

ACTA
ACADEMIAE
ARTEM
VILNENSIS
80-81

KŪNAS: NE LAIKU IR BE VIETOS

THE BODY. OUT OF TIME AND
WITHOUT A PLACE



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ACTA ACADEMIAE ARTIUM VILNENSIS

Leidžiamas nuo 1993 m. 4 kartus per metus /
Published quarterly since 1993



Lietuvos
mokslo
taryba

Leidinį pagal „Valstybinės lituanistinių tyrimų ir sklaidos
2016–2024 metų programą“ finansuoja Lietuvos mokslo taryba,
sklaidos projekto finansavimo sutarties Nr. LIP-070/2016
The publication is sponsored by the National Development
Programme of Lituanistics (2016–2024)
of the Research Council of Lithuania, agreement No. LIP-070/2016

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Straipsniai vertinti dviejų recenzentų / The articles were reviewed
by two experts

Straipsniai įtraukti į *EBSCO Publishing* sąrašą / All articles
are included in *EBSCO Publishing* (Academic Search Complete,
Academic Search Premier, Art & Architecture Complete,
Humanities International Complete, Humanities
International Index)

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Bartram O'Neill

HERE AND THERE: TWO WORKS, TEN COUNTRIES

RECENZIJA

Arūnas Sverdiolas

ATVAIZDO GYVASTIS IR JOS MECHANIZMAI

ISBN 978-609-447-221-3



9 786094 472213

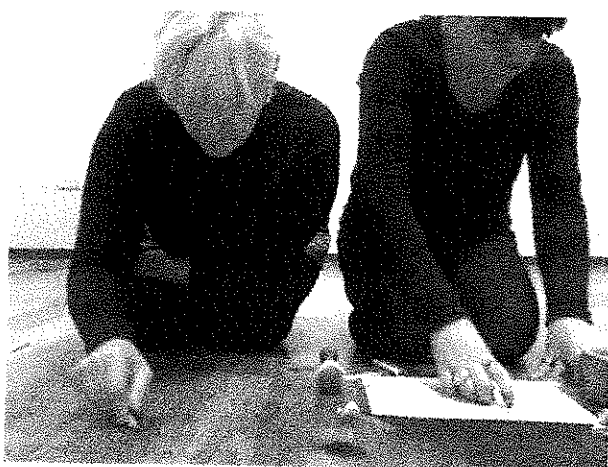
ISSN 1392-0316

HERE AND THERE: TWO WORKS, TEN COUNTRIES¹

Bartram O'Neill

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Performed by²

Speaker 1

Speaker 2

“The Body: Out of Time and Without a Place”

(Vilnius, 22nd May 2015)

Duration –

Overall, the performance/paper should last
20 minutes.

¹ Performansas-pranešimas „Here and There: Two Works, Ten Countries“ buvo atliktas 2015 m. gegužės 22 d. Vilniuje, konferencijoje „Kūnas: ne laiku ir be vietos“. Įkūnydamos menininkes Angelą Bartram ir Mary O'Neill, performansą atliko Greta Bernotaitė ir Inga Galinytė.

² Performed by Greta Bernotaitė ir Inga Galinytė.

Structure –

It is structured as a conversation – taking turns.

Speaker 1

Repeating phrases from recording.

The audio element has four sections. Each section begins with “Repeat after me” and is followed by eight words or phrases.

Speaker 2

Read paper.

The paper element is the text in blue.

SECTION 1

Speaker 1: Play recording on headphones
and repeat words phrases 1,

mé

tú

sé

sí

muid

sinn

sibh

said

Pause and wait while Speaker 2 reads.

Speaker 2: Read text 'I, I am, I am here, I am speaking here'

In December 2013 Bartram O'Neill performed 'I, I am, I am here, I am speaking here' as part of Performa 1, Art Basel Miami (USA). This was performed remotely from the U.K. through two 'bodies' in Miami. Unlike the theatrical tradition of script, rehearsal, interpretation etc., this work required these 'bodies' to act as channels or 'puppets' for the performers in the UK. Using text messaging and Skype, the UK based 'performers' and authors of the work communicated to the audience in Miami. Meanwhile, the UK authors listened to the performance through a telephone connection with an audience member, thereby being both performers and audience of their work.

SECTION 2

Speaker 1: Play recording on headphones and repeat words phrases 2,

Ta mé

Ta tú

Ta sé

Ta sí

Ta muid

Ta sinn

Ta sibh

Ta said

Pause and wait while Speaker 2 reads.

Speaker 2: Read text 'You had to be there.'

You are here. You are in Vilnius. You are viewing our performance. We are in the U.K. Would our actual bodies make this a different piece? Would our corporeal presence add to your engagement with the work? Is this more akin to seeing and experiencing an exhibition than a live event? John Dewey discusses the distinction between recognition and perception of an artwork. Recognition takes place in the presence of the work; one recognises the work as a work of art, one sees the various elements, one identifies the artists,

one can even make links with other works by the same artist. However, perception is a separate experience that does not necessarily take place in the presence of the work but can take place some time later. Perception involves an appreciation of the work, when the meaning becomes clear and the viewer develops an understanding of the intentions of the artist and the implications of the work.

Today you will have heard papers from other contributors. During those did you at any time think: 'When is this going to end?' Did you look at the programme while someone was speaking to see if there would be coffee soon? These are not transgressive acts, but the kind of thoughts one can have while at a symposium or while watching a performance. One's physical presence is not a guarantee of cognitive presence. And yet, in the world of performance, the presence of the body, both the physical presence of the performer and the audience is given a special status. Here the fetishized art object may well have been replaced by the fetishized performing body – this is exemplified by the MOMA performance retrospective of works by Marina Abramović: *The Artist Is Present*. RoseLee Goldberg in *Performance Art from Futurism to the Present* states, 'The history of performance art in the twentieth century is the history of a permissive, open-ended medium with endless variables, executed by artists impatient with the limitations of more established art forms, and determined to take their art directly to the public. For this reason its base has always been anarchic.' For us 'I, I am, I am here, I am speaking here' represented a shift in our work, originally borne out of necessity – the need to make work when 'presence' was not possible, that is in keeping with the view of performance expressed by Goldberg. This shift required a reconsideration of the role of the body in performance and an acknowledgment of the risk of creating a new form of commodification that demands for 'presence' to be represented.

Echoing the insights offered by Dewey, we question if engagement with a performance when the artists

are not present creates a different form of recognition which can in turn lead to a different form of perception.

SECTION 3

Speaker 1: Play recording on headphones and repeat words phrases 3,

Ta mé anseo

Ta tú anseo

Ta sé anseo

Ta sí anseo

Ta muid anseo

Ta sinn anseo

Ta sibh anseo

Ta said anseo

Pause and wait while Speaker 2 reads.

Speaker 2: Read text

Bartram O'Neill participated in 'O/R' in the streamed Low Lives 4 Networked Performance Festival. From an empty gallery in Nottingham, UK, the pair performed at 2am GMT to an open laptop on the floor, reaching audiences in the USA, Japan, Trinidad & Tobago, Australia, France, Colombia, Norway, and Aruba, between 8 and 9pm the calendar day before, depending on location. After the performance to laptop they left the closed and dark gallery through a fire door and entered a street strewn with the merriment and festivities of drunken revellers leaving clubs and bars after their night out. Through 'O/R' and 'I, I am, I am here, I am speaking here' we are developing a kind of practice where our performances, either including our physical presence or not, form a part of a continuum which includes description of works both performed and unperformed, instructions for D.I.Y. performance events, and which resists the preference for the corporeal experience as being the ultimate in authenticity.

SECTION 4

Speaker 1: Play recording on headphones and repeat words phrases 4,

Ta mé ag caint anseo

Ta tú ag caint anseo

Ta sé ag caint anseo

Ta sí ag caint anseo

Ta muid ag caint anseo

Ta sinn ag caint anseo

Ta sibh ag caint anseo

Ta said ag caint anseo

Pause and wait while Speaker 2 reads.

Speaker 2: Read text

These works incorporated not just distance, but also time difference – in the former the performers were in a living room surrounded by their diurnal domestic trappings, and in the latter they performed in the middle of the night having walked through deserted streets to occupy a gallery devoid of life. Both works distanced the body of the performers, who were in fact 'present'. This interactive paper explores the possibilities, complexities and contingencies of this dynamic seeking to analyse what it is to be presented as 'live' when being geographically distant.

Speakers 1 & 2 – Sit down, the performance has ended.

Received 19 01 2016