

Expanded EXPORT:

Toward a Phenomenological Reading of VALIE EXPORT's Work of the 1960s and 1970s

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THESIS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>CHAPTER</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
II. A GENEALOGY: HISTORICAL CONTEXTUALIZATION AND INFLUENCES.....	4
III. TOWARD A PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH.....	17
IV. EMBODIED PERCEPTION AND ART'S SENSORILY DIDACTIC ROLE: MERLEAU-PONTY AND EXPORT.....	27
V. CONDITIONED AND PERFORMATIVE EMBODIED ACTIONS: BUTLER AND EXPORT.....	57
VI. CONCLUSION.....	75
VII. FIGURES.....	79
VIII. CITED LITERATURE.....	102
IX. BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	105

SUMMARY

Best known for her seminal feminist performance and multi-media art of the 1960s and 1970s, Austrian artist VALIE EXPORT's work has understandably most frequently been presented or accounted for in conversation with semiotic, deconstructionist, and psychoanalytic groundings – most often centered around her engagement with the social inscription of the female body and female experience in society. EXPORT's feminist and deconstructionist interest in conditioned and conditioning language, imagery and film, especially as they relate, psychologically and otherwise, to the female body and experience, is certainly clear throughout her practice. However, I argue in this paper that also clearly evident throughout her practice, and part of what makes it so compelling and effective from a feminist standpoint, is a *phenomenologically* feminist interest in and commitment to making visible and deconstructing the complicated, preexisting and conditioned, and embodied modes of perceiving, experiencing, being, and acting as an individual, and especially as a “woman,” in an often hostile, patriarchal, and sensory-laden world. Due to the scope of this paper and preexisting scholarship's tendencies to focus on the aforementioned semiotic, deconstructionist, and psychoanalytic groundings particularly in her earlier oeuvre, I limit the discussion here to EXPORT's photography, film, expanded films, and actions of the 1960s and 1970s. To begin to draw out the phenomenologically feminist foundations of these works and EXPORT's greater practice, I mainly employ the phenomenological aesthetic theories of Maurice Merleau-Ponty and the early gender performativity theories of Judith Butler.

“It is not enough for a painter like Cézanne, an artist, or a philosopher, to create and express an idea; they must also awaken the experiences which will make their idea take root in the consciousness of others. A successful work has the strange power to teach its own lesson.”
– Maurice Merleau-Ponty¹

I. INTRODUCTION

In 1967, Waltraud Höllinger (née Waltraud Lehner in 1940) shed her male-derived surnames, first given at birth by her father and later taken from her former husband in marriage, and adopted the name VALIE EXPORT. “VALIE” is a variation of Wally – an abbreviation of her first name Waltraud; and “EXPORT” is a term with which she could frame her still developing art practice as a way to export her theories and ideas. EXPORT has said of this gesture, “I did not want to have the name of my father [Lehner] any longer, nor that of my former husband [Höllinger]. My idea was to export from my ‘outside’ (*heraus*) and also ex – port, from that port.”² EXPORT meant to figuratively export herself from certain social and cultural conventions and restrictions.

She also was quick to link her new artistic surname “EXPORT” visually to Smart Export – a popular and specifically masculine Austrian cigarette brand at that time – by redesigning, so to speak, the brand’s cigarette pack (fig. 1). EXPORT modified the packaging, replacing Smart’s central logo of the earth with her tightly cropped portrait and inscribing “VALIE” in bold lettering over “Smart.” One of the best-known images from this dual declaration of individual and artistic independence is a 1970 photograph of EXPORT holding a 1967 altered Smart Export cigarette pack in front of her, in full focus of the camera, while smoking a cigarette herself (fig.

¹ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, “Cézanne’s Doubt,” in *Sense and Non-Sense*, trans. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Patricia Allen Dreyfus (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 19.

² VALIE EXPORT quoted in Kristine Stiles, “Corpora Vilia, VALIE EXPORT’s Body,” in *VALIE EXPORT: Ob/De+Con(Struction)*, ed. Elsa Longhauser (Philadelphia: Moore College of Art and Design, 1999), 26.

2). The linguistic meaning of “export” was significant in this confrontational appropriation, at least for EXPORT, as were the cigarette brand’s associations with: masculinity; the conservative and patriarchal Austrian society; and the repressive politics that the Austrian nation came to fully embody and signify during the Anschluss (the 1938 German annexation of Austria) and World War II.

This self-proclaimed “identity transformation” announced EXPORT’s feminist convictions and the issues that she – like many other avant-garde artists based in postwar Vienna – took with the Austrian government and society. These issues were namely: Austria’s often reactionary politics and conservative dispositions toward the arts, scholarship, and women in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as well as the nation’s citizens who were largely complicit in the barbarism of World War II. EXPORT’s identity transformation also indicates one of the artist’s first major engagements with the socially constructed and often insidious nature of language – both verbal and visual. EXPORT, in a deconstructionist move, sought to investigate and expose verbal and visual language’s entrenched social, cultural and political meanings, especially as they relate to and mediate certain bodies, exposing them for their ability to determine and reinforce certain social, cultural and political conventions, and most especially revealing their often gendered and patriarchal nature.

Best known for her seminal feminist performance and multi-media art of the 1960s and 1970s, EXPORT’s work has understandably most frequently been presented or accounted for in conversation with semiotic, deconstructionist, and psychoanalytic groundings – most often centered around her engagement with the social inscription of the female body and female experience in society. EXPORT’s feminist and deconstructionist interest in conditioned and conditioning language, imagery and film, especially as they relate, psychologically and

otherwise, to the female body and experience, is certainly clear throughout her practice, as I will address later. However, I would argue that also clearly evident throughout her practice, and part of what makes it so compelling and effective from a feminist standpoint, is a *phenomenologically* feminist interest in and commitment to making visible and deconstructing the complicated, preexisting and conditioned, and embodied modes of perceiving, experiencing, being, and acting as an individual, and especially as a “woman,” in an often hostile, patriarchal, and sensory-laden world.

Due to the scope of this paper and preexisting scholarship’s tendencies to focus on the aforementioned semiotic, deconstructionist and psychoanalytic groundings particularly in her earlier oeuvre, I will limit the discussion here to EXPORT’s photography, film, expanded films, and actions of the 1960s and 1970s. And to begin to draw out the phenomenologically feminist foundations of these works and EXPORT’s greater practice, I will mainly employ the theories of Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Judith Butler. In doing so, I aim to examine the spatial, material, temporal, experiential, and phenomenological components of EXPORT’s work – especially as these relate to issues of corporeal perception and enacted gender and contribute to EXPORT’s mediations of the complex spatiotemporal relationships between individuals and the sensuous world. I also argue that these phenomenological components, in concert with the sign- and language-based or psychologically based components already well expounded upon in scholarship on the artist, are crucial in order to fully understand the feminist and deconstructionist efficacy of EXPORT’s work, as well as its broader relevance – both in its original (art) historical moment and in its ability to still speak so effectively to our present moment.

II. A GENEALOGY: HISTORICAL CONTEXTUALIZATION AND INFLUENCES

Already steeped in their own conservative culture, the Anschluss of 1938 fully enveloped Austria in Nazi Germany's destructive hyper-conservatism. This of course had well-known, traumatic and most often fatal consequences for Austria's Jewish population, leftist politicians, and oppositional thinkers, among many others. But, as was the case in Germany and in most European cities of the time, the Anschluss also completely halted the development of organized artistic movements and schools in Vienna that were deemed to be in any way divergent from National Socialist aesthetics and values.³

The post-World War II four-power split of Vienna between the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and the Soviet Union resulted in a decade filled with espionage and identity confusion for the Austrians, and especially for the Viennese. The Viennese were given no time to recuperate as a city post-World War II, constantly dealing with pressures from both the East and West, and it was not until the signing of the Austrian State Treaty in 1955 that the nation gained back its own territory and the Viennese returned to some sense of self-determination, albeit with the condition that the city remain neutral during the Cold War.⁴ Yet, even when allowed sovereignty, it was after years of complicit fascism that the post-World War II Austrian and Viennese societies unsurprisingly continued to reinforce elements of conservatism, with "pressure exercised by the pragmatic petit bourgeoisie, locked in their extreme Catholicism,"⁵ in

³ Hjørvardur Harvart Arnason and Elizabeth C. Mansfield, *History of Modern Art* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc., 2010), 439.

⁴ José Lebrero Stals, "High Voltage," in *Viennese Actionism: Günter Brus, Otto Muehl, Hermann Nitsch, Rudolf Schwarzkogler*, ed. Pilar Parcerisas (Seville: Junta de Andalucía, Consejería de Cultura; Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo, 2008), 5.

⁵ Pilar Parcerisas, "Body and Revolution," in *Viennese Actionism: Günter Brus, Otto Muehl, Hermann Nitsch, Rudolf Schwarzkogler*, ed. Pilar Parcerisas (Seville: Junta de Andalucía, Consejería de Cultura; Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo, 2008), 13.

order to refocus the society, pushing forward social and political restraints that resulted in a culturally barren environment. It is within this context, this postwar reality of “prohibitions and regulations that controlled the individual from infant to (im)mature citizen,” that reintroduced the key elements of “discipline, obedience, subordination, and adjustment” to the Viennese, that the post-World War II avant-garde found its unrest and cause for cultural uprising.⁶ It is in the continued traditional Catholic conservatism, bureaucratic political atmosphere, and social inability to address a post-World War II reality, that groups like the 1950s literary Wiener Gruppe and the 1960s Viennese Actionists found cause for alarm and for aggressive structural criticism through cultural media – through literature and visual arts.

With this resurgence of conservatism in Vienna of the 1950s and 1960s, there developed a combative counterculture. Even in the midst of the post-World War II European city, among the cities that was perhaps most subject to Theodor Adorno’s infamous 1949 “to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric”⁷ statement because of its willing annexation to Nazi Germany, progressives found a voice. The initial existentialist-based aesthetics and abstract-oriented artistic approaches to confronting a post-World War II Europe in the 1950s would soon give way to more openly socially and culturally critical artistic movements. Returning to the European heritage of protest and anti-art, looking to multi-media movements like Dadaism, progressives found the ability to directly address the reality in which they were now living. As early as 1950,

⁶ Ferdinand Schmatz, “Viennese Actionism and the Vienna Group: The Austrian Avant-Garde after 1945,” trans. Jamie Owen Daniel, *Discourse* 14, no. 2 (Spring 1992): 60.

⁷ Theodor Adorno, “Cultural Criticism and Society,” in *Prisms*, trans. Shierry Weber NicholSEN and Samuel Weber (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1983), 34.

artistic avant-garde movements began to form again within Vienna, finding effective beginnings in the 1950s literary Wiener Gruppe.⁸

Although never acknowledging themselves as an official, unified group, the main writers involved in the Wiener Gruppe – Friedrich Achleitner (1930-2019), H. C. Artmann (1921-2000), Konrad Bayer (1932-1964), Gerhard Rühm (b. 1930), and Oswald Wiener (b. 1935) – worked alongside one another in a post-World War II Vienna, a world in which they had experienced firsthand language become a potent and formidable tool of propaganda.⁹ The authors and poets began work with the aim to debar the state of language – the “linguistic conventions,” which they found to be the main source of Vienna’s then contemporary oppressive reality.¹⁰ Concurrently, the collective of individual participants in the Wiener Gruppe worked to dissolve traditional literary genres and understanding and also to redefine old language as new “text, montage, ideogram, and constellation, as chanson, as dialect, as literary cabaret.”¹¹ The writers sought to deconstruct the reality in which they lived, and often referred to their European heritage of artistic, activist, psychoanalytical, and societal critique-based movements – drawing specifically upon more localized sources like Ludwig Wittgenstein – upon the building of their own, individual linguistic and social analysis.¹²

Questions of consciousness and language were raised, with the desire to define whether and how conscious acts occur – focusing in on linguistic expression and its effect on

⁸ Some of the more radical post-World War II European artistic developments initially resurfaced in the world of literature, as the varied fascist regimes’ attacks on avant-garde culture devastated schools of modernist and avant-garde art before and during the war.

⁹ Kerstin Braun, *Der Wiener Aktionismus: Positionen und Prinzipien* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1999), 85.

¹⁰ Schmatz, “Viennese Actionism and the Vienna Group,” 59-60.

¹¹ Schmatz, “Viennese Actionism and the Vienna Group,” 60.

¹² Parcerisas, “Body and Revolution,” 13.

consciousness specifically. For the Wiener Gruppe, linguistic critique did not just lie within the realm of sensory perception, rather it could be focused within the “(in)capacity for thought,” and the constructed realities – the social context – “the space within which these norms for behavior and language were used.”¹³ The writers then explored the possibility of other realities, replacing actuality with their own somewhat arbitrarily constructed realities that might translate how the natural becomes the artistic model, and how the artistic model becomes the natural.¹⁴ This exploration came in the form of restructured poetry and performative acts, as well as in other literary forms, with the purpose of discovering and adequately depicting *how* intertwined language and systems of oppression are – how inherently, language constructs the political reality of Vienna, how that reality then dictates language, and how language, in turn, further dictates and exacerbates this constructed reality and its patterns of behavior – recognizing the importance of demythologizing previously set standards (as seen in the group’s redefinition of literary genres) and the presence of collective authorship in this entire process.¹⁵

Working into the 1960s, the Wiener Gruppe writers formed anew Vienna’s artistic avant-garde scene – referencing issues explored in the city’s early twentieth-century modernity, as a result of war-imposed identity confusion that prompted years of cultural stagnation, yet forming a more contemporary and developed framework of thought and experimentation with these references as a basis. Both the Viennese Actionists and VALIE EXPORT were exposed to and in communication with the Wiener Gruppe, and these artists would individually continue to explore some of the more radical elements of the writers’ exercises and hypotheses in works of their

¹³ Schmatz, “Viennese Actionism and the Vienna Group,” 72.

¹⁴ Schmatz, “Viennese Actionism and the Vienna Group,” 72.

¹⁵ Parcerisas, “Body and Revolution,” 13; Schmatz, “Viennese Actionism and the Vienna Group,” 73.

own, picking up on the performative aspects of the Wiener Gruppe's experiments especially, as well as the Wiener Gruppe's linguistic structurally-focused social, psychological, cultural, and political critique.¹⁶

The artists who comprise the Viennese Actionist movement took note of their literary predecessors and sought to more aggressively challenge the language-constructed boundaries in which they were living. The artists who make up the Viennese Actionist movement – mainly Günter Brus (b. 1938), Otto Muehl¹⁷ (1925-2013), Hermann Nitsch (b. 1938), and Rudolf Schwarzkogler (1940-1969) – were more aesthetically aggressive than some of their American and British contemporaries, reflecting certain aspects of Europe's neo-avant-garde, but more exactly mirroring the material-, destruction-, and rebirth-based Japanese Gutai movement of the 1950s and 1960s, and finding themselves in direct opposition to Vienna's conservative society.¹⁸

Although each Viennese Actionist came from a different artistic background, it was their collective, somewhat delayed exposure to the experimentation of other avant-garde artists that led to the Viennese Actionists at first actively exploring psychology and existentialism by way of exceedingly gestural, abstract paintings in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Nitsch's 1962 *Ohne Titel* [Untitled] (fig. 3) is an example of such paintings. These paintings reference the "expressionistisch-erotische Tradition"¹⁹ of a Vienna past – looking to a Secession-based Vienna, with expressionist and psychology-oriented artists such as Gustav Klimt (1862-1918), Egon Schiele (1890-1918), Oskar Kokoschka (1886-1980), and Richard Gerstl (1883-1908) –

¹⁶ Parcerisas, "Body and Revolution," 13.

¹⁷ His last name is often also spelled "Mühl".

¹⁸ Hubert Klocker, "Viennese Actionism / Bodypolitics," in *Viennese Actionism: Günter Brus, Otto Muehl, Hermann Nitsch, Rudolf Schwarzkogler*, ed. Pilar Parcerisas (Seville: Junta de Andalucía, Consejería de Cultura; Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo, 2008), 21.

¹⁹ Danièle Roussel, *Der Wiener Aktionismus und die Österreicher* (Klagenfurt: Ritter, 1995), 55.

while also attempting to break away from these potentially constricting bounds or inherited baggage. Still, this link to their artistic predecessors, exposure to a number of the mid-century varieties of abstraction (such as Tachisme), and their proximity to the Wiener Gruppe's progressive literary and poetic actions of the late 1950s Viennese cabarets, inspired the early aesthetic experiments of the Viennese Actionists and influenced their move to look to other media for aesthetic and political expression and intervention.²⁰ Although the Viennese Actionists relatively quickly became frustrated by painting's limitations,²¹ the artists' exposure to various past and contemporary artistic movements and their own initial experimentation in the more traditional media of painting and sculpture gave them the foundation that they needed in order to more adequately and aggressively address their own structural-based critiques of Vienna within their various 1960s actions, understanding the frustrations of language's and other traditional communication forms' limitations firsthand.

The Viennese Actionists were not a unified group with one specific aim or manifesto, but rather a heterogeneous movement of artists who often affiliated with one another, often involved each other in direct collaboration, and who concurrently developed a variety of aesthetics with the shared purpose to confront, shock, and deconstruct the structural conservatism in Vienna responsible for such a repressive cultural, political, and societal state. It is through use of the body, through gesture and action, that the Viennese Actionists felt art could effectively produce real meaning, and in some of their later actions, produce revolution. As Pilar Parcerisas notes, "The actions were an extension of painting and, at the same time, a liberation of the instincts in

²⁰ Parcerisas, "Body and Revolution," 7-10.

²¹ With Brus noting in his 1960 diary, "My pictures are repressed stamping, screaming, hissing – I try to transform the physical process of feeling into a physical process of seeing – it often causes me great suffering..." Dieter Schwarz and Veit Loers, *Von der Aktionsmalerei zum Aktionismus: Wien 1960-1965* (Klagenfurt: Ritter, 1988), 128.

their attacks on sex and religion.”²² The Actionists assailed cultural taboos that were founded in a “counterfeit and backward tradition whose social norms and forms resulted in a ‘reality’ that had to be broken,”²³ a reality that could be first and foremost broken by the rejection of a constricting two-dimensional medium, in favor of the more reality-infused actions.

The four main protagonists of Viennese Actionism pursued their breaks from social, cultural, political, and aesthetic convention with different methods in their individual practices and with varying degrees of effect. Brus maintained an interest in sometimes public, spatial intervention and often staged or performed messy, masochistic actions, with a tragic-heroic element, only capable of confronting taboos that repress reality and the individual psyche by way of self-injury or martyrdom. Schwarzkogler was similarly interested in themes of pain and self-injury as a means to free oneself of various sociocultural and political constraints. Although, he placed less overall emphasis on public or performative action. Muehl represents a more hedonistically destructive version of Viennese Actionism, exploring the liberation of sexual instinct through both individual and collective therapy,²⁴ as well as representing a fixation with decay and defilement, and material substances (e.g. paint, food, noise, light, and the bodies of the

²² Parcerisas, “Body and Revolution,” 15.

²³ Schmatz, “Viennese Actionism and the Vienna Group,” 60.

²⁴ This therapy takes place, according to Muehl, through his actions that move the performers and viewers to confront and enact taboo sexual fantasies alone and together. By carrying out these fantasies, Muehl meant to encourage the destruction of oppressive and violently constraining social, cultural, and political structures that enforce the repression of healthy sexual fantasies. Without the exploration of these healthy aspects of one’s being, an individual is not in a state of freedom or position to find one’s own true reality. However, it is extremely important to note that Muehl later founded the authoritarian and supposedly far-left Friedrichshof Commune, which remained open from 1972 until 1990 under the façade of freedom from structural violence imposed by the nuclear family and society. This commune, detailed in the 2012 documentary *Meine Keine Familie*, complicates Muehl’s artistic practice, with his radical ideology transforming into an exceptionally patriarchal and, in some ways, fascist and terrorizing reality for the commune residents. This reality further brings the often-hypocritical nature of Muehl’s work to light.

performers and/or audience). Nitsch, another Dionysian actionist with an interest in materiality,²⁵ instead has played on Austria's theatrical and bureaucratic Catholic traditions in ritualized sadomasochistic sacrificial actions, which heavily feature the red-and-white palette of Austria's flag and Catholicism's favorite themes of blood and purity.

Although each of the four artists represents a different aesthetic and methodical strain of the movement, they still shared in their push to bring art into life in order to change life, in order to, very much in the 1960s tradition, "free" themselves and others – from social, cultural, and political constraints, and past and present traumas. As Ferdinand Schmatz comments on the Viennese Actionists, as well as the Wiener Gruppe, "they shared a common mistrust of culture and in particular of language as the political instrument of controlled communication."²⁶ The Viennese Actionists have then taken this shared mistrust and trauma and transformed the deconstructive literary theory of the Wiener Gruppe into a visual, visceral, psychological, and confrontational reality for the artist and viewer.

With this context in mind and EXPORT's peripheral involvement in the Viennese Actionist scene, it is understandable that much of her work would take up such deconstructionist approaches to language, signs, media, rituals, and psychology in her emphatically feminist practice. And it is also understandable that her practice would be treated with the semiotic and psychoanalytic lenses that scholars of her work have employed. From the Wiener Gruppe she

²⁵ Dionysian, like Muehl, as opposed to a more Apollonian approach, like that of Brus or Schwarzkogler, in that both Nitsch and Muehl actively explore action that is based on impulse and that is meant to result in satisfaction of some sort of desire, providing the performers and viewers with a feeling of intoxication or ecstasy. The Apollonian approach of Brus and Schwarzkogler is still meant to be therapeutic and freeing from social, political, and cultural constraints, but they enact this therapy with less focus on immediate satisfaction of desire or feelings of ecstasy.

²⁶ Schmatz, "Viennese Actionism and the Vienna Group," 59.

inherited a mistrust of language and Austrian society at large, and a penchant for performative media. From and alongside the Viennese Actionists (or Wiener Aktionisten), she inherited and shared this same mistrust of Austrian society and the modes with which social, cultural, and political communication, rituals, and structures determined and reified the constricting postwar realities in which they lived and made art. Also from and alongside the Viennese Actionists came a focus on a highly psychoanalytic and multi-media practice, with an unrelenting interest in materiality (including the materiality of the body), pain as a potential tool for self-determination and autonomy, and confrontation of conservative norms.

Yet, even though these influences are clear, EXPORT's influences and work extends far beyond the worlds of just the Wiener Gruppe and Viennese Actionists. EXPORT's early education at a convent was steeped in Austrian and Catholic cultural values. From 1956 to 1959, she studied at the Arts and Crafts College in Linz. From 1960 to 1964, she studied in the Design Department at Vienna's Higher Federal Teaching and Research Institute of the Textile Industry (Die Höhere Bundes-, Lehr- und Versuchsanstalt für Textilindustrie). From 1965 to 1968, she started working in the film industry, as a script assistant, assistant editor, and extra. Around the time of her studies in Vienna, she was also married, had two children, and divorced soon after, becoming in that time intimately acquainted with the domestic and maternal expectations of women in the 1960s.

Although she had an interest in language and psychoanalysis (mostly Freud by way of Lacan), EXPORT's early biographical experiences and other intellectual and aesthetic interests distinguished her and her work from the Wiener Gruppe and Viennese Actionists. EXPORT, for instance, also expressed sustained interest in: anthropology – most notably via the writings and theories of Claude Lévi-Strauss; media theory and expanded cinema – especially via Marshall

McLuhan's writings, her participation as a 1968 founding member of the Austrian Filmmakers Cooperative (alongside the likes of Kurt Kren [1929-1998] and Peter Weibel [b. 1944]), and her 1960s-80s on- and off-artistic partnership with Weibel; semiotic and deconstruction theories – via Jacques Derrida and others;²⁷ and of course the beginnings of the 1960s and 70s feminist movement and later feminist theories – via Simone de Beauvoir, Luce Irigaray, and more often via EXPORT's own transposition of earlier non-feminist texts into feminist contexts (e.g. her use of Mallarmé's "écriture corporelle" concept to account for the inscription of the female body with various conservative meanings and norms, which in turn necessitates the re-inscription of the female body with other self-determined possibilities²⁸).²⁹ These varied interests and early life experiences resulted in an explicitly feminist and multi-media approach to language and deconstruction in EXPORT's artistic practice – a result that decisively differentiates her work from that of the Wiener Gruppe and Viennese Actionists.

In a 2000 essay on the artist, Gary Indiana discussed the above and other, additional influences, as well as those artists with which EXPORT has an affinity, in form and/or content:

EXPORT's work has obvious links to the ontological investigations of such conceptual artists as Joseph Kosuth and Lawrence Weiner, and to the visceral actionism process art of Otto Mühl and Hermann Nitsch; it also recalls the fantasy cinema of Jean Cocteau, Luis Buñuel, and Georges Franju, and bears some family resemblances to the "technofeminist" artmaking of Jenny Holzer, Barbara Kruger, and Cindy Sherman. It has deep roots in the radical deconstruction of language found in the work of such Austrian writers as Ludwig Wittgenstein, Karl Kraus, and Thomas Bernhard [as well as the Wiener Gruppe]. Broadly speaking, VALIE EXPORT is anti-authoritarian and existential

²⁷ This interest does align more with the Wiener Gruppe and Viennese Actionists. However, her feminist and multi-media approach to these texts and theories distinguished her from her mostly male predecessors and contemporaries.

²⁸ VALIE EXPORT, "Aspects of Feminist Actionism," *New German Critique*, no. 47 (Spring – Summer 1989): 81.

²⁹ One could also acknowledge the influence of her visual and literary artistic contemporaries specifically interested in the subjecthood of women, such as Elfriede Jelinek (b. 1946), Ingeborg Bachmann (1926-1973), Maria Lassnig (1919-2014), Birgit Jürgenssen (1949-2003), Carolee Schneemann (1939-2019), Ana Mendieta (1948-1985), and so on.

in ways that are related to most of what seems valid in our intellectual and cultural life after World War II, characterized by a sense of embattlement and an approach of often satirical defiance, an opposition to power inflected by power's constant reorganization of itself, and its diffusion in a continually refigured ensemble of oppressive (and increasingly subliminal) structures.³⁰

These influences and affinities are valid and have been addressed in much of the scholarship on EXPORT. However, also present within EXPORT's anti-authoritarianism is her predilection for expanded cinema and this field's frequent focus on expansion of consciousness and embodied vision via multi-media and multi-sensory experiences.³¹ In considering this side of EXPORT's work, we can start to tease out her less often stated or analyzed phenomenological groundings. Even as EXPORT fell more in line with the structural side of expanded cinema, seeking to break down the means with which film functions and in which it functions for the viewer – seeking, in her more recent words, to “discover and realise new forms of communication, the deconstruction of a dominant reality”³² – her interest in embodied perception and consciousness, as connected to this “deconstruction of a dominant reality” is undeniable.

And although I hesitate to take what an artist says of their work at face value when recalled with decades of distance and hindsight, EXPORT noted in a 2003 lecture (later published as an essay):

I had been particularly impressed during my student years by cubism, Constructivism and Futurism, and thus with the form and extension of artistic expression in(to) space, and the related element, time; the interconnection between light and movement, processes that

³⁰ Gary Indiana, “Body Double,” in *VALIE EXPORT: Ob/De+Con(Struction)*, ed. Elsa Longhauser (Philadelphia: Moore College of Art and Design, 1999), 43.

³¹ See Gene Youngblood, *Expanded Cinema* (New York: Dutton, 1970) and other publications.

³² VALIE EXPORT, “Expanded Cinema: Expanded Reality,” in *Expanded Cinema: Art, Performance, Film*, ed. A. L. Rees, Duncan White, Steven Ball, and David Curtis (London: Tate Publishing, 2011), 288. This text was first delivered as a lecture at the “The Essential Frame: Austrian Independent Film, 1955-2003” symposium with talks and screenings, organized by Mark Webber and held in London May 31 – June 1, 2003.

irritated my educated way of seeing; and above all the image, and an ‘actionist’ method for dealing with the image.³³

EXPORT still prioritizes the image here and the human body as an image, a sign, a language, or a code in other areas of this “Expanded Cinema: Expanded Reality” lecture. However, there is still a recognition of an interest in seeing and “irritating” our “educated,” or conditioned ways of seeing. While this sentiment certainly applies to rendering visible and deconstructing the otherwise invisible and insidiously oppressive codifications of the female body throughout historically male-produced art history and mass media, seeking to establish the female body as a self-determined subject instead of a male-produced object,³⁴ this act of “irritating” our “educated” ways of seeing also has to do with perception more generally, as I will argue in the forthcoming sections.

As EXPORT has said of 1960s expanded cinema, including her own:

Its aesthetic was aimed at making people aware of refinements and shifts of sensibility, the structures and conditions of visual and emotional communication, so as to render our amputated sense of perception capable of perception again. It was a matter of abolishing old, outdated aesthetic values.³⁵

This notably does not just apply to the world of images. It has to do with our day-to-day realities and day-to-day modes of perception. Especially keeping in mind EXPORT’s emphasis on the

³³ EXPORT, “Expanded Cinema: Expanded Reality,” 288.

³⁴ EXPORT wrote in a March 1972 manifesto: “men have succeeded for millennia in expressing their ideas of eroticism, sex, beauty, their mythology of power, strength and severity in sculptures, paintings, novels, films, plays, drawings, etc., thus influencing our consciousness...IT IS HIGH TIME that we women use art as a means of expression to influence everybody’s consciousness, to allow our ideas to enter the social construct of reality, in order to create a humane reality...we must articulate our statements! Destroy all these concepts of love, faith, family, motherhood, female companionship that were not created by us and instead create new ones that correspond to our sensitivity and our wishes.” VALIE EXPORT, “Woman’s Art,” in *Split:Reality*, VALIE EXPORT, trans. Maria Clay (Vienna: Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien; Vienna & New York: Springer, c. 1997), 205. This manifesto was originally published in German in *Neues Forum*, no. 228 (1972): 47.

³⁵ EXPORT, “Expanded Cinema: Expanded Reality,” 288-289.

body throughout her practice and writings, we can begin to understand the aforementioned recognition of interest in conditioned ways of seeing, perceiving, and being as another foundational and *phenomenological* side of her practice. The focus has been more on how images and language condition our ways of understanding the world, and this is significant. Yet, there is also a side of EXPORT's practice that seeks to address our very ways of seeing and being as well.

III. TOWARD A PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH

This is not to say that phenomenology has been completely absent from the scholarship on EXPORT. However, much of the literature on EXPORT that does involve phenomenology more explicitly tends to focus on her feature films of the late 1970s and 1980s or on her more recent artworks of the 1990s and 2000s, or, seemingly due to limited scope, does not delve very deeply within actual phenomenological theories and their implications for EXPORT's work.³⁶ For example, Elena del Río's 2000 article "Politics and Erotics of Representation: Feminist Phenomenology and Valie Export's *The Practice of Love*" does acknowledge the phenomenological through line in EXPORT's practice:

It is the constant attention to these fundamental components of perception/representation that has indelibly marked Export's media practices as implicitly, if not always overtly, phenomenological. This essay therefore proposes a phenomenological perspective to supplement, rather than to contradict, the predominantly psychoanalytic approaches used in understanding Export's challenging work.³⁷

However, del Río does not engage EXPORT's earlier works in the essay, opting to instead focus on the artist's 1984 film *Die Praxis der Liebe* [*The Practice of Love*]. Another article from 2009, Gertrude Postl's "From Gender as Performative to Feminist Performance Art: Judith Butler and Valie Export," does allow for a brief phenomenological analysis of some of EXPORT's earlier work, even if Postl only focuses on the artist's more canonical works as a subversive, "parodic

³⁶ See: Elena del Río, "Politics and Erotics of Representation: Feminist Phenomenology and Valie Export's *The Practice of Love*," *Discourse* 22, no. 2 (Spring 2000): 46-70; perceptual and visual aspects addressed in Homa King, "Vision and Its Discontents: Valie Export's *Invisible Adversaries*," *Discourse* 22, no. 2 (Spring 2000): 25-45 (this text is still largely focused on the psychoanalytic aspects of the artist's film); Agnes Husslein-Arco, Angelika Nollert, and Stella Rollig, eds., *VALIE EXPORT: Zeit und Gegenzeit / Time and Countertime* (Cologne & London: Walther König, 2010); Marguerite P. Harris, "Thought, Object and Experience in Film/Video Installation Art," in *Analecta Husserliana: The Yearbook of Phenomenological Research, Volume LXXXVII, Human Creation Between Reality and Illusion*, ed. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer, 2005), 185-197.

³⁷ del Río, "Politics and Erotics of Representation," 47.

practice,” and even if only in the service of validating Butler’s theories. Scholarship on EXPORT is certainly not completely exclusionary of the role of phenomenology in her work of the 1960s and 1970s, even if much of such scholarship leaves room for further, more in-depth studies and analyses in this vein.

Although not focused explicitly on the phenomenological side of EXPORT’s practice, Mechtild Widrich’s writings on the artist have been able to provide a refreshing and nuanced approach to the artist’s earlier works. Even her review of the 2010-2011 *VALIE EXPORT: Zeit und Gegenzeit* [*VALIE EXPORT: Time and Countertime*] exhibition held in Austria and Italy, manages to briefly and concisely elucidate the role of vision and perception in EXPORT’s work somewhat more successfully than the accompanying exhibition catalog.³⁸ In her discussion of EXPORT’s *Adjunct Dislocations III* (dated 1978, 1996, and 2010), Widrich states: “The work at once destabilizes and sharpens vision, while placing it resolutely in space...insist[ing] that seeing is not a disembodied activity, but always an act performed by bodies in space.”³⁹ Widrich continues in a discussion of the importance of vision and perception in EXPORT’s broader oeuvre:

These challenging meditations on perception, the phenomenology of everyday life, and experience of the body in space—“my” body but also any and every body, including the bodies of mechanical objects like cameras and monitors—is at the center of EXPORT’s contribution to performance art, and explains her approach to it through “expanded cinema” and other new media. That all perception is embodied is a lesson EXPORT may have learned from phenomenology: not only that of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, fashionable in 1970s Vienna, but also the late work of Edmund Husserl, and its application to

³⁸ To be clear, the exhibition is not solely meant to focus on the role of vision or the phenomenological in EXPORT’s work. The thesis of the exhibition argued that the diverse theoretical, visual, and media components of EXPORT’s entire oeuvre, from 1950s to present-day, be accounted for. The underlying motivations of the publication, not dissimilar from my own motivations in approaching this thesis, were to challenge the simplified presentation of EXPORT’s few canonized works.

³⁹ Mechtild Widrich, “Location and Dislocation: The Media Performances of VALIE EXPORT,” *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art* 33, no. 3 (September 2011): 55.

sociology and ethics by Alfred Schütz (*The Meaningful Construction of the Social World* [*Der sinnhafte Aufbau der sozialen Welt*], published in Vienna in 1932 and reprinted in 1960).⁴⁰

As I will later argue, the phenomenological theories of Merleau-Ponty around embodied perceptual experience and the role of art and aesthetics within this experience are especially key in understanding the full aesthetic and political efficacy of EXPORT's practice.

Another source of note that points us toward the phenomenological in EXPORT's earlier and broader oeuvre is the 1997 Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien *Split:Reality*, VALIE EXPORT exhibition and accompanying catalog. As Peter Assmann so succinctly states in his "Remarks on an Obsessive Idea" essay in the exhibition catalog, even though in reference more to her film projects of the late 1970s and 1980s, her conceptual photography, and dreamscapes or dream-like visions as EXPORT's "way out" of restrictive ways of seeing and being: "Starting from the human body and its social determinations the artist has consistently continued her querying of the fundamental conditions of visual perception and their expression in the media (and hence in society)."⁴¹ Christina von Braun's "Why show something that can be seen?" essay from the same exhibition catalog also seeks to account for the ways "in which cognition (or the attempt 'to understand the world') which was once the sole terrain of written

⁴⁰ Widrich, "Location and Dislocation," 55.

⁴¹ Peter Assmann, "Remarks on an Obsessive Idea," in *Split:Reality*, VALIE EXPORT, trans. Maria Clay (Vienna: Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien; Vienna & New York: Springer, c. 1997), 206. Even with this in mind, Assmann remains devoted more to the latter half of this statement – to the expression in media and society, and fixates on EXPORT's dream-like visions and visuals in order to counter restrictive codes: "The human body, and in particular the female body, is shown to be a social code precisely by means of the obvious absurdity of the constellation, as a product of social mechanisms that define the body, determine its contours and keep the personal freedom of decision as restricted as possible....The restriction of the mobility of one's own body...supplies here the impulse for the pictorial concepts that expand reality, for dreams and desires. Wishful thinking seems to be the only 'way out' of this restriction of movement." Assmann, "Remarks on an Obsessive Idea," 206-207.

thought happens increasingly on the visual terrain,” addressing the “dissolution of reality” or the “disappearance of otherness” within EXPORT’s work.⁴²

Significant for my thesis, von Braun notes that “what mattered to [EXPORