been carefully expurgated so that it was no longer directly named, sex was taken charge of, tracked down as it were, by a discourse that aimed to allow it no obscurity, no respite (Foucault, 1990: 20).

With the rise of bourgeois societies with the great help of Christianity's imperative confessionary, the seventeenth century starts an era of repression, not a new one, but through a process that regulates everyone. The mandatory confession requested not only an examination of acts against the law, but also thoughts, soul, memory, will and every statement made, in this sense everything concerning sex was transformed into discourse, especially one's desires. (ibid, 21)

However, Foucault claims that the main effect of such repression - the prohibition - instigates the proliferation and amplification of the discourses on sex as an 'exercise of power.' The speaker is supposedly an agent of authority that makes the use of power to talk about sex (ibid, 18).

In Foucault's account, the eighteenth century saw new techniques of power over sex discourse – from morality towards rationality. "[Society's] future and its fortune were tied not only to the number and the uprightness of its citizens, to their marriage rules and family organization, but to the manner in which each individual

made use of sex" (ibid, 25). So, sex became a political and economical issue in the framework of Reason. This new perspective brought on a strategy to redirect "knowledge and power centering on sex", naming sexual deviants bodies – women, masturbating children, couples engaged in non-reproductive sex, multiple partners and homosexuals (ibid, 103-5). Those sexually deviant bodies were the foundation of oppositions to Goffman's definition of "normal". We also can relate those deviants as members of subcultures, which resist normativity. How could sexually deviant bodies resist and subvert normativity?

The sexually deviant bodies which belong to a subculture, such as cyberculture or body modification and - as we will see during the analysis of the case studies – Warhol and performance artists, could succeed in subverting normativity through one of Foucault's conceptions of power relations.

The conventional top-down model of power which came from the monarchical system is based on a negative idea of power – an energy that comes from one source and has the authority to rule, impose and punish all, transforming the others into victims of the system, without manner to escape. This must be left aside for a better understanding of how deviant bodies resist and subvert power. In Foucault's theory, power and resistance are interconnected in the same system, working simultaneously. Just as there is no fixed location of power, there is no "great refusal" or a locus of resistance. Instead power and resistance operates from diverse points from inside a dynamic system of relations, a net, which comes from different directions. In fact power is not an organization, but moments of state that operate within the limits of time and space, as Foucault points out: "The omnipresence of power: not because it has the privilege of consolidating everything under its invincible unity, but because it is produced from one moment to the next, at every point, or rather in every relation from one point to another" (ibid, 93).

Butler, among others, has criticized radical feminists such as Dworkin and MacKinnon[7]. Those radical feminists have enumerated power oppression of gender inequalities, which comes direct from patriarchal, rather than investigating how this process is founded. And more importantly, how they can possibly subvert this relation that oppressed them, as Butler argues: “The effort to identify the enemy as singular in form is a reverse-discourse that uncritically mimics the strategy of the oppressor instead of offering a different set of terms” (1990: 13).

Those feminists tend to understand that sex is given and gender is a social construction that follows a “heterosexual matrix”. In this system of binary sex, it presupposes an internal coherence between sex, gender and desire. It is because of the false assumption that there is a consistency between sex, gender and desire that contemporary feminists believe the idea of woman’s identity has failed, as Butler elucidates:

> [G]ender is not always constituted coherently or consistently in different historical contexts, and because gender intersects with racial, class, ethnic, sexual, and regional modalities of discursively constituted identities. As a result, it becomes impossible to separate out “gender” from the political and cultural intersections in which it is invariably produced and maintained” (ibid, 3).

For the purpose of this study, the importance of the deconstruction of a collective identity, and in particular gender identity employs a set of critical methods concerning female identity that can also be applied to different minorities, including the gay and lesbian community, sadomasochists and so on. Indeed, identity assures, in the name of supposedly selfhood consistency, a fixed conception of sexual practices, in order to maintained “cultural intelligibility by which persons are defined” (ibid, 17). The process of deconstructing gender identities is central to understand the

[7]For more about their work see Dworkin, A. (1987) *Intercourse,* London: Arrow Books and MacKinnon, Catharine (1993) *Only Words* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press

queer theory project of rejecting the “normal”, just as it is an important issue for Warhol’s and performance artists’ work and life, as will be made evident later.

CHAPTER 6

PERFORMING GENDER

Although the popular notion of identity is connected to autonomy, Butler contends that the process of identity formation is constituted by possible negotiations and transformations, rather than an inner outcome. Identity is the effect of negotiations within the cultural / social system of power /knowledge, elaborated by Foucault (see previous chapter). In other words, desires, tastes, and bodily' attitudes are not individual choices of freewill, but constraints set by the cultural and historical aspects of a society, as Butler claims:

> [T]he source of personal and political agency comes not from within the individual, but in and through the complex cultural exchanges among bodies in which identity itself is the ever-shifting, indeed, where identity is constructed, disintegrated, and recirculated only within the context of dynamic field of cultural relations (ibid, 127).

Butler's conception of "gender identity formation" is constituted by a set of ritualistic acts: a product of gender normalization rather than an outcome of agency. Those acts of performance that she calls performativity are repeated and experienced through a pregiven meaning which aims to legitimize one's identity, and reinforce the gender binary and its compulsory heterosexuality. "The effect of gender is produced through the stylization of the body […] in which bodily gestures, movements, and styles of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self" (ibid, 140). Apparently opposed to performativity, gender performance in Butler's thought is a theatrical act; exaggerated mimicries from existent social gender codes. If gender performativity is constructed through a set of corporeal repetitions of a binary gender system, and performance is an exaggeration of those codes, then a performance can be itself performativity. Given this, is there any space to subvert the

binary gender system through performance or performativity? In fact, both performance and performativity can reinforce normativity or subvert it.

According to Butler, performance can be subversive through the idea that "there is no doer behind the deed". It also means, if a performance subverts the "norm", it is realized just after it has been enacted. The unknown effects of the outcome of the performance bring different meanings to different people and this is potentially subversive. Butler claims that what makes a performance subversive is "the kind of effect that resists calculation" (Butler quoted in Sullivan, 2003: 91). In other words, a performance subverts normativity when its outcome deconstructs the binary gender "norms". In her performance titled *Action Pants: Genital Panic* (dealt with in details in chapter 7) VALIE EXPORT walked through the aisle of the movie theatre before the movie started, wearing crotchless pants, embodying the objectification of the female as fetish in the cinematic industry. Although it was performed during the 1960's in an Arts Cinema in Munich, where unpredictable performances were to be expected, most of the audience left and the session was canceled. Although it had been widely talked about, it was not without controversy. EXPORT's exposure of her genitals to the public, simultaneously question and reinforce normativity.

Butler asserts that "performativity is a precondition of the subject existence", through repetition of the corporeal styles and movements. It is neither completely autonomous in operation, deliberated from a free inner will or an outcome of agency, in which it differentiates from performance, nor is it a process that simply reproduces exactly the same acts, operating like a copy. Instead, gender is an "act [which] is itself a repetition, sedimentation, and congealment of the past which is precisely foreclosed in its act-like status" (Butler, 1993: 244, note # 7). In this sense, gender

performativity through the process of repetition, creates a matrix that allows sex and gender to become real, rather then just an imitation.

In gender performativity, the re-articulation of those of acts of performance in time is constructed within its own limits. It cannot be completely replicated because it will always be repeated in another context and time. For instance Butler suggests: "[A] transvestite onstage can compel pleasure and applause while the sight of the same transvestite on the seat next to us on the bus can compel fear, rage, even violence. . ." (Butler quoted in McKenzie, 1998:222). Those repetitions function like a citation rather than a mimesis. Citation is the act of mentioning something that has happened or has been said to have happened in the past and reappropriated as a paradigm in the moment that it was reenacted.

Moreover, because those acts, as Butler suggests "through the stylization of the body […] in which bodily gestures, movements, and styles" take place on the surface of the body; it gives a deceptive notion of an inner power for identity formation. The self supposedly operates as an agent of the acts and consequently it camouflages the hidden aim of a gender performance: intelligibility and acceptance as a social being and, contrary to the idea of being an agent, it reinforces a binary norm of gender, as Butler states:

> Acts, gestures, articulated and enacted desires [of being an intelligible] create an illusion of an interior and organizing gender core, an illusion discursively maintained for the purposes of the regulation of sexuality within the obligatory frame of reproductive heterosexuality. [….] Gender can be neither true nor false, but are only produced as the truth effects of a discourse of primary and stable identity (Butler, 1990: 136 emphasis added).

The identity of sexual normativity can be interpreted as something that can only be fully implemented by those who are betrothed to a lifelong monogamous and heterosexual relationship, for the exclusive purpose of reproduction. In this sense,

sexual normativity is a regulation that can seldom be entirely exercised. Moreover, constant letdowns lead to its own destabilization, as Butler contends:

> Heterosexuality offer positions that are intrinsically impossible to embody, and the persistent failure to identify fully and without incoherence with these positions revels heterosexuality itself not only a compulsory law, but as an inevitable comedy, [….] a constant parody of itself (ibid, 122).

Indeed it is within those terms, that "the other", the sexual deviant bodies: gays, lesbians, bisexuals and gender inversion parodies, such as drag, butch/femme and cross-dressing have a latent potential for subverting and displacing the norm. Through performance, parodies of gender inversion expose the mechanism in which a gender imitation is already a copy of a non existent original. Gender performativity, as we have seen, is like citations – a reappropriation of acts in other time / contexts; in fact there is no original, as Butler states: "The original identity after which gender fashions itself is an imitation without origin" (ibid, 138).

According to Butler feminist theory have been understood sexual inversion parodies either as a degradation of women or "an uncritical appropriation of sex-roles stereotyping from within the practice of heterosexuality [which] is copied". A drag queen performance is perceived as a stereotype of a female, which proposes to humiliate woman. (ibid: 137). If we turn to the meaning of the word stereotype, we can further comprehend what Butler means. According to the Cobuild Dictionary, stereotype "is a fixed general image or set of characteristics that a lot of people believe represent a particular type of person or thing" (1999:1078). In saying that, stereotype can be a symbol, which may be true or false, and in the case of a woman, is neither an original nor a copy, but already a reworked representation.

Despite the critics that claim that the drag queen exaggerates female style, it also deconstructs the idea that sex, desire and gender are linked, and destabilizes

the notion that feminine and masculine roles are natural, necessary and tied to compulsory heterosexuality. And yet, Butler suggests: "[W]hen the normal, the original is revealed to be a copy [of a fabricated gender model], and an inevitable failed one, an idea that no one can embody, […] laughter emerges" (ibid: 139, emphasis added). In other words, gender parody is supposedly a copy of a stereotype, in which the stereotype is already a representation of a gender identity that is in fact a fabricated model, without origin. In this sense, gender parodies can be subversive, exposing the mechanisms in which they mimic, not an original gender, but rather a copy without an origin. Further, in the case of a drag performance which destabilizes the notion of sex and gender, as Butler states:

> The performance of drag plays upon the distinction between the anatomy of the performer and the gender that is being performed. But we are actually in the presence of three contingent dimensions of significant corporeality: anatomical sex, gender sex and gender performed (ibid, 137).

When a deviant body succeeds in destabilizing heterosexual normativity, it challenges female and male roles. The fixed and stable notion of sexual identity, whether or not a parodic performance, is the very moment when Foucault's system of power relations is operating in response to the creation of the compulsory normativity, in which "mechanism of knowledge and power [is] center[ed] on sex" (Foucault, 1990:103). Further, Foucault's conception that power is not an institution, but rather an energy or state that comes from different directions, it is contrary to the theories of radical feminism, which believe that women are victims of power that comes from a single source – male domination. Queer theory extends the failure of the performance of heterosexuality to create new perspectives on the field of sexuality. Compulsory heterosexuality, as power that prohibits and limits, does not create force, is realized by negating and imposing restrictions. As Foucault claims:

"[I]t is incapable to do anything, except for what this power allows it to do. [. . .] It is basically anti-energy" and its triumph can be achieved if its resources have not been made visible, by resource I mean, the origin of the copy that Butler has proved does not exist. "Power is tolerable only on condition that it masks a substantial part of itself; its success is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanism" (Foucault, 1990:85-86). After all, through the lenses of Foucault and Butler, which were significant to the development of queer theory, brings the possibility of reframing the notion of identity as fixed, stable and connected to sexuality.

Queer can be seen as an embodiment of deviance – whose bodies can not fit into the normativity. The term "deviant bodies" has been transformed from the pejorative meaning of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as Foucault has shown us, into a set of meanings that allow scholars to explore other ways to live and identify. This twist of signification is exactly what queer theorists support as a ground for challenging imperative norms. It is under this framework that I am presenting the following two case studies as an instrumental material to be analyzed on how normativity can be subverted throughout performance and performativity. The first case study is how performance artists during 1960's and 1970's have used their bodies to endure the limits of flesh and mind, provoking shock. The second case study is how Andy Warhol, though his performance of apparent dispersonification became a well-known artist within the high Art circuit - critics, collectors and artists - and simultaneously a popular figure in the underground Art scene in New York on the beginning of the 1960's and 1970's. The reason for comparing the two case studies is to provide an account of the different ways that to use body to question normativity and its inflexible and imperative modes to understand sexuality and identity.

CHAPTER 7

PERFORMANCE ART: WHEN THE BODY TALKS LOUDER

In the following subchapters, I will present four performances from different artists which are representative of the process of using the body as a medium to address sexuality and identity issues.

The human body has been present in the arts throughout the course of history. From Art Rupestre, passing through Greek theater, to the 15th century - when the body became free to be represented in visual arts; painting and sculptures were popular ways of portraying people. “Painters and patrons were delighted with the idea that art could be used not only to tell the sacred history in a touching way, but also to reflex a fragment of the real world” (Gombrich, 1999:248). Although the body has constantly been in the arts, it was only in the 20th century and specially in a movement called Performance art that artists have used the body not only as a matter of representation of the flesh, but as a central vehicle to address subjectivity.

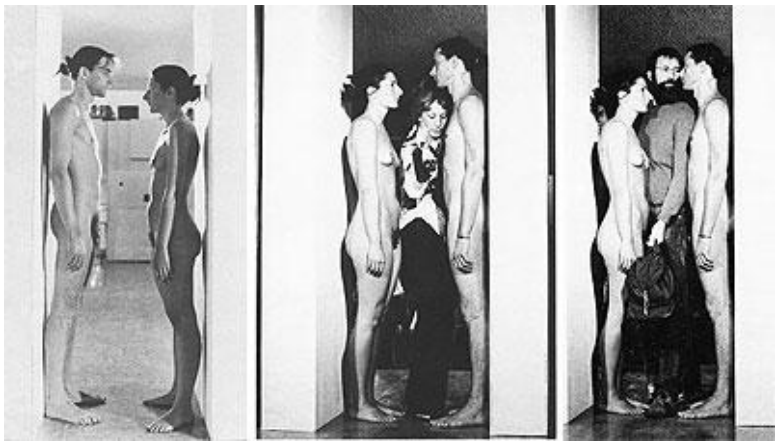
As RoseLee Goldberg states in her historical book *Performance Art: from Futurism to the Present,* Performance is seen “as a chosen medium for articulating difference” (2001: 9). Artists have been performing in different art movements to speak out against the established conventions in the arts, in politics or in other social spheres. It is difficult to say when performance started, however Performance art can be said to stem from the Futurist movement. Italian artists dissatisfied with Academy’s values of painting and literature and motivated by political issues against Austrian colonialism performed the first Futurist evening in Trieste on January 12th, 1910 (Goldberg, 2001:13). Dadaism – the subsequent movement inherited from Futurism questions the museums art system, consequently their members have left the conventional space to perform in alternative venues, such as cabarets, cafes,

galleries and also on the street, closer to real life and interaction with the public. Indeed, alternative venues and the relation between artist and audience are trademarks of Performance art that has emerged in the second half of the 20th century. In the same way that art movements and schools have employed performance to protest and bring transformation, Performance art during the 60's and 70's has also been influenced by many art movements as well as political and social moments, such as the feminist movement, postmodernist theory, countercultural movements and so on. The aim of using the body by that time was done to provoke reflection and to resist / play with hegemonic power relations. The performances illustrated in this study, like the work of Abramović, follow the mantra: "No rehearsal, no repetition and no predicted end" (Laub and Abramović, 2005 and Abramović, 2007:15). It is relevant to mention here that what Abramovic means by repetition concerns the enactment of the same performance many times, like in a theater. Her performances are repetitions of the binary gender system, which the effects on the audience are unknown before it is enacted. In this sense performance can be compared to Butler's theory of performativity.

"No rehearsal, no repetition and no predicted end" are fundamental characteristics to differentiate performance art from theater and to blur the division between performativity and performance conceptualized in chapter 6 by Butler. When an artist performs without rehearsal, during the very act of doing it, the performance will be constituted. However it is not the same to say that the enactment of a performance is the same as the performativity of the body suggested by Butler. There is a fragile line that divides both: in performance there is an initial strong and conscious drive – the artist has to set up a time and day, arrange a location, he/she may need some props. Although in Butler's theory of performativity there is also a drive, it is not previously articulated. We can therefore understand performance as an

enactment, a practice of exposing the mechanism of performativity, and an articulated desire of performativity.

Imponderabilia, 1977- Marina Abramović and Ulay



4. *Imponderabilia*, 1977
Reproduction: unknown[8]

Abramović and Ulay lived and collaborated together for almost two decades, performing and traveling extensively. Their performances explored the parameters of power and dependency within the triangular relationship between each other and their audience.

In *Imponderabilia,* presented at *Galleria Comunale d'Arte Moderna* in Bologna, both Abramović and Ulay stood naked facing each other in front of the Gallery door, and leaving a narrow space for public entrance. The spectators were obliged to touch the naked bodies of either one of the performers. In passing they were observed by other visitors, who had either already crossed the door or were still hesitating to do so. The passage was the performance, in which the spectator was forced to transgress the boundary between public and private.

[8] Imponderabilia, 1977, Reproduction: unknown. Soruce: Digital Esthetics http://kalos0.cafe24.com/tt/entry/%EA%B0%9C%EB%85%90-%EC%97%86%EB%8A%94-%EB%AF%B8%EC%88%A0-3-%EB%B0%94%EB%94%94-%EC%95%84%ED%8A%B8 – Last viewed: May 20th, 2008.

Imponderabilia could be seen as a metaphor for the repressive normativity, in which one must choose between two models of sexual identification – masculine or feminine - without another alternative.

Rhythm 0, 1974 -- Marina Abramović

5. *Rhythm 0*, 1974
Reproduction: Unknown[9]

Abramović posited naked next to a table with 72 objects and a sign which gave instructions to the audience to do whatever they wanted to her using any of those objects, which included "scissors, a knife, a whip, and, most notoriously, a gun and a single bullet. Initially, members of the audience reacted with caution and modesty, but as time passed (and the artist remained inactive and impassive) several people began to act quite aggressively. As Abramović described it later" [10]

> The experience I learned was that [...] if you leave decision to the public, you can be killed." [...] I felt really violated: they cut my clothes, stuck rose thorns in my stomach, one person aimed the gun at my head, and another took it away. It created an aggressive atmosphere. After exactly 6 hours, as planned, I stood up and started walking toward the public. Everyone ran away, escaping an actual confrontation (Daneri, 2002:29).

[9] Rhythm 0, 1974 - Reproduction: Unknown – Source: http://jejinternet.blogspot.com/2007/03/body-art.html – Last viewed: May 20th, 2008.
[10] Performance description extracted from: Wikipedia – <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marina_Abramovi%C4%87#Rhythm_10.2C_1973> Last viewed on: June 14th, 2008.

In this performance Abramović points out the female's body that serves and is dominated by other. When she stands up and leaves the room, it gives her agency and immediately her detractors move away. If in one sense this performance is a critique of patriarchal normativity, in which the woman's body is used and abused, it is also seen as a critic of woman's victimatization – she was abused until the moment that she decided to gain her agency and move away.

Action Pants: Genital Panic, 1969 – VALIE EXPORT

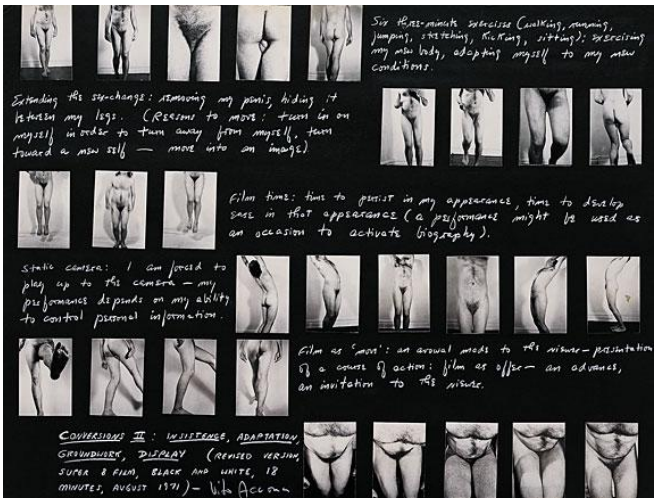
6. *Action Pants: Genital Panic, 1969*
   Reproduction unknown[11]

VALIE EXPORT was invited to present a film with other artists in an art cinema in Munich. Before the session started she walked slowly aside the aisle wearing pants with the crotch cut out and saying "What you see now is reality and it's not on the screen and everybody sees you watching this now" (Abramović, 2007:118). Most of the people silently got up and left the theater. In *Action Pants: Genital Panic* her aim was to confront the pornographic reduction of women to static representations,

[11] Action Pants: Genital Panic, 1968 - Reproduction unknown – Source: http://editions.patrickpainter.com/artists/Export_Valie/work-01.html – Last Viewed: May 20th, 2008.

thereby posing a direct, political challenge to the abstract objectification of the female body as fetish. She made an aesthetic gesture that went beyond the representational context of safe boundaries of art into an actual encounter with the public. In this action, EXPORT realized the capacity of a gesture "both to produce and to represent action" (Stiles: 2000:47). She produces a gesture when she walks in the cinema with her crotchless pants, generating a non passive reaction from the audience, but at the same time this gesture is a representation of the woman's body fetish in the cinema. An interesting point is that the photo that works as a reference of this performance is a staged one; it probably was done after her performance had been enacted. In the photo, EXPORT is set holding a gun; there is no evidence that she used the revolver, however, in the cinema during her action. In this light, EXPORT performed an action in opposition to the reductionist form of woman's representation, in which the publicity of her performance is not the real action, but a representation of it. Further, by holding a gun EXPORT overrepresented her intention to bring back woman's power over her body.

Conversions I, II and III - 1970 / 1971 - Vito Acconci



7. *Conversion II* – 1971
Reproduction: unknown[12]

[12] *Conversions II: Insistence, Adaptation, Groundwork, And Display*, 1971 – reproduction unknown – source: http://www.guggenheimcollection.org/site/artist_work_md_1B_2.html – last Viewed: May 26, 2008.

During the 1960's and 1970's performance artists questioned normativity from the oppressed point of view – lesbians, gays, women and blacks, while Acconci, as a white, man and probably heterosexual[13], questioned normativity destabilizing the assumption of the male's solitude, as Amelia Jones claims:

> Acconci's *Conversions* explore the way in which the male body legitimates but also is legitimated by its continual (and always already failed) staging of plenitude, the way in which the privilege of artistic genius accrues to the body-with-penis in modernity (1998: 145).

Conversions is a trilogy of performances which Acconci's intention is to question the power of masculinity, attempting to feminize his unquestionable body as being male, white and a producer of art – immortalized by Pollack's representation of the codes of normativity, "the myth of the macho abstract expressionist artist". In *Conversion I,* Acconci burned the hair of his chest with a candle, as it is a clear masculine symbol[14]. In the following performance he made a series of movements, like jumping and running, while trying to hide his penis between his legs, in an effort to make it disappear and finally, in the last one, he pulled his breasts trying to transform them into a female breast.

These performances can be addressed in connection with Butler and Foucault's framework already previously discussed in chapter 6. Acconci's manipulation of his own body in an attempt to produce a sexual transformation destabilizes the privilege of masculinity, exposing the mechanisms of power in which masculinity is constructed, Foucault claims: the "success [of power] is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanism" (1990: 86). In revealing the mechanisms in which heteronormativity is constructed, Acconci exposes the false assumption that

[13] At least Acconci image was. It was implicit in the fact he had for many years a stable heterosexual relationship - he lived and worked with his female partner - the artist Kathy Dillon and also he or anyone had never claimed the opposite.
[14] Woman does not have a hairy chest. This and other appearance and physical differences between male and female bodies are symbols based on normativity interpretations of masculine and feminine.

masculinity is a natural rather than a cultural construction. Furthermore, as Butler suggests, the binary gender identity built into the framework of normativity is a copy without origin, and cannot be fully embodied (1990: 138).

Abramovic, Ulay, EXPORT and Acconci were active performance artists during the 1960's and 1970's and their performances briefly discussed in this chapter represent a generation of artists, rather than an exception for the period. These performance artists used their bodies to speak out, or speak louder as I suggest in the title of this chapter, in order to provoke shock and bring visibility to the effects of normativity that incise our society. In other words, it was through the visibility of the endurance and exposition of their bodies that they question the binary gender system. Their performances blur the conceptions of performance and the performativity. If on the one hand, there is an "I" before the performance that place, on the other hand, the will to make a performance comes before the "I, so in this sense performance is performativity.

Comparing these performances presented in currant chapter which overexposed and endure their bodies, to the effort of disembodiment in virtual subcultures (see chapter 3), it is possible to understand that the (dis)embodiment through corporeal performances plays a fundamental role in the formation of gender identity. Although both modes of performance claim agency, they also have shown problematic aspects to sustain their claims: the fail of "leaving the meat behind" in virtual spaces in an attempt for disembodiment (see chapter 3) and the trap of visibility, exemplified by performance artists. In this light, on the next chapter will be presented Andy Warhol oeuvre and manner which he is located between embodiment and disembodiment – simultaneously he attempts dispersonification and overexposure. Through Warhol's style, choice of subjects and object of desires, we will see how his corporeal performance and performativity constructed his identity.

CHAPTER 8

ANDY WARHOL: EMBODYING ESCAPE

Warhol - painter, illustrator, entrepreneur, avant-garde filmmaker, collector, publisher, music producer and celebrity - is recognized “as one of the greatest artists of the second half of XX century” (Crimp 1999, quoted in Dyer 2004: 33). His oeuvre is often celebrated as breaking the barrier between high art and popular culture, bringing to the art scene previously perceived mundane subjects (Vowel: 1993: 26, Dyer: 2004: 34). And yet his paintings have been compared to modern masters, such as Goya, Matisse and Raphael, by Heiner Bastian for example - the curator of *Andy Warhol: Retrospective*, which was firstly exhibited at *Neue Nationalgalerie*, in Berlin and then move to *Tate Modern* in London and *Museum of Contemporary Art* in Los Angels. On the text of the exhibition’s catalogue Sebastian regards Warhol’s *Flowers* and *Death and Disaster* paintings as “Goyaesque” (Bastian, 2001, quoted in Siegel, 2003: 8).

Apart from the misinterpretation of Warhol’s oeuvre – associating him with historical Old Masters and setting him apart from Pop art and the countercultural movement - a very important side of Warhol’s oeuvre and his persona has emerged among texts, exhibitions and books.

In fact, Warhol has influenced more than the art field, as Collins states in his article *Dick Tracy and the Case of Warhol’s Closet*: “[A] new generation of scholars has lately found evidence of another dimension of his work” (2001: 54), Siegel also gives us the clues of this evidence: “[Warhol’s] play[s] a major role in just about any significant account of twenty-century queer history” (2003: 7). Moreover, this account

is not due to his success as a homosexual artist in the extremely homophobic mainstream art world of the pre-stonewall era[15], rather most of his work has a meaningful connotation for queer project as Siegel claims: "[Warhol's] life and multimedia art production offered and continues to offer to legions of young queers the exaltedly blatant promise of another way of life" (ibid). His work challenges normativity and relocates queer and deviants to the center of the New York cultural focus, in which from the end of 1950's on, has became the world most prominent place for art.

Bringing queer to the center of homophobic art world, as Warhol did, connects him to Henry David Thoreau's *Walden,* published in 1854. The novel is about Thoreau's 36 months in a cabin in the woods, after he rebelled against the tax office. His book brought indignation of an exciting life that lacks domesticity – conveyed through the absence of family. Although Thoreau was often portrayed as a lonely person, he was not alienated or isolated; in fact Thoreau's project brought to the center queer as an alternative life, as Henry Abelove states:

> What *Walden* figures as valuable and vivid is life outside the discourses of domesticity, romantic love and marriage, and the white bourgeois family. To transcend them is *Walden*'s object, and if it fails fully to accomplish this transcending, the object remains (2003: 37).

