

What Performance Artists Wear

12.01–24.02.2024

Luciano Castelli

Lara Dâmaso

Barnaby Horn

Nils Amadeus Lange

Eva Maspoli

Martina Morger

Pipilotti Rist

Davide-Christelle Sanvee

Silvia Ziraneck

marytwo

«Vain trifles as they seem, clothes have, they say, more important offices than merely to keep us warm. They change our view of the world and the world's view of us.»

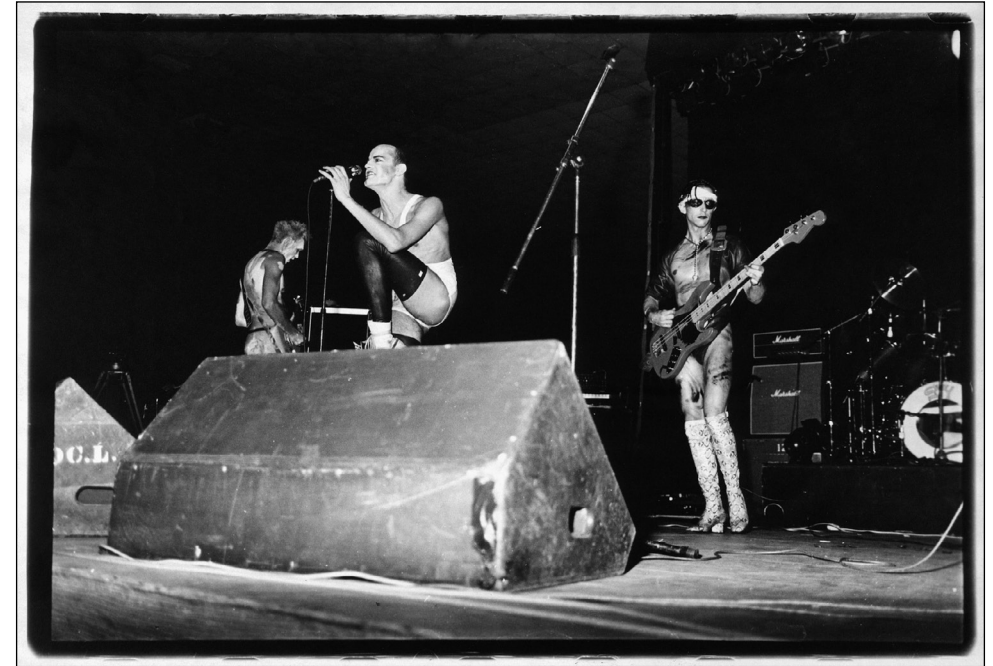
Woolf, Virginia. Orlando, 1928

Text by
Monica Unser

Clothes are the closest things we wear to skin. They can be a shell, a shelter, or some kind of bodily extension that forms a certain image in the eyes of others. Through them, we can invent personalities, stories and identities. Orlando, the main character in Virginia Woolf's eponymous early queer novel, evolves across centuries and norms, in a temporal framework in which they vacillate between gender identities. In this liminality, the multiplicity of clothing plays a decisive role within the narrative. It seems to impact or at least reflect Orlando's interiority in the various stages of their story, accompanying the complex fluidity of their person. Much more than "vain trifles" and accessories remaining on the surface of the skin, these objects are an open window into their bodily metamorphoses.

When thinking about performance art as an artistic medium, the first words that come to mind are liveness and ephemerality. And then there's the eternal question: what remains after a performance? Is it the echo of the bodies' presence in our memory, the documentation photographs, the traces on the floor of the space, the smells, the emotions? The exhibition *What Performance Artists Wear* at marytwo chooses to focus on one aspect that seems to occupy a marginal place in the history of art: the garments and ornaments worn during performative events.

A certain history of performance art argues that it has developed through constant transgression, through criticism of the exclusivity of the museum or gallery, or opposition to the commercial motor of the art world. The transgression would always be defined by its essential ephemerality. Questions of documentation, archiving and the musealization of performance are still at the heart of theoretical and practical debates, and different schools of thought still start from an ontology of liveness. By moving away from the reign of liveness and looking closer at the performative body, the temporality that costumes occupy can allow for an interesting shift away from the question of the "after".



GEILE TIERE (Salomé, Luciano Castelli, Luise Walter, Udo), 1982
Support act for a Nina Hagen concert at the Deutschlandhalle in Berlin
Photo credits: Helmut Metzner

The video work *GEILE TIERE* (1981) by Knut Hoffmeister can be viewed online at marytwo.one for the duration of the exhibition.



Lara Dâmaso
Gravity and Grace, 2023
Installation and performance, 15/16/17 June 2023, -18'
Sound composition with Ludwig Abraham

Descending Movements: Hanging in the Fall, 2023
Red velvet fabric, felt fabric, epoxy resin

Move Festival, Centre Pompidou, Paris
Photo credits: Hervé Véronèse



His brittle stillness
fresh eyes to straddle
petal clouds
all smiles

A 'Millinery Storyteller' Barnaby Horn describes the hat as a sculptural equivalent to the haiku – expansive and uniquely positioned to explore dreams, complex desires, and the head's continual breathing.

Barnaby Horn would like to thank liIAC emanuel for their invaluable partnership and support in the production of these works.

Right: Coat and hood by liIAC emanuel
Photo credits: Victoria Ralph





Above: Nils Amadeus Lange and Mario Petrucci Espinoza (pictured)
Skulpturengruppen, 2022
Sound set, text, songs, costume, 120'
Both invited by Yasmina Haddad to perform at Seccession in Vienna
Photo credits: Seccession Vienna

Right: Nils Amadeus Lange
Hildegard von Bingen, 2023
Performance: Lisa Candinias, Flo Schlessmann (pictured)
Voice: Mario Petrucci Espinoza, Catherine Schroeder
Light: Demian Jakob
Production: Rabea Grand, Paelden Tamnyen
A project in cooperation with Kulturhaus Helferei Zürich, CCN de Rennes et de Bretagne / Centre culturel suisse Paris, Arsenic Lausanne & Urbäng! Festival Köln
Photo credits: Nils Amadeus Lange





Eva Maspoli
wachsen lassen, 2023
Body, space, potato plant, 40'
Performed during Act Performance Festival in Geneva
Photo credits: Loue Wyder



Martina Morger
Fossils – Layers of Intimacies, 2022
Installation and performance: Glass, silicone, memorabilia, aloe vera, 60'
Kunstmuseum Appenzell, CH
Photo credits: Lukas Zerbst



Pipilotti Rist
Ever is Over All, 1997
Audio video installation (video still)
© Pipilotti Rist, Courtesy the artist, Hauser & Wirth and Luhring Augustine / 2023, ProLitteris, Zurich



Daive-Christelle Sanvee
Tourbillon quoiqu'il arrive, 2020
Production & editing: Frederico Ramos Lopes
Costume: Doria Gomez Rosay
Assistant: Emilie Derian
With the support of the Canton of Geneva
Video still credits: Frederico Ramos Lopes



Perhaps the most important transgression that performance enables concerns the norms assigned to the body in social and ideological spaces. And if the body is often clothed, the costume plays a central role in this history as a liminal object. It allows an event to resonate in its materiality and thus places the performance beyond the live, telling something about the skin it has hidden or will reveal. Much more than an archive, it is the incarnation of a personae developed for a piece. As an object of metamorphosis, it contains transformation, movement and fluidity, without reducing them.

The exhibition space is imagined here as a stage without curtains, on which slumbering costumes rest like a constellation of different generations of artists and different events. The costume is present as an iconic object, as are the red shoes of Pipilotti Rist's *Ever is over all*, a work that inspired Beyoncé's famous music video "Hold Up". It is also a transgressive object, as in Barnaby Horn's headpieces or Luciano Castelli's work, both of which question gender roles. The objects on display are sometimes self-made – as with Eva Maspoli – or the result of collaboration between artists and designers, as with Lara Dâmaso and Vitelli. In the work of Davide-Christelle Sanvee, a bodysuit, a robe and jewellery enable the embodiment of a historical figure. Most of the exhibited costumes are to be understood as processual objects: Nils Amadeus Lange's pieces have evolved through their various appearances, in Martina Morger's work, clothes bear witness to the various steps of a past action, and for Silvia Ziraneck, pieces of costumes only appear in the space for the first time on the opening night with the work *NOT UNDIRTY*, performed together with her daughter Yma Ziraneck Wilson. All of these costumes carry the theatricality and performativity of the self in their knots, stitches and assemblages. If you look closely, the shells may seem far from empty.

Monica Unser

Reading List

Compiled by Monica Unser and marytwo

Donatella Barbieri, *Costume in Performance: Materiality, Culture, and the Body*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017

Kathy Battista, *Renegotiating the Body: Feminist Art in 1970s London*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2013

Lauren Elkin, *Art Monsters: Unruly Bodies in Feminist Art*. London: Random House, 2023

Richard Thompson Ford, *Dress Codes: How the Laws of Fashion Made History*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2021

Charlie Fox, *This Young Monster*. London: Fitzcarraldo Editions, 2017

Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven, Irene Gammel, Suzanne Zelazo, *Body Sweats: The Uncensored Writings of Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2011

Gabriella Giannachi, Jonah Westerman, *Histories of Performance Documentation: Museum, Artistic, and Scholarly Practices*. Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2017

Roselee Goldberg, *Performance Art: From Futurism to the Present*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1988

Calla Henkel, *Other People's Clothes*. London: Hodder & Stoughton 2021

Sofia Pantouvaki, Peter McNeil, *Performance Costume: New Perspectives and Methods*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2020

Charlie Porter, *What Artists Wear*. London: Penguin, 2021.

Paul B. Preciado, *An Apartment on Uranus*. London: Fitzcarraldo Editions, 2020

Catherine Wood, *Performance in Contemporary Art*. London: Tate, 2018

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