

To Michael Johnston Sperlinger and

Ina Hagen

Research paper

6<sup>th</sup> November 2023

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Kunstakademiet i Oslo

Wenche Sandra M.

Disington.

“Performance art as a  
tool”

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“Performance art as a tool”

This draft has 13 chapters. From different personal reasons I decided this number since I started writing this text.

Kandinsky.

<https://aidancookedesign.files.wordpress.com/2013/11/wassilykandinsky.jpg>

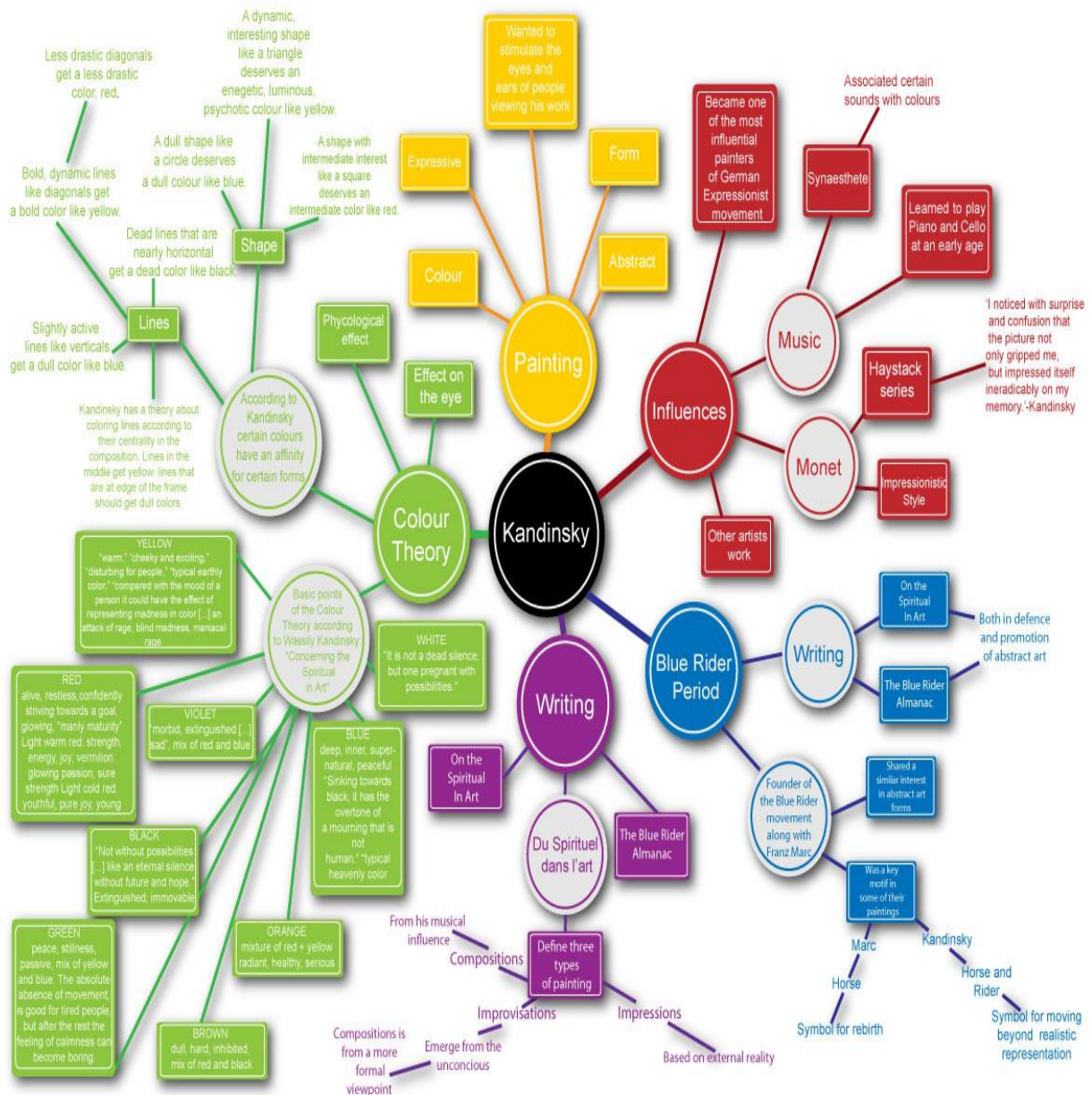
The Mind-map of Kandinsky.

This is illustrating how we move around and how we get to the source.

I am mentioning this in chapter 8.1 and 8.2.

Can you translate this to a performance? When you look at the movements?

Even the movements are in your mind.