Although, it is evident in Siegel's and other articles[16], as we will see later that, the engagement of Warhol's work and life is a queer project, Bastian's retrospective of the artist keeps away not only the importance of Warhol's sexuality in his work, but also the queer environment within Pop Art emerged in USA, as Seigel revels "Andy Warhol: Retrospective – we might say that – clearly large institution art exhibitions

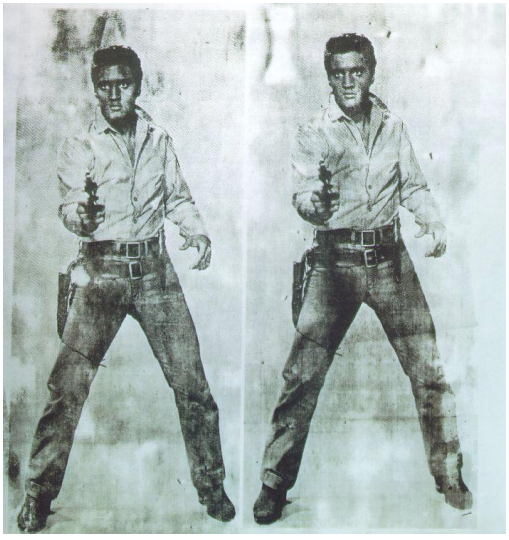
[15] Stonewall consisted a series of clashes that started on June 28th, 1969 between LGB – lesbians, gays and transgender/transsexual people and NY City police that took place in the Stonewall Inn – a restaurant frequented mostly by black and Hispanic gay communities. Those riots became a landmark of the beginning of the gay liberation movement in U.S. – Wikipedia Encyclopedia online - <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stonewall_riots> Last viewed April 15th, 2008.
16 See also Collins, 2001; Dyer, 2004; Mayer, 1995 and Vowell, 1993.

are exactly what they used to be: hypocritical, homophobic arrogant, and politically retrograde" (Siegel, 2003: 9).

One of Warhol's famous epigrams says a lot about it: "If you want to know all about Andy Warhol, just look at the surface of my paintings and films and me, and there I am. There's nothing behind" (Berg, 1967, quoted in Goldsmith, 2004:90). Although the meaning of his work is in fact on the surface as he stated, contrary to what is generally thought as nothing there - he portrays meaningless subjects, with the creation of emptiness (he often used found images on his production). However, the signification of his work was (and perhaps still is) not accessible to the general public that is not aware of the codes implicitly in it; there are other implications pointed out by Collins:

> Warhol's images of Marlon Brando as a motorcyclist and Elvis Presley as gunslinger for example, carried two meanings, one of which was unavailable to heterosexuals. Because the *macho* cyclist and the cowboy with gun and holster were standard characters in gay erotic at the time, Warhol knew that readers of such materials would see in his works both homage to Hollywood and its star system and objects of desire (2001: 54).

8. Marlon Brando, 1966
Reproduction, A. Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts[17]



9. *Double Elvis*, 1963
Reproduction, A. Warhol F. for the Visual Arts[18]

[17] *Marlon Brando*, 1966 Reproduction, Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, source: http://artchive.com Last viewed: May 19, 2008
[18] *Double Elvis*, 1963 Reproduction, Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, source: http://artchive.com Last viewed: May 19, 2008

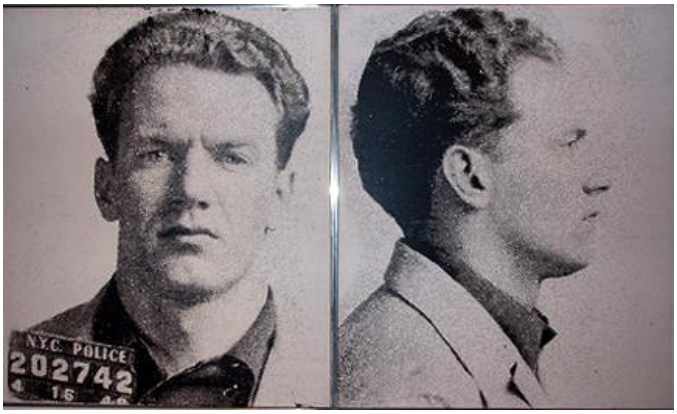
Another example is Warhol's *Thirteen Most Wanted Men,* a black-and-white panel composed by FBI head shots commissioned to be at the 1964 *New York World Fair* on the facade of the New York Pavilion, was censured for unclear political reasons, but what is interesting is its double connotation: Those men are wanted by the FBI for their crimes, but also they are wanted by Warhol, for his queerness. This panel connects outlaws and homosexuals, as Richard Meyer points out:

> The circuitry set up between the image of the outlaw and Warhol's outlawed desire for the image [. . .] and for these men. [. . .] turns on a double entendre: it is not only that these men are wanted by FBI, but the very act of wanting men constitutes a form of criminality if the wanter is also male, if, say, the wanter is Warhol (Meyer, 1995: 98).

Moreover, Crimp has extended his reading of the case along with other authors concluding that the censorship against Warhol's panel is part of a moral clean up in the preparation of the New York Fair, as he states: "New York authorities stepped up their harassment of public gay establishments and activities in the period leading up to the 1964 fair" (Crimp, 1999: 61). It the end, the panel was only exhibited a couple of days before the Fair started, and because of its double implication, would as Warhol was concerned that his work would be responsible for the capture of these men:

> A bunch of us went to Flushing Meadow to have a look at it [*The Thirteen Most Wanted Men*], but by the time we got there, you could only see the images faintly coming through the paint they'd just put over them. In a way I was glad the mural was gone: now I wouldn't have to feel responsible if one of the criminals ever got turned in to the FBI because someone had recognized him from my pictures (Warhol, 1980: 90).

10. *Thirteen Most Wanted Men*, 1964 – Installation
Reproduction: A. Warhol F. for Visual Arts 19



11. *Thirteen Most Wanted Men*, 1964 – Close up
Reproduction: Art Gallery of Ontario, no date 20

Despite the promise of assembling and for the first time exhibiting original contexts, *Thirteen Most Wanted Men,* had again been censured (Siegel, 2003: 10). At the Berlin exhibition *Andy Warhol: Retrospective*, in 2001, was coincidently opening at the same time the FBI was releasing the new wanted list after September 11th, the curator Sebastian, afraid of giving "rise to the wrong connotations", substituted the panel for *The Last Supper* (1989). He justified the change by saying: "[Warhol] was a very Catholic person, a highly moral artist" (Bastian, quoted in Siegel, 2003: note 15). It is relevant to mention here that Warhol's *Last Supper* has less to do with his Catholic childhood than with an intention to criticize the loss of the value of a holy image through commercialization. Warhol used a cheap reproduction from *The Last Supper* and reproduced it more than 100 times for a single exhibition.

According to Siegel, Sebastian did not explain the possible negative connotations which could be raised by showing Warhol's *Most Wanted* under the

contemporary political situation. Nevertheless, based on Siegel's interpretation, it could have brought on the same set of questions that it would have, in 1964. Warhol "work's subversiveness resides in its radical critique of state of power and, specifically, in queer nature of that critique" (2003:10). Siegel means that beside the playful connotation of gay desire in the title *Wanted Men*, described by Meyer; it also could problematize the imperative power of the FBI and the US (a metaphor for "normal") against Others (as a metaphor for deviants) – for instance Vietnam and communism in Warhol's time, and Al-Quaeda in our time.

Warhol produced paintings, silk-screens, Polaroid photographs, films, sculptures, concerts, happenings, vinyl; the list is endless and the amount hardly countable. This multifaceted, massive and eclectic assembly of artworks is united by one *raison d'être*, rooted in his life, desires, environment and identity, as Vowell points out: To address Warhol's life away from the art-historical context cheapens his contribution to art history; to look at his art without discussing his life is to fail to meet him on his own terms" (1993: 25). However, what has been emphasized in his production and personality is the random aspect of his subject matter and his disattachment of those subjects, time and people around him, as a summary of the American way of living through consumerism and superstars. This is likewise shown in one of the most well-known art book series – *The Art of the 20th Century*::

> Value, feelings, seems not to exist for Warhol. He registered race riots, suicides, airplanes crashes, and the atomic bomb, the electrical chair with the same detachment that he brought to registering soup cans, revolvers, flowers and Brillo boxes. […] There has been much debate about whether Warhol was truly the detached, cold-blooded reporter he made himself out to be, or whether his show of emotionless-ness concealed a fundamentally moralistic attitude (Ingo F. Walther, 2000: 323).

19 *Thirteen Most Wanted Men*, 1964 – Installation view, reproduction, A. Warhol F. for Visual Arts, source: *Art Journal*, Vol. 62, No.1 (Spring, 2003), p.7

13 *Thirteen Most Wanted Men*, 1964 – Close up, reproduction from the exhibition *at Art Gallery of Ontario* – no date, Source: http://www.flickr.com/photos/bamcat/184286135/, last viewed: May 19, 2008.

Nevertheless, the authors of the cited book do not clarify what exactly "moralist attitude" means, neither where it could be found on Warhol's production and life style. Warhol was queer, as he states[21], living around outcasts; drag, artists, writers, poets, different subculture members, pretty much open to all kind of intense experiences, from free love, to drugs, typically eminent from the 1960's counterculture attitude. Although the traces of his homosexuality were all over, as we will see, from his subject matter in paintings, relationships and movies, Warhol was astute in managing his homosexuality. Firstly, we have to consider the homophobic atmosphere in the pre-Stonewall period, as Lobel points out: "Warhol had come of age in the 1940s and 1950s, when homosexuality was subject to widespread cultural prohibition. [. . .] Warhol was only too aware of the problematics of expressing certain desires" (Lobel, 1989: 44). In his early years at New York City, he had a frustrating experience when a series of his homoerotic drawings were not accepted for exhibition at the *Tanager Gallery*. Later, in the winter of 1956, those drawings were shown at *Serendipity 3* – a fashionable dessert place frequented by queers, and in a little gallery next door called *Bodily* (Burns, 2006). Furthermore, Lobel sentences: "[S]ome things just should not be aired in public, let alone openly displayed within the frame of the work of art. [. . .] Better to keep them private, hidden, unseen" (1989: 44).

Indeed, most of the myths about Warhol's personality as being shallow, passive, boring or alienated are not borne out if we examine his long life and diverse oeuvre. As Seigel contends: "Warhol's literalism towards attitudes about [any] particular reality was […] a calculated provocation. As such, his literalism indicates as well his implicit challenge to normalizing and moralizing attitudes toward

[21] "We spent the night in a motel near there, and once again it was the-boys-in-one-room-the-girls-in-the-other scene, even though somebody kept telling the little old lady who ran the place, *But we're all queer.*" (Warhol, 1980: 192-3)

countercultural differences" (2003: 12 emphasis added). Taking an overview of his work, it is worth noting that in his early phase, paintings like *Advertisements* (1960) and *Nancy* (1961), were less literally concerned with homosexuality, as I will show later, than were his movies, such as *Sleep* (1963) in which he films his lover at the time - the poet John Giorno - sleeping. The outcome is an eight hour film of the homoerotic gaze – long takes from different angles of his naked torso. The body is relaxed, passive, and unaware of the camera gaze, which takes advantage of the sleeping situation to scan the flesh in slow motion. The long slow gaze dominates the situation, zooming to show the body in parts for its own pleasure. The sleeping male body serves the other as a visual object of pleasure, as it is usually framed female bodies in the cinema.

12. Sleep, 1963 - film still [22]
Reproduction unknown

13. *Sleep*, 1963 - Film strip [23]
Reproduction unknown

It is also interesting to mention that the subject of *Sleep*, which could apparently be perceived as a random choice for Warhol's first movie, is indeed a great tactic of tying up his daily experience – Giorno was his lover and a good

22 Film still from Sleep, 1963, source http://www.thisislondon.co.uk/arts/article-23397997-details/Andy+made+me+famous/article.do - Last viewed: May 20, 2008

23 Film strip from Sleep, 1963, source: http://www.warholprints.com/cgi-bin/Warhol.Andy/gallery.cgi?category=Warhol.Early Last viewed: May 19, 2008

sleeper[24], to the social art atmosphere – a rising in underground filmmaking, and to his oeuvre – movie became in the following years Warhol's main media. Warhol's apparently detachment from his environment – people and social / cultural engagements could be interpreted as a negation of the impassionate, genius and "macho" artist represented by Pollack.

In as much as Warhol seems to be "cold-blooded", distant and an isolated artist, his attitude did not follow the normative codes of the time. His odd manners in dealing with sensible situations were unexpected of him - he could not be comprehended according to those norms. Indeed, he creates his own way to subvert those codes: on the one hand he refused to accept normative codes, escaping with evasive answers, leading people to see him as alienated; on the other hand, he states that everything about himself is on the surface of his paintings, in the scene of his films, on the pages of his diaries (for those lucky enough to see them).

On the Surface

In psychoanalytic theory it is believed that it is through the surface of the body that the Ego – is shaped. The Ego is the part of the personality that negotiates between reality and the Id instinct's needs and desires. For Freud, the Ego is described as "first and foremost a bodily ego; it is not merely a surface entity, but it itself the projection of a surface" – it is through the tactile sensation on the flesh and its projection that the Ego is first formed (Freud, 2001: 26). While, for Lacan, it is the infant's own image in the mirror that provides the ground for the construction of the Ego. Nevertheless, it is on the surface of the body – physical and/or visual sensations

[24] Giorno says: "I was a kid in my early 20s, working as a stockbroker. I was living this life where I would see Andy every night, get drunk and go into work with a hangover every morning. The stock market opened at 10 and closed at three. By quarter to three I would be waiting at the door, dying to get home so I could have a nap before I met Andy. I slept all the time – when he called to ask what I was doing he would say, Let me guess, sleeping?" (Giorno, quoted in Goldsmith, 2004: 21)

of the body - that provides a ground for the unconscious desires to be negotiated within reality, as we can survey on Warhol's surfaces, his body, but also painting and movies, are the locus where his sexuality is negotiated within and between a homophobic society and a queer subculture (Benson, 1994: 101).

In this section I will address some of Warhol's paintings, films, interviews, books, and his life style performance, focusing on his construction of subjectivity, which was placed outside of the codes of normativity. Indeed, Warhol creates his own codes of signification, but rather than inventing a new system opposed to normativity, he plays ironically with those codes, subverting them in a way that apparently seems obvious, superficial, open and public. However, there is a further way of reading his codes, which can lead to private and secret layers of signification, as we will understand during the analysis of his oeuvre. He stands for transparency, and oversimplification, but also ambiguity, confusion and mysticism. These aspects of his personality are not oppositions, rather aggregate new meanings.

Perhaps, that is one of Warhol's greatest deeds: his creation of his own myth. As Lobel puts it: "Warhol's persona presents us with a seeming paradox, for he appears to have conducted himself simultaneously in the most public and private of ways" (1996: 44), which continuously leads us to (mis)interpret, love and hate, however still admire him, from outcast figures to the most homophobic conservative curators and art critics. Each person relates to his work through their conceptions of them "selves". Nevertheless, that may not always be what Warhol meant to convey.

Silver, Mirror, Space, Stars, Amphetamine: Depth in Emptiness

> A lot of people thought that it was me everyone at the Factory was hanging around, that I was some kind of big attraction that everyone come to see, but that's absolutely backward: it was me who was hanging around everyone else. I just pay the rent, and the crowds came simply because the door was open. People weren't particularly interested in seeing me, they were interested in seeing each other. They came to see who came.
>
> Warhol, *Popism: The Warhol Sixties*

The Factory was Warhol's studio, where he produces his visual art work, paintings, silk-screens, sculptures and most of his films. At the same time, it also was an open place where people frequently visited, to see what was going on, or perhaps to be in his films. In this sense, the popularity of the Factory "produced artworks and personalities, including Warhol's" (Dyer, 2004:33). The Factory had four different addresses all in New York City, although when someone refers to the Factory's wild atmosphere it is more likely to be about the Silver Factory that operated at East 47th street from 1963-1967 (Bill Name, on Griffths, 1889, documentary). In fact, the Factory was all painted in silver, as Warhol explains:

> Billy was responsible for the silver at the Factory. [. . .] He bought cans of silver sprayed everything with it, right down to the toilet bowl. Why he loved silver so much I don't know. It must have been an amphetamine thing – everything always went back to that. But it was great, it was a perfect time to think silver. Silver was the future, it was spacy – the astronauts wore silver suits – Shepard, Grissom, and Glenn had already been up in them, and their equipment was silver, too. And silver was also the past – the Silver Screen – Hollywood actresses photographed in silver sets. And maybe more than anything, silver was narcissism – mirrors were backed with silver (Warhol, 1980: 83).

From Warhol's quote above, it seems that the silver in the Factory happened as an amphetamine accident, nevertheless it meant a great deal for the time. The mirror symbolizes the relation between narcissism, which refers to the Greek myth of Narcissus who falls in love with his own reflection in the water - and the male homosexual through the emergence of the underground movie scene in New York City in the early 1960's (Brennan, 2002). Warhol was among those filmmakers that

were exploring cinema through subcultures, in which they belonged, as Warhol states: “[P]eople thought the Factory was a place where everybody had the same attitude about everything; the truth was, we were all odds-and-ends misfits, somehow misfiting together” (Warhol, 1980: 276). Their films were basically about them - how they lived and what they did – and furthermore to complete the cycle of narcissism, for them – as their own audience, claims by Brennan:

> By making films mostly about themselves, their friends, and each other, these filmmakers fostered an underground world whose *raison d'être* was largely recording of it. Significantly, many of these underground filmmakers identified as male homosexuals. [. . .] These films arguably formed the first cinema made by, for and about male homosexuals [. . .]. Rather than instituting the first gay-identified cinema, these films more accurately mark a pioneering moment for queer cinema, in keeping with the more contemporary usage of queer to mean sexualities that resist easy categorization. (2002)

Beyond the constant wild atmosphere of parties - the Factory had “a high power drug infiltration, mostly amphetamine and attracted strong and wired personalities”, as Billy Name – The Factory keeper - says in the documentary *Warhol’s Cinema;* It was a place of intensive creativity and collaboration (Bill Name, on Griffths, 1889, documentary). The Factory dropouts also jointed to show in mutual support for Warhol’s queer assignment, as Siegel claims: “[T]he 1960’s Factory artistic production [had] the commitment of Warhol and his superstars to a project of aesthetically and erotically publicizing their way of life” (2003: 13). This project’s aims were clear from the beginning, as Name comments:

> Along with the amphetamines and the wild people another magnetic was the overtness of the gay factor. The gay movement has just become a cultural force and Andy [. . .] said ok lets show that now. [. . .] Lets them see man loving man, woman loving woman (Bill Name, on Griffths, 1889, documentary).

Another interesting aspect of Warhol’s movies is the divisionary categorization between documentary and fiction, which is blurred. It doesn’t mean that from time to

time he was shifting between the two genres, rather that the same movie contains aspects of both documentary and fiction. For example in his infamous *Chelsea Girls* (1966) which is supposedly filmed live in the Chelsea Hotel most of the scenes were set up. Indeed, the hotel was partially the set of the film (many scenes were filmed at the Factory), not all personages live in the hotel. The hotel functions as a unifier for the scenes and the structure for the film. In this sense*, Chelsea Girls*, in a certain extend can be considered a fiction.

However, Warhol's film usually comes to be filmed from only a basic simple idea of a set or a situation that the film would go around. He neither has a plot nor does he follow it, as he asserts: "I only wanted to find great people and let them be themselves and talk about what they usually talked about and I'd film them for a certain length of time and that would be the movie" (Warhol, 1980: 139).

His "stars" play themselves - opposed to the idea that an actor "acts" as someone else rather than his/her own personage, as he reports:

> Once I heard Eric telling someone about the direction I gave him for the first scene. Andy just told me to tell the story of my life and to somewhere along the line take off all my clothes. After thinking for a second, he added and that's what I've been doing ever since. Their lives became part of my movies, and of course the movies became part of their lives; they'd get so into them that pretty soon you couldn't separate the two. You couldn't tell the difference – and sometime neither they (Warhol, 1980: 227).

Warhol's directing style contrasts with what is expected: he does not give specific instructions on how they should act, what the dialogues should be; it is up to the "stars" to make them up, but since they are playing themselves, they just have to be themselves while the camera is rolling, however still a construct. It brings us to the insight that Warhol's movies in a certain extension are also documentaries. It seems a quasi anthropological work, as George Marcus calls "modern ethnography" - to distinguish from the traditional form that seeks to be "the distant observing gaze",

while the latter ”identify and recognize the similarities between who study and those who are studied” (Marcus quoted in Brennan, 2002). Further, this identification between them constructs a collaborative project dealing with queer visibility – as Siegal claims:” aesthetically and erotically publicizing their way of life” and so both sides of the camera were devoted to the success of the project. In this sense, the reality captured by the camera became peculiar to be valuated in the process of producing reality. As Tyler observes in the film *Fuck (Blue Movie* -1968), in which Viva and Louis Waldon have intercourse, talk about Vietnam War and eat,

> We are watching *reality* in the instance of two organic human bodies on a bed, and elsewhere, intent on doing something, but doing it only as they are prompted by some inner impulse to do it; part of which as I say, is doing it for Andy (quoted in Siegel, 2003: 11).

Another example of a movie that, in an explicitly way, communicates an intention to destabilize normativity is the *Kiss* (1963) this is a 50 minute long movie composed by close-ups of heterosexual and homosexual couples kissing each other for 3 minutes. The idea for *Kiss* came from the Hayes Office prohibition of actors in the movies, touching lips for more than 3 seconds. Hayes Office was a self regulatory agency - officially called Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of Americas - created by the major film companies to provide internal regulation for moral conduct.

14. *Kiss*, 1963 – film strip[25]
Reproduction: Unknown

15. *Kiss*, 1963 – film strip[26]
Reproduction: Unknown

Although the identification between Warhol and his "stars" puts them together into a quasi documentary project foreseeing normativity deconstruction, it immediately raises uncertainties about the reality produced by and within. How much does Warhol's camera affect the way his "stars" perform? This concern leads me to bring back Butler's conception of performativity and performance. Although Warhol's "stars" subvert and parody normativity through the constant repetition of gender "norms", which in Butler's term it could be considered performativity or performance. The difference between them concerns the will of the "starts" in doing so, which in this case it is blur. If on one hand the "stars" are "doing it for Andy", which implies will to do it and it can be understood as a performance, on the other hand, what they are "doing for Andy" is something that they already have been doing, which leads us to believe that it is performativity. So, in this sense, we can understand that performance is itself performativity.

Collecting Signifiers

Sex is nostalgia for when you used to want it, sometimes. Sex is nostalgia for sex.

Warhol, *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol: From A to B and Back Again*

> The people that I loved were the ones like Freddy, the leftovers of show business, turned down at auditions all over town. They couldn't do something more than once, but their one time was better than anyone else's. They had star quality but no star ego – they didn't know how to push themselves. They were too gifted to lead *regular lives*, but they were also too unsure of themselves to ever become real professionals (Warhol, 1980: 71).

From the quote above we can recognize how Warhol constructed his own "star system"[27], his own world. The name "Factory", apart from "leftovers although gifted" visitors, plays on unambiguous ideal of the assembly line, which is directly connected to the methodology of his work – mass production, series of portraits, desire "to be a machine" opposed to be a craftsman, and leaving the person geniality behind. However, factory also means a place of work in opposition to the home – a place to live, to distinguish between public and private. At his house, Warhol built his personal world, in which a few people had access. In the privacy of his home he held a huge art collection, which just became known in its own magnitude after his death.

In the spring of 1988, Sotheby's Auction House sold ten thousand items from Warhol's art collection. On the auction exhibition, Reif – a journalist from *The New York Times* reports: [Warhol's collection] will present one of the largest and most diversified holdings ever auctioned at Sotheby's - 19th-century Americana, Art Deco classics, American Indian artifacts, postwar art and 20th-century jewelry, watches and collectibles" and by collectibles she adds" 175 cookie jars, 313 watches, 57 Navajo blankets, 210 Bakelite bracelets, 1,659 pieces of Russel Wright pottery and

[25] Kiss, 1963 – film strip - source:http://visualarts.qld.gov.au/media/andy_warhol/details.asp?ID=102 – Last viewed: May 20, 2008

[26] Kiss, 1963 – film strip – source:http://www.artbrokerage.com/artdataretail/warhol2/warhol_kiss.htm - Last viewed: May 20, 2008

[27] Paul Morrissey – Warhol's collaborator and a kind of office manager. He compared the success of the Factory organization in producing stars with the "old MGM star system" (Warhol, 1980: 278)

170 chairs" (Reif, 1988). The extent of Warhol's commitment to his collection has shown us how important it was for him. Among those objects he constructed his private world, in view of the fact that the compulsory heterosexual world is not for him, he creates his own world, a world in which his existence makes sense, as Lobel states: "In the collection objects are accumulated, ordered, and narrativized into a coherent whole, an activity that echoes the attempt to construct a stable unity out of the heterogeneous elements. [. . It is] a sort of playscape of the artist's mind, a space of privacy and retreat" (Lobel, 1996: 46).

A collection, in the sense of constructing a world that you can fit into, it is also a link between people with the same interest. In the case of Warhol's collection, the very act of collecting is a code to identifying other males with the same sex-desire, as Wayne Koestenbaum proposes through Oscar Wild's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* : "Collecting is a code for homosexual activity and identity […] - the collector who, like the libertine, has no family, no social ties, no loyalties, no interior. It's not clear whether Oscar Wild's Dorian Gray obsessively collects exotic musical instruments, jewels, perfumes, embroideries, and ecclesiastical vestments because he's gay, or whether Wild tells us about collection because he can't mention homosexuality (Koestenbaum, 1993:62). Moreover, those codes of identification, are only understandable to members of a particular subculture, function, at the same time as a form of recognition - the act of displaying would be a hidden (coded) act of self-revelation - and exclusion, as Lobel clarifies the necessity for those codes: "Historically, prohibitions against homosexual activity have often necessitated a reliance on identificatory codes, [which] are intended to reconcile the simultaneous necessity for secrecy and display" Lobel, 1996: 46). "The necessity of display" is not the same as exhibitionism, rather it is the latent need for a sensation of belonging to a group, and "secrecy"; a self protected mechanism against a homophobic world.

Dislocating Meanings

I like to be the right thing in the wrong place and the wrong thing in the right place.

Warhol, *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol: From A to B and Back Again.*

Another remarkable aspect of a collection which Lobel points out is the dislocation of the object from it original use, transforming not only the object, but its meaning, as he claims: “[Collection is] a practice that radically decontextualizes objects and subsumes them within a new narrative structure”. The exploitation of the dislocation of the objects’ meaning from its origin, or as we have previously seen “a twister of signification”, is a “potential critical tool” wisely used by queer to subvert normativity (Lobel, 1996: 45). In this light, we can recognize the association between Warhol’s queerness, his efforts towards a collection and his oeuvre. Moreover, it is possible to take an overview on the artist’s production in order to prove that his oeuvre is united on the conception of the dislocation and recontextualization of his subject matter, for instance, found photographs that he used for his portraits, and for the *Death and Disaster Series* (1963), the transformation of soap pads boxes into a sculpture - *Brillo Box* (1964) and soup cans into paintings - *Campbell’s soup cans* (1964).

16. *Brillo Box*, 1964
Photographer: Giulio Saggin[28]

17. *Campbell's Soup Can*, 1962
Photographer**:** Sid Gomez Hildawa[29]

Pop does not just dislocate the meaning of an object from one point to another, but also reverts back to its original concept, as Warhol evaluates in the case of *Stable Gallery* – where his first exhibit is held in New York and in the case of the *Church* – a discotheque opened in 1968:

> It [*Stable Gallery*] had been an actual stable where rich people kept their horses […]. To use a real stable space and call it the *Stable Gallery* was a very modern idea for the fifties, which generally was a time when people put on airs: usually they remodeled and redecorated, […] to camouflage what they basically were. But in the sixties, you'd go and play up what a thing really was, you'd leave it as is […]. [And then in '68 was] a discotheque called Church they left the religious fixtures exactly the way they were: even the confessional booths stayed –they just installed pay phones in them. Playing up what things really were, was very Pop, very sixties (1980: 30-31).

From this perspective pop plays back and forth with the concepts of real and its origins, exposing what is already known and reveling the meaning that is already there. It escorts us towards a set of questions concerning the assumptions of real

[28] *Brillo Box*, 1964, photographer: Giulio Saggin at Brisbane's Gallery of Modern Art – January 2008 Source: http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/01/06/2132536.htm – last viewed: May 19, 2008.

[29] *Campbell's soup can*, 1962, photographer**:** Sid Gomez Hildawa at Museum of Modern Art – NY – June 2007 Source: http://momahildawa.blogspot.com/2007/06/andy-warhol-campbells-soup-cans-1962.html – last view: May 19, 2008.

and original that is in fact a conception imposed by normativity. The inquired of the genesis of objects and subjects is relevant for this study because it is through those questions that it is possible to denaturalize the sexual binary system, in which sex, gender and desire are aligned within an internal coherence, as discussed in chapter 5.

Feeling Pop, Seeing Pop

> I was never embarrassed about asking someone, literally, What should I paint? Because Pop comes from the outside, and how is asking someone for ideas any different from looking for them in a magazine?
>
> Warhol, *Popism – The Warhol Sixties*

Although, the elements that constitute Pop Art, such as the choice of popular, ordinary matters from daily life and its recontextualization in a playful way, are present in Warhol's oeuvre, he was never part of the Pop Art movement, in the sense of belonging to a group, working together. Henry Geldzahler – the curator of the twenty-century art at the Metropolitan Museum during the 1960's and 1970's said to Warhol in the beginning of his career as an artist: "It was like a science fiction movie – you pop artists in different parts of the city [New York], unknown to each other, rising up out of the muck and staggering forwards with your paintings in front of you" (Warhol, 1980: 3). In fact, Warhol tried the approach of other pop artists, but he was rejected by the New York based American precursors of the movement" (Warhol, 1980: 14). Roy Lichtenstein, Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns were relatively well-known working on the pop theme; while Warhol was struggling to get someone interested in his work as an artist[30]. Warhol's *Nancy* (1961) painting, revels a great deal about his feeling of exclusion by those artists, as Collins interpretation shows:

[30] There were two main reasons for Warhol being rejected by those artists: firstly he was a well-known commercial artist, working on main advertising campaigns and magazines and secondly at the beginning of his career as an artist, he was not much keen to dissimulate his homosexuality (Burns, 2006). The advertisement field was less homophobic than the art one.

Like many of Warhol's works at the time, it turns on a pun. *Nancy* was a derogatory name used in both gay and straight worlds for effeminate and presumably homosexual male […]. Nancy's need for additional protection against inclement weather – reveals the basis of this dual psychological satisfaction. One the obvious level, the reference is to the chilly homophobic climate in the New York art world [and the other] Catholicism, too, provided a frosty climate, from which he also sought protection (2001: 76-77).

18. *Nancy*, 1960
Reproduction: Claudia Martins[31]

Nevertheless, after Warhol's first exhibition at *Leo Castelli Gallery* in Los Angels, he became an icon of Pop Art. Rather then being influenced by a certain movement and later by others[32], Warhol's art work was pop throughout his life time. Indeed, Not only was Warhol's art Pop but he himself was a piece of Pop Art, through his philosophy, relationships, interviews; he acts pop, he sees pop, he was pop, as he states:

> The farther west we drove, the more Pop everything looked on the highways. Suddenly we all felt like insiders because even though Pop was everywhere – was the thing about it, most people still took it for granted, whereas we were dazzled by it – to us, it was the new Art. Once you got Pop, you could never see America the same way again (Warhol, 1980: 50).

[31] Nancy, 1960 painting on canvas – source: McShine, Kynaston. (ed.) (1989) *Andy Warhol A Retrospective*, Boston: Bullfinch Press/Little, Brown and company, pp, 153
[32] For instance, Robert Rauschenberg has emigrated at the end of 1950's from Abstract Expressionism to Pop Art. (Lippard, 1992:22).

Furthermore, I want to draw attention to the straightforward connection between Warhol's daily experience and his oeuvre. Warhol's feeling towards his environment had totally shifted from 1960 to 1963: from not belonging to the Pop group, expressed in his *Nancy* painting - he was felling alone and experienced an unwelcoming environment; to felling "like an insider" articulated in the quote above, when he was among with his friends; they drove from New York to Hollywood.

"Who Wants the Truth?"

I've heard people say, Tiger Morse was a fraud. Well, of course she was, but she as a real fraud. She'd made up more stories about herself for the newspapers that I did. Nobody knew where she came from, really, but who cared? She was an original, and she showed a lot of people how to have fun.

Warhol, *Popism – The Warhol Sixties*

Warhol had a very particular and ambiguous relationship with the press. At the same time he was open to receive any one – from a High school paper (Warhol, 1980:251) to the main art publication in the country; he turned out to be in a non collaborative interviewee, for instance, when he was interviewed by *Art Voice* in 1962. The reporter asked: "What is Pop Art?" And Warhol answered: "Yes. What is Pop Art trying to say? I don't know. Are Marilyn and Troy significant to you? Yes. Why? Are they your favorite movie stars? Yes" (Goldsmith, 2004:4). This is a non cooperative attitude observed in a collection of interviews which seem to be more a strategy to avoid some questions than a non-sense manner of being vague and alienated as many critics have said. Wolf points out Warhol's reasons for that on the introduction of *I'll Be Your Mirror – The selected Andy Warhol Interviews*: "If Warhol avoided answering a question in a direct way, there was a good chance it has to do with the formulaic, or canned, nature of that question" (Goldsmith, 2004: xiii).

There are several aspects to be considered here: Firstly, It was and still is a cliché to ask a visual artist about his/her predecessors, influences and origins[33], as those questions would be simple and direct keys to provide the idea about the artist's oeuvre[34]. Secondly, Warhol had a very critical opinion about interviews:

> I've found that almost all interviews are preordained. They know what they want to write about you and they know what they think about you before ever talk to you, so they're just looking for words and details from here and there to back up what they've already decided they're going to say" (Warhol, 1975: 78).

Thirdly, a part of Warhol's philosophical enquires concerning the state of Art - what could be considered art or not, what are the differences between art and commercial art and furthermore is an interview art? - He asked during many of his interviews if an interview could be a work of art (Goldsmith, 2004: xi). If we take into consideration that an interview is a commodity – commissioned or for sale - that is produced, edited and copyrighted under someone's name to publishing, there is a suggestive parallel between an artwork, commercial art and interviews.

Finally, Warhol subverts meanings and contents in a playful way, not just the subject matter of the interview, but the interview itself, as Wolf explains: "When asked: What is Pop Art? He replied, Yes. This utterance itself sounds pop, as if Warhol were providing an illustration, rather than a definition, of that word" (Goldsmith, 2004: xxvi). Warhol also used the same strategy of subverting the procedure when he was called to deliver a lecture about Pop Art and the process of making movies in 1967 at the Drew University, as Wolf explains:

[33] According to Goldsmith Bob Dylan, Susan Sontag among other personalities had similar attitude troubling their interviewers, when questioned about their procedures, origins and influences (Goldsmith, xviii, xix)

[34] It is simplest and reductionist to believe that those question would give a concrete view of an artist's oeuvre, Particularly in Warhol's case, in which the predecessor movement of Pop Art was Abstract Expressionist, that the geniality of the artist is transferred from his inner conflicts to the canvas – opposed to any of Warhol's conception. Besides, as he states in an expel attitude "the world of Abstract Expressionism was very macho" (Warhol, 1980: 15). He came from an immigrant and poor countryside family, which also could not explain his attraction for art, even more Pop Art – that it is connect to consume and urban desires.

> What they [the students] did get was a demonstration instead of explanation: rather than speaking about filmmaking, Warhol showed a film; his disappointing yes and no answer were as illustration of pop art rather and a discussion of it. The event was a performance, as were so many of the published interviews (ibid. xvii).

Following the same line, When Warhol was asked to talk about his background, he often suggested to the reporter to make it up, or even more ironic he asked the interviewer to answer for him, which he would repeat, as if those repeated words would be valid as a statement. For instance, in an interview in 1966 for the film *USA: Artists,* he said: I'm so empty today. "I can't think of anything. Why don't you just tell me the words and they'll just come out of my mouth" (ibid: 54). In another interview titled *Andy Warhol on Automation*, published at *Chelsea 18* in 1968, this and another interview supposedly conducted by his assistant Gerald Malanga, but in fact totally forged by the latter with Warhol's consent, as Goldsmith explains: "Malanga made up both the questions and answers based on having researched various industrials processes of automation, after Warhol's famous quote I think everybody should be a machine" (ibid. 56).

Warhol believed that a good performance was worth more than the real thing. In the occasion that Warhol was asked to delivery a series of lectures in Western U.S.A. but he was very busy working in New York. Allen Midgette suggested going in his place and performing Andy Warhol. By that time they had been playing each other identities at parties and opening in New York for years, saying that Warhol was Gerald, Eddie was Warhol, Viva as Ultra and so on. Warhol accepted the idea and said: "Allen was so good-looking that they [the students] might even enjoy him more" (ibid, 312). In doing so, Warhol subverts the conception of identity - its uniqueness and geniality[35], which has an implicit connection to the myth of artists. Four months

[35] Emphasis on the geniality of the artist was one of the main aspects of the Abstract Expressionism, which Warhol put himself away of it.

later when people from the College found out, comparing pictures from the lectures and from a newspaper, Warhol commented:

> I still thought that Allen made a much better Andy Warhol than I did.[. . .] Who want the truth? That's what show business is for – to prove that it's not what you are that counts, it's what they think you are (Warhol,1980: 313).

In performing each other identities, Warhol and his friends question the origin of identity, particularly a gender identity discussed by Butler. If an identity is constituted during of repetition of the acts of performance, it means that there is no original identity; it is formed by the continuous process of (trans)formation.

Divine Icons

I like to listen for new ways to say old things and old ways to say new things.

Warhol, *Popism – The Warhol Sixties*

The iconographic aspect of Warhol's portraits is evocative in both, content and style, as well we have seen in his paintings, sculptures and films. The content is his choices of subject matter: the outcasts (but not the same way that many others artists have done before – representing the Others, rather, Warhol's outcasts belong to the same context that he does) and mundane objects that are usually not portrayed in the Arts. Warhol's portrait style is compared to Christian iconostasis from the Byzantine Renaissance used by the Eastern Orthodox Church, in which Warhol was taken regularly by his mother during his childhood (Burns, 2006). Dyer points out the influence of the saints' portraits from the church in Warhol stars' portraits: "Stark frontality, simplicity of design and the subject's situation in empty space recalls the popular Christomorphic iconography of the Renaissance (2004: 36).

Warhol expropriates the style of the divine icons and translates them into his mundane world. In doing so, he places popular idols the same level of the divine icons, worshiping his Marilyns, Lizas, Elvis, the same way it would be done with Jesus and the saints in the church. Marilyn, Liz and Elvis are not random choices; they are representatives of the iconographical queer system.

In playing ironically with iconography, Warhol is questioning the system in which symbols are produced and venerated. It is worth noting here that in choosing famous people for his portraits, which are popular icons (and in a sense they have been already worshiping), he challenges the adoration performance, proposing an view that the same action is performed with divine icons, and is repeated with popular idols. Furthermore, in the case of Marilyn, Liz and Elvis, that are queer icons, he performs a repetition but with a difference, and it is through this difference that he sends his message.

19. Liz, 1964
Reproduction unknown[36]

20. *Saint George*, no date
Author: unknown
Reproduction unknown[38]

21. *Mao*, 1973
Reproduction unknown[37]

36 Liz, 1964, reproduction unknown, source: www.artnews.com – last viewed March 15th , 2008

[37] Mao, 1973, reproduction unknown, source: www.artnews.com – last viewed March 15th , 2008
[38] Saint George – iconography from the Byzantine Eastern Orthodox Church, no date, reproduction unknown, source: http://www.gsinai.com/rw/icons/panel_icons_Saints.php – last viewed May 19, 2008

Difference Through Repetition

Apparently, most people love watching the same basic thing, as long as the details are different. But I'm the opposite: if I'm going to sit and watch the same thing I saw the night before, I don't want it to be essentially the same – I want it to be exactly the same. Because the more you look at the same exactly thing, the more the meaning goes away; and the better and emptier you feel.

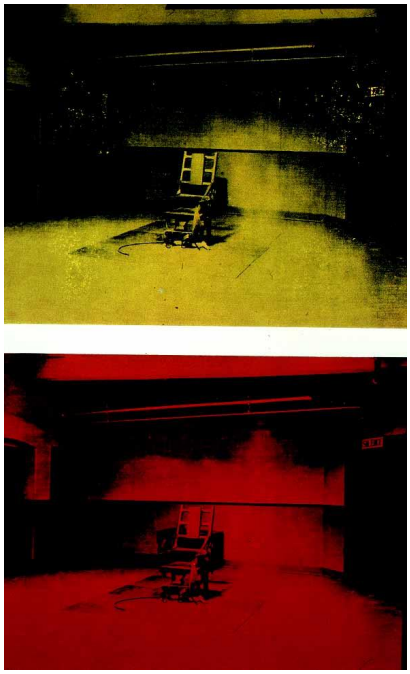
Warhol*, Popism – The Warhol Sixties*

Repetition is another recurrent aspect in Warhol's oeuvre: Repetition of performances, style, and images. Through silkscreen technology he has printed uncountable numbers of Marilyns, Lizas, Jacks, and Elvis, using the same matrix and just alternating the color, format and base. On a direct reading of those repetitions, we can observe his intention to deflate the idea of a unique and single piece of art found in the traditions of the Art field. In a subjective analysis those multiple repetitions can be understood as part of his ethical project of queer visibility, reveling infinity outcomes (Marilyns / sexual relations) generated from a single matrix (screen / person). Furthermore, he also had produced series of screens in which a single image was duplicated many times on the same canvas, as is evident in his series *Death and Disaster, Coca-Cola* and *Flowers.*

The images of commodities and disasters - that we have been saturated with seeing every day, on the news - Warhol transferred with the same intensity of repetition, to the Museums and Galleries. The displacement of the venues, from the pages of the newspapers and on the TV screens, to the art venues, brings back the concern about their content, which due to the overexposure by the media had already lost its effect, for instance the woman that was poisoned by a tuna fish can, or an electric chair. Though, the effect produced by the process of displacement of those subjects into an art institution is not any less ambiguous, as most of Warhol's work is. Simultaneously it provokes oddness and consequently a concern about the subject portrayed, since an Art institution is a place for contemplation and not for action; it

also has reverse effect on the viewers – an anesthesia. In fact, the subject returns to its anterior state of unaffectedness, by the same position of apathy that was perceived when it was overexposed by the media.

22. *Tunafish Disaster*, 1963
Reproduction: Claudia Martins[39]



23. *Electric Chair*, 1963
Reproduction: Unknown[40]

However the most remarkable aspect of Warhol's repetition of images is the process of duplication, which generates mistakes by which the differences become visible. In other words, the process of making the same image over and over produces small mistakes, which usually happens in any production line. The interesting thing is that Warhol did not dispose those images that the matrix had skipped, indeed it is exactly because of those defects that he preferred the works, it is through those mistakes that you can see the differences, as Dyer points out:

While the basic design is repeated, not two prints are the same. The silkscreening is sloppy and never identical applied. [. . .] Focusing on the differences between the images reveals that the similarities between images are structural and that their structure produces their differences. [. . .] Warhol's images turned out to be, not series of repetitions of the same image, but series of differential repetitions (2004: 37).

24. *Marilyns*, circa 1967
Reproduction: unknown[41]

In Warhol's process of reproduction, he generates a copy, but because of those mistakes a copy is never exactly a perfect reproduction of the original, neither are there two copies of the same work, as Dyer affirms:

The weight of Warhol's silkscreens is the difference produced by small accidents through the process of making copies. So, the irregular difference is the feature that makes each work be unique. Moreover, because those small accidents are unpredictable, the outcome is also a surprise and the artist, in the act of making copies, is opened to accept the difference produced (Dyer, 2004: 37).

[39]Tunafish Disaster, 1963 - Reproduction: Claudia Martins – source: McShine, Kynaston. (ed.) (1989) Andy Warhol A Retrospective, Boston: Bullfinch Press/Little, Brown and company, pp, 263
[40] Electric Chair, 1963 - Reproduction: Unknown – Source: www.artnews.com – last viewed March 15th , 2008
[41] *Marilyns*, circa 1963, reproduction: unknown, source: www.artnet.com – last viewed March 15th , 2008

In this light, we can compare Warhol's repetition of images that reproduces imperfect, although desirable copies, to Butler's insight that through repetition of the binary gender reproduces gender parodies – multiple and different sexual possibilities, which it is desirable for queers.

Further, the defects produced by the repetition of Warhol's paintings can never make two perfect copies, as we can see in the process of identity formation proposed by Butler. Identities are simultaneously "instituted and relinquished", depending on the context which it will serve for, which it leads to a wide range of possible assembling of identities, sometimes coherent, some other times divergent and ambiguous, but surely not complacent into "normal" limited structure .

Before I was shot, I always thought that I was half-there than all-there – I always suspected that I was watching TV instead of living life. […] Right when I was being shot and ever since, I knew that I was watching television.

Andy Warhol, *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol: From A to B and Back Again*

CONCLUSION

This thesis has shown how the subject is (de)constructed through corporeal performances and power relations. I argue this by departing from queer theory that challenges sexual identity as a stable, fixed, unified and assembled by normativity in a heterosexual project of classifying and marking bodies that do not fit the "norm." In this sense, throughout this paper I looked for ways to subvert binary sexual identities.

One way that I found this subversion is by looking at how various body-related subcultures resist normativity and claim agency. One such example was cyberpunk subculture, which craves disembodiment through a transformation of the entity into data and byte. However, in an opposite direction, a subculture of body-modification overexposes the decorated body seeking visibility. As a result, in this paper I have argued that two subcultures which appear to be in discordance are in fact, in their own way, claiming ownership of the body and rebelling against the "norm".

I used the theories of Foucault and Butler to explain how heterosexuality is destabilized through a system of power relations. This happens due to the failure of repeating binary gender performances makes visible the mechanism of binary gender is constructed. I show how Butler's argument of the simulated origins of this binary gender system – natural femininity and masculinity - is the location where it is possible to subvert gender identities.

In order to investigate how those subversions take place blurring Butler's conception of performance and the performativity, I used two case studies: the first case study showed how performance artists during the 1960's and 1970's used their bodies to endure the limits of the flesh and mind in provoking shock. The second

case study is how Andy Warhol, through his performance of apparent disembodiment, deals with his subjectivity.

The importance of this project is read the artist's bodies in performance artists and Andy Warhol through the lens of Foucault and Butler. In the process of my research about the materiality of the body, I investigated the use of artists' bodies in the 1960's and 1970's seeking to understand the reason in which the body reemerged in contemporary art. I have concluded that the body has not left either the art scene or the concerning of Western society. What my research shows how bodily negotiations of identity, sexuality and agency occur outside of normative space. My research opens the door for a similar investigation on how subjective experiences of bodily performance can influence the process of identity formation.

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