## 1. The Performance.



Performance 31<sup>st</sup> October and 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2023

“Do you want to talk to me?”

“A performance in a performance”

I am opening for a conversation with a maximum length of 20 minutes.

The experience from these two days makes me reflect of different things concerning this act:

First, of all, the vulnerability of the concept.

Does anyone want to come to talk to me?

What will come up, during the conversation?

The only limit I have is 20 minutes.

I got this idea after a group crit at school, listening to the different issues from the students. We are in a middle of many wars, inside ourselves and in the world. These situations affect us in different ways, so this is the reason why I am sitting here and open for a conversation. While I am writing on my master draft.

Here are three examples:

My first conversation took place at 12noon Tuesday.

“We talked mostly about M`s (student) upcoming exhibition and how he reflected on the situation with the War in the Middle East.”

Conversation at 1pm Tuesday:

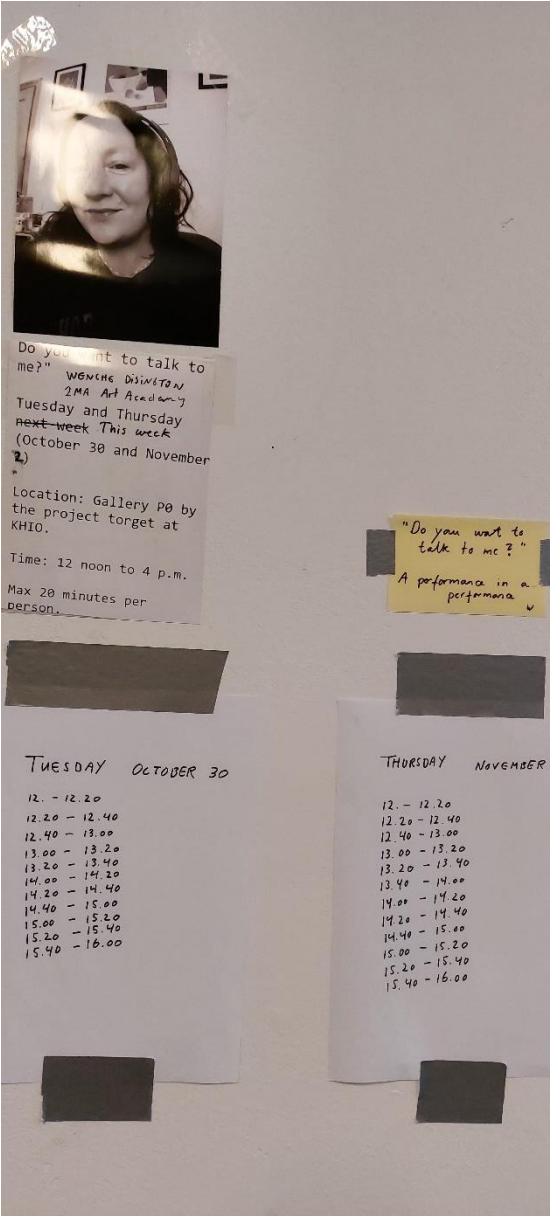
“V`s (tutor) and me had a talk about my ongoing performance, it was really helpful conversation.”

Conversation Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 3pm

“H’s (student) situation concerning her situation at KHIO, mostly about plans and reflections of her latest works, and some thoughts about being an artist after her bachelor’s degree at KHIO”

I do not record these conversations and I only use the first letter of the person’s name, and what time they arrived the performance. The results of this performance will be a note about limits, time, and sensibility.

And some still-photos.



I have looked up the artist Ian Wilson, and how he documented his talks/performances.

<https://janmot.com/exhibitions/2020-ian-wilson-perfect-detail-page/>





Photo from my Performance and exhibition: “Welcome to my Home, Kurt Schwitters, Frida Kahlo and me” 5th-9th December 2022.

## 2. The Performance nr 2

Art works can be expressed in so many ways.

How to use performance as an explicit expression of art?

Where can you show or present your performances?

-Why is my personal experience relevant to anyone but me?

In my performances I look at myself as a medium for my narratives. Specially when I do my Joik, that is a Sami traditionally way of expression. Often it comes to you from your ancestors. You are just a canal to express love, anger, fear, or loss. All very human feelings, and we can all do it or feel it. Throat-singing is also an old traditional shamanic expression, using the lower part of your throat.

As an artist you are a canal of intuitive feelings, that from this point you work further on. Intuitions are also controlled in a way that if you use it as a tool.

With this I do not mean that everything is out of control, during years of practice you learn how to express it.

### 3. Two very different artists presenting how to use space for installations or a performance.

How important is the space for these two artists?

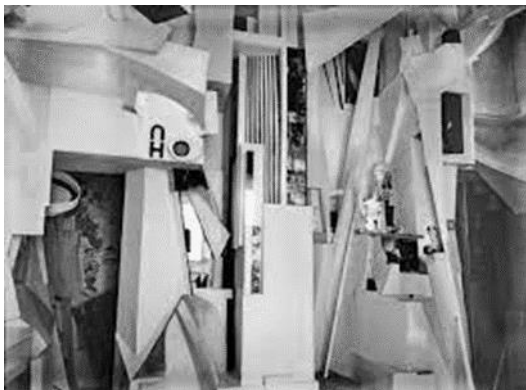
-Following I show two pictures of artist Kurt Schwitters (born 1887 Germany-1948 UK) and Teichin Tshei (born 1950 Taiwan)

Two different installations/performances that shows two examples of filling up or using a space for artworks.

Schwitters used his flat and made it into an installation. Here: Room in a flat by Kurt Schwitters.

and a City (New York) by Teichin Tshei.

Tshei used a City, a Town for his one-year on-going performance.





Kurt Schwitters, Merzbau. 1937 (destroyed in a British air Raid in October 1943.) Ref: <https://www.brollystudios.org/merzbau-metalepsis>

Schwitters invited friends and guests into his flat where he also lived.

Making your home to a gallery, was not unusual at that time, in lack of places to exhibit, and the political control in Russia and especially eastern Europe.

Schwitters had a lot of histories from his home, like the sculpture of his son's head and I think the performance part of his Merzbau was very important. His audience was surprised when they entered the room. And he used to hide in his installations also playing an organ that he had placed in his installation work.

<https://www.aftenposten.no/norge/i/8Wq1/schwitters-loeftes-frem-paahoevikodden>

Artist Teichin Tshei, who decided to live outdoor in New York for a year (26th September 1981- 26th of September 1982) But this in a name of a Performance. When his year as a homeless, became something else since he called it a performance. Most people do not care or pay attention to the homeless, but Hsieh got attention from Journalists, Art institutions and curious people in common just in the name of being an artist. He became an important or famous homeless:



<https://www.tehchingsieh.net/lifeworks-1978-1999>

<https://www.tehchingsieh.net/biography>



The map Tshei made of his movements during his homeless period in New York. (81- 82) ( A map is telling limited histories about a certain area, it does not talk about rules and feelings about areas, like if it is a lovely park, or a strict and uncanny area.) Can a map be a location for a performance?

<https://aidancookedesign.wordpress.com/2013/11/04/kandinsky-mindmaps/>

Tshei was applying for a residence permit in the USA, so he was an illegal immigrant in New York City.

During this year 1982-1982 while he was waiting for a permission from USA, he used his backdrop as an artist to make a statement for his stay. He had several rules for him self during this year as a homeless, like never go inside a building and never take money from others. With these limitations he made no burden to the society. He made several photos to document his performance also in front of the immigrant department in NY.

<https://www.tehchingsieh.net/>

I was so happy to see the exhibition from Tshei`s year as a homeless performance/exhibition. I think it was in Berlin at Hamburger Bahnhof. What I mostly remember was the smell from his clothes and luggage he had carried around for one year.

#### 4. Christian Grüny about performance art.

Earlier this year I went to a lecture Christian Grüny, and I just copy his notes for the lecture as following:

Christian Grüny: “There Is No Such Thing as Performance Art”

“In this lecture, the German philosopher Christian Grüny will reflect upon the concept of Performance Art, exploring its possible relevance within contemporary art and music practices.

Time and place: Mar. 14, 2023, 4:15 PM–6:00 PM, Aud. 4, Eilert Sundt's Hus  
“Image may contain: Person, Forehead, Glasses, Cheek, Chin.

There is no such thing as Performance Art In her seminal overview, RoseLee Goldberg writes that performance art “draws freely on any number of disciplines and media for material – literature, poetry, theatre, music, dance, architecture and painting, as well as video, film, slides and narrative – deploying them in any combination”. Considering this statement together with the radical

heterogeneity of her examples, one may wonder what holds all this together and whether 'performance art' is an art form at all, whether it is a method, a type of movement, or a determinate negation of one's artistic origin.

If negation is the appropriate category, it makes a difference whether something is not theatre, not dance, not music, not sculpture, or not painting. But even these negations suggest too much of a unity, if not of content but of process. The modes of distancing oneself from one's discipline vary as greatly as that which they negate, and the various movements do not converge – Yvonne Rainer and Marina Abramović have next to nothing in common. To understand this field, it is necessary to trace where a performative practice comes from and where it takes place, and the categories of material and site become crucial. In addition to explicating these ideas theoretically, I will employ them to look at several contemporary examples (Tino Sehgal, Jennifer Walshe, Forced Entertainment, and Public Movement)

Christian Grüny is professor of Contemporary Aesthetics at the State University of Music and the Performing Arts in Stuttgart. He received his PhD 2003 at the Ruhr University Bochum and his Habilitation 2011 at the University Witten/Herdecke, where he was assistant professor from 2008-2014. He has been visiting professor at the music academy in Hamburg, interim professor at the art academy Düsseldorf and at the Technical University Darmstadt, and researcher at the Max Planck Institute for Empirical Aesthetics in Frankfurt. He has published in aesthetics, the philosophy of music, phenomenology, symbol theory and the philosophy of culture. [www.grueny.info](http://www.grueny.info)

Organized by Institute of Musicology / IMV in collaboration with The Seminar of Aesthetics, by UIO."

Why is this relevant for me? I think Gruny's description of a space the performance artists take place. How do the surroundings effect a performance? Like Thsei used the city and documented himself in different places. The city becomes his home.

And Schwitters home became his gallery, in a way. The intimacy of letting others into his home.

5. My own practice. -I'm interested in investigating ideas and concepts surrounding notions of performance as an expression of the time and place and where it happens. I also question the performance to be recorded in different ways like, sound, video, recording, sharing in different ways and directions.

In 1996 I participated together with an art-community in Oslo called "Atelier Nord" the exhibition at Høvikodden Art Centre in Oslo.

The exhibition was called "Electra".

"1996, March. Henie Onstad Kunstsenter outside Oslo organizes the six-week exhibition Electra 96: project for electronic media, which explores the relationship between technology and art, architecture, and design. This exhibition is the first of its kind in Norway and among the largest in Europe and presents over 30 mainly interactive artworks by artists such as Nam June Paik, Art + Com, Ulrike Gabriel, Knowbotic Research and Bill Seaman, drawn from environments such as mV2\_ and the DEAF festival in Rotterdam, ZKM in Karlsruhe and Ars Electronica in Linz. They will be joined by established Norwegian video artists and photographers such as Rolf Aamot, Marianne Heske and Kjell Bjørgeengen in addition to new artistic forces such as Espen Gangvik, Vibeke Tandberg and Ståle Stenslie. Among other things, the museum has provided an exclusive Silicon Graphics computer and a web server to support the artworks. The ambitious exhibition is very successful with the public, but the museum is left with a large deficit, and there is a lot of criticism for the uncritical use of new technology."

<https://bek.no/kronologi/kronologi/>

My work at Høvikodden Art Centre was an art- film made on an Amiga-computer, called "Water, Dream and Letter".

I mention this exhibition because it made me meet new medias in art, in such a format as Høvikodden. So many artworks in one place concerning the new media in art.

I had just discovered the artist Laurie Anderson (born June 5, 1947) an American avant-garde artist, composer, musician, writer, and inventor.

She had an interactive work where you could put your hands on, and as I remember it, you could play with light and sound.

## 6. 1

Laurie Anderson, Yoko Ono and Kurt Johannessen. Performing artists from US and Norway.

“Laurie Anderson, (born June 5, 1947, Wayne, Illinois, U.S.), American performance artist, composer, and writer whose work explores a remarkable range of media and subject matter. Anderson began studying classical violin at five years of age and later performed with the Chicago Youth Symphony. In 1966 she moved to New York City, where she attended Barnard College (B.A., 1969) and Columbia University (M.F.A., 1972). For two years she taught art history at the City University of New York.

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Laurie-Anderson>

“Yoko Ono, Japanese Ono Yōko, in full Yoko Ono Lennon, (born February 18, 1933, Tokyo, Japan), Japanese artist and musician who was an influential practitioner of conceptual and performance art in the 1960s and who became internationally famous as the wife and artistic partner of musician John Lennon. Ono was born into a wealthy family in Japan and grew up mostly in Tokyo, where she attended an exclusive school. As a child she wrote poetry and plays and received classical training in piano and voice. In 1952 Ono became the first woman admitted to the philosophy program at Gakushūin University in Tokyo, but, after about a year there, she joined her family in the New York City area, where her father, a bank executive, had been transferred. For the next three years, she studied writing and music at Sarah Lawrence College in Bronxville, New York, though she struggled to find an artistic niche and never graduated. In 1956 Ono married Ichihyanagi Toshi (divorced 1962), a Japanese composition



student through whom she began to forge a connection to the New York City avant-garde art world. Four years later Ono's downtown Manhattan loft became the site of a seminal series of performance events, which she organized with experimental composer La Monte Young. Drawing partly from the interdisciplinary Zen-inspired work of John Cage, himself a habitué of the loft events, Ono presented simple conceptual art pieces that imaginatively encouraged, and often required, interactive participation. *Painting to Be Stepped On* (1960), for instance, was a canvas upon which audiences were invited to tread. Many of the works she created during this time existed primarily as written instructions for others to carry out or, in some cases, merely to muse upon. Ono later compiled these epigrammatic texts—*Lighting Piece* (1955) offered the direction “Light a match and watch till it goes out”—in the book *Grapefruit* (1964). Interested in the integration of art with everyday life, Ono became associated with the Fluxus collective, and in 1961 the group's founder, George Maciunas, provided her with her first solo gallery show.”

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Yoko-Ono>



<https://visp.no/kurt-johannessen/>

“Kurt Johannessen (b.1960) works with performance, books, video, drawing, graphics, and installation. He has performed in Europe, Asia and America since the early 80's. His performance often has a poetic and minimalist expression. He exhibited in several places in Norway, including the Bergen Art

Museum and Kunstnernes Hus (2007) and Kunstnerforbundet (2016). He works with text and publishes his own artist books. The text works are often short visual, poetic, and sometimes contain humour. He has produced more than 100 books. Since 2013, many of his books (About Something/Om-noko) have been the basis for a series of performance lectures. These books are at the crossroads of philosophy/visual art/poetry/science.”

[www.zeth.no](http://www.zeth.no)

Why do I choose these three artists? Laurie Anderson, Yoko Ono and Kurt Johannessen.?

Laurie Anderson have especially moved me by her playfulness with sound. I remember the first time I heard her song “Oh Superman” in 1992. It was something else she presented. And she is a woman who plays with her skills. For me growing up in a time with most male musicians, I always paid extra attention to female artists. Laurie Anderson was one of them.

Yoko Ono presents for me a woman who have pushed the borders of her form of art. From being in the Fluxus movement and into her own expressions and using her voice. I have met her in person three times in my life, twice in Oslo and once in New York. I was doing voice recording in “Quark” studio, a mixing of music works, when Yoko Ono just had finished. I just met her in the door, passing. Why I mention this is that all the people we meet, known or unknown can make an impression on us. These impressions can later become a performance, an art-piece, or a certain feeling or of time passing.

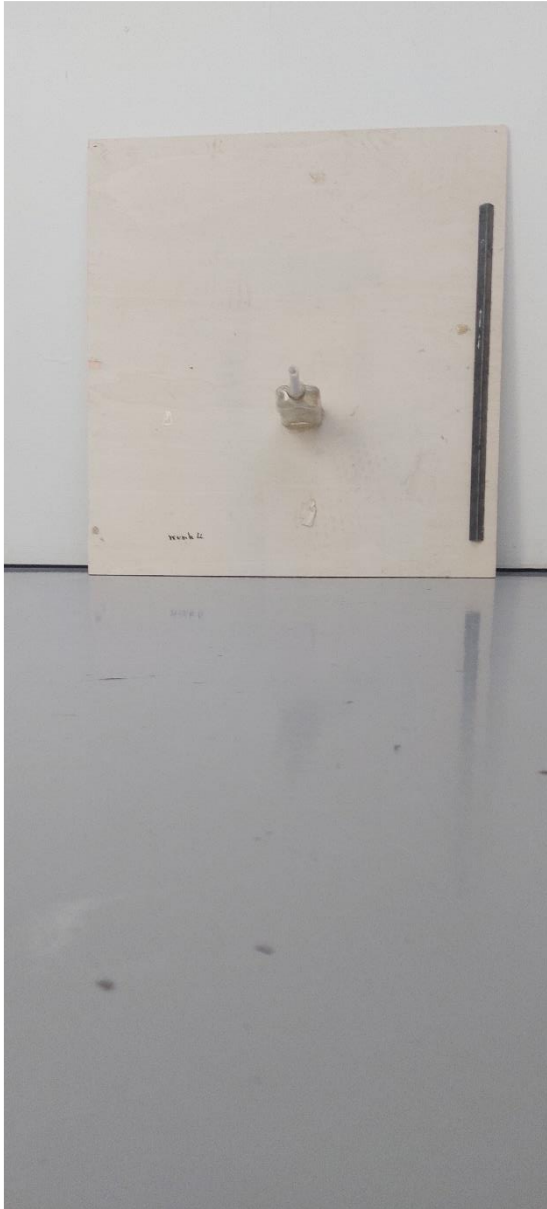
Kurt Johannessen has been my tutor for a performance class I participated at the Art Academy in Oslo. I was not a student but got invited by friends who were at the Academy in Oslo at that time. This was in the 90`s and Kurt did a lot

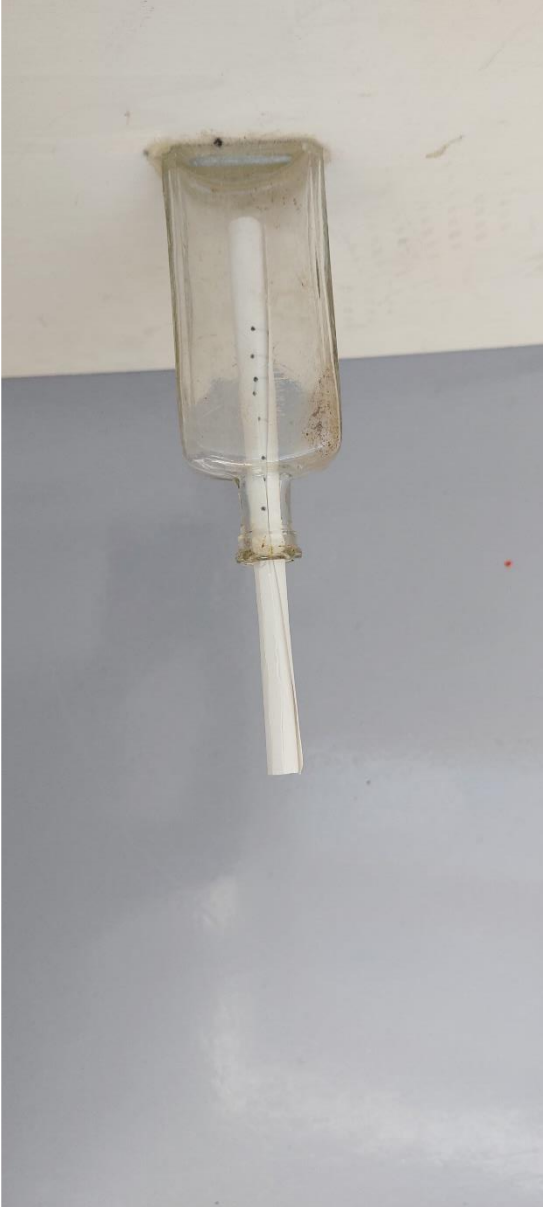
of public performances that period. And he still does. He has a minimalistic expression strong connected to nature, and I feel I must learn a lot from him.

7. What is a mental place, is it the place we all own, our very private sphere?

Our own private space? And then you share it during the performance, with consciousness or unconsciously?

8. “Message in a bottle” My own artwork. BIPOC group show BEING at Seilduken1 and 2. 16<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> March 2023





“Message in a bottle” by Wenche Disington March 2023

This work attended the audience to take out the message in the bottle, it said:

“help”

There were different reactions, and it was interesting to observe.

Some looked confused, some laughed. This is telling me how I can interact the audience. I felt that it had a performing sphere. If the audience got to know that they could pull the paper out of the bottle. This was told in the information paper for the exhibition.

9. "The Dead Fish" 1(MA) ximum taste. Seilduken 1. 1MA show  
9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> March 2023.



"The Dead Fish" February Installation  
work/performance. Wenche Disington





Photo of a painting I made in 1992.

I only have this copy. But I could see the strong references to my “The Dead Fish”. Therefore I presented it with my new work from 2023.

The time travel still connects the same feeling.

Is the time-travel also a kind of performance? The movement of the feelings?

## 10. The Source 1. By Rilke.

Where ideas come from? Do we need solitude?

In that case I quote Rainer Marie Rilke, in his words about being for yourself, or self-chosen solitude.

Rainer Marie Rilke (1875-1926 Germany.) Quote:

“The best I you do, is when you are alone”. The poet Rainer Maria Rilke said: “I Am Much Too Alone in This World, Yet Not Alone” What is Rilke’s meaning of Isolation and loneliness? How important is his form of isolation and solitude?

Quote:

“The necessary thing is after all but this, solitude, great inner solitude. Going into oneself for hours meeting no one – this one must be able to attain.”

“It seems to me that almost all our sorrow are moments of tension, which we feel as paralysis because we no longer hear our astonished emotions living. Because we are alone with the unfamiliar presence that has entered us; because everything we trust and are used to is for a moment taken away from us; because we stand during a transition where we cannot remain standing. That is why the sadness passes: the new presence inside us, the presence that has been added, has entered our heart, has gone into its innermost chamber and is no longer even there, – is already in our bloodstream. And we do not know what it was. We could easily be made to believe that nothing happened, and yet we have changed, as a house that a guest has entered changes. We cannot say who has come, perhaps we will never know, but many signs indicate that the future enters us in this way to be transformed in us, long before it happens. And that is why it is so important to be solitary and attentive when one is sad: because the seemingly uneventful and motionless moment when our future steps into us is so much closer to life than that other loud and accidental point of time when it happened more, we can make it our own, the more it becomes our fate.”

— Rainer Maria Rilke

Published May 8th, 2002, by Dover (first published 1929).

The Source 8. 2.

I want to adjust the sources, not only as an inner experience, but all the impressions we get all the time, awake or dreaming. Like the people we meet, the music we listen to. Where you grow up, your family and friends. Nature and cities. Dreams. Travels and education or not education. All the things in life that forms us.

But the Source 1, by Rilke is the travel you take in your own mind.

I want to quote Carl Gustav Jung:

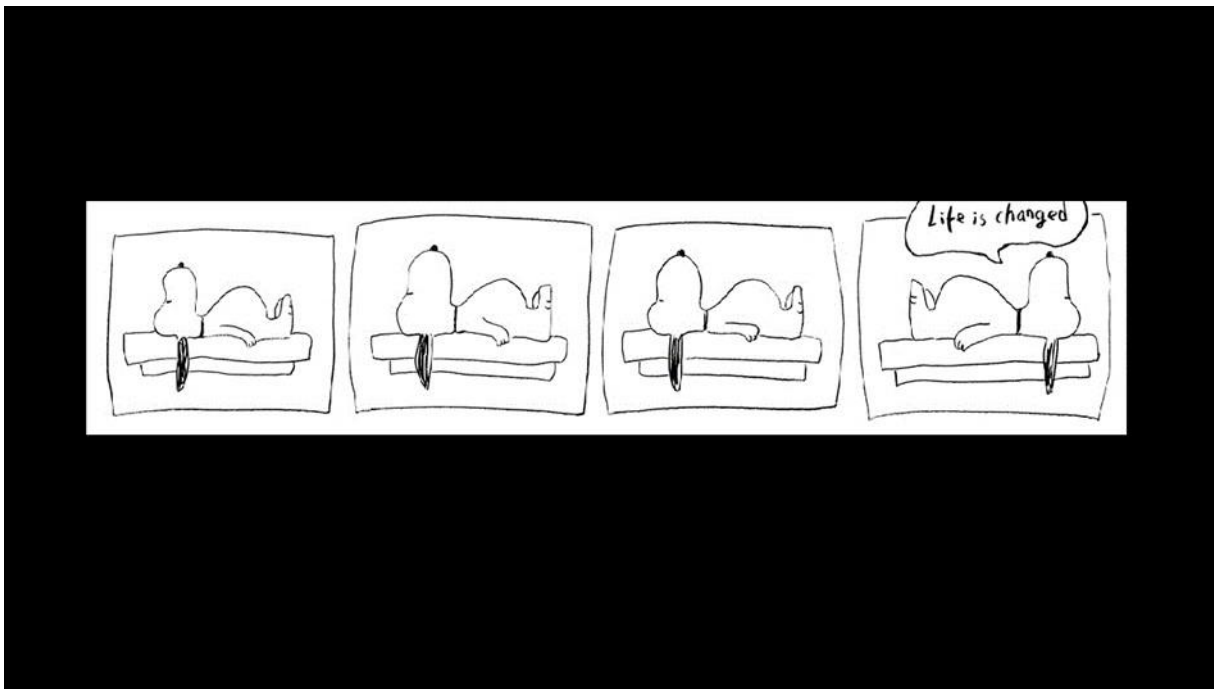
“Those who looks outside dreams.

Those who looks inside awakes”.

(1875-1961)

What could Jung tell? Is it the impressions we get looking out to the world, is the impact of what we later think and mean, and may want to express?

Photo: My Archive 2023 by Wenche Disington.



(Image nr) Snoopy Cartoon. Provided by the artist.

I have reflected on the following topic about Performance art:

About Performance as an Art-Movement:

About Performance as an Art-Form. From Performing Artist, like classical Dancers, to Contemporary Performance Art. How the digital Art influences new art-movement.

Performing arts refers to forms of art in which artists use their voices, bodies, or inanimate objects to convey artistic expression. It is different from visual arts, which is when artists use paint, canvas, or various materials to create physical or static art objects. Performing arts include a range of disciplines which are performed in front of a live audience. (not necessary).

Theatre, music, dance and object manipulation, and other kinds of performances are present in all human cultures. The history of music and dance date to pre-historic times whereas circus skills date to at least Ancient Egypt. Many performing arts are performed professionally. Performance can be in purpose buildings, such as theatres and opera houses, on open air stages at festivals, on stages in tents such as circuses and on the street.

Live performances before an audience are a form of entertainment. The development of audio and video recording has allowed for private consumption of the performing arts. The performing arts often aims to express one's emotions and feelings during their stage- performance.



Ref: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Schneemann-Interior\\_Scroll.gif](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Schneemann-Interior_Scroll.gif)

Performance art is a performance presented to an audience. Performance may be either scripted or unscripted, random, or carefully orchestrated, spontaneous or otherwise carefully planned. The performance can be live or inside via media; the performer can be present or absent. It can be any situation that involves four basic elements: time, space, the performer's body, or presence in a medium, and a relationship between performer and audience. Performance art can happen anywhere, in any type of venue or setting and for any length of time. The interactive World is making the process further into the future.

Carolee Schneemann, performing her piece Interior Scroll. Yves Klein in France, and Carolee Schneemann, Yayoi Kusama, Charlotte Moorman, and Yoko Ono in

Joseph Beuys, *Jeder Mensch ein Künstler*  
— *Auf dem Weg zur Freiheitsgestalt des sozialen Organismus*  
(Every person an artist — On the way to the libertarian form of the social organism), 1978



New York City. Joseph Beuys, 1978: *Jeder Mensch ein Künstler — Auf dem Weg zur Freiheitsgestalt des sozialen Organismus* ("Every person an artist — On the way to the libertarian form of the social organism").

- How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare, or *Wie man dem toten Hasen die Bilder erklärt*, its original German title. Namely, this particular performance happened in 1965 at the Galerie Schmela in Düsseldorf.

Ref: <https://www.widewalls.ch/magazine/how-to-explain-pictures-to-a-deadhare-joseph-beuys>

In the late 1990s and into the 2000s, several artists incorporated technologies such as the World Wide Web, digital video, Webcams, and streaming media, into performance art.

## 11. Performance as a provocation:

Artists such as Coco Fusco as Cuba welcomes visitors to the Havana Biennial. The New York–based Cuban American artist Coco Fusco travelled to attend the 13th edition of the biennial, which will include 83 artists from 45 countries under the title “the construction of the possible.” But when she landed at José Martí Airport, she was detained by customs officials and turned away.

Ref: <https://repeatingislands.com/2022/01/13/coco-fusco-for-cuban-artistscensure-is-the-norm/>

Ref: ART News (the Magazine) April 10th, 2009, by Maximilano Duròn. “I heard one of the immigration officials refer to me as an ‘inadmissible,’”



In her statement, Fusco noted that she is “not the first or the last intellectual with close ties to Cuba who has been punished in this way for expressing my views and advocating for greater freedom of expression in Cuba.”

With this example I want to show how the reaction from others becomes part of your performance. There are always certain things you cannot talk about, depends on where you are in the world and the politics that is performing in a certain time. This can lead to a catastrophe, as the story tells us.

<https://www.artnews.com/art-news/news/coco-fusco-cuba-havana-biennial2019-12338/>

## 12. The end.

I have now been travelling from Kandinsky’s mind map into my own performance “Do you want to talk to me?”. Happening at his very time. How we can get to the sources of our ideas and how different artists have worked with performance art and influenced our art-history. In this case especially performance art.

## 13. What is performance art if not a dialogue between human performer and audience?

Like all the impressions in life, from who we meet, who we are in what society we grow up with. These impressions can later become a performance, an art-piece, or a certain feeling of time passing.

Performance art comes from theatre and music related shows and concerts. You put yourself as a medium for a narrative. When I try to do a Sami joik, I am just a medium for my ancestors. It is not from me. But some other relative passed away talking through you and your body. This is for me a performance. It is not only about myself, but me as a canal with an audience. It can be without

an audience too. Those important time for yourself with a canal from the past, present and into the future.



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Christian Grüny: “There Is No Such Thing as Performance Art” Time and place: Mar. 14, 2023, 4:15 PM–6:00 PM, Aud. 4, Eilert Sundt's Hus

<https://bek.no/kronologi/kronologi/>

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Laurie-Anderson>

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Yoko-Ono>

<https://visp.no/kurt-johannessen/>

[www.zeth.no](http://www.zeth.no)

— Rainer Maria Rilke “Letters to a young poet”.

Published May 8th, 2002, by Dover (First published January 1. 1929).

Snoopy Cartoon. Provided by the artist.

Ref: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Schneemann-Interior\\_Scroll.gif](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Schneemann-Interior_Scroll.gif)

Ref: <https://www.widewalls.ch/magazine/how-to-explain-pictures-to-a-deadhare-joseph-beuys>

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<https://www.artnews.com/art-news/news/coco-fusco-cuba-havana-bi>  
Ref:<https://youtu.be/DRhDkZFIF38>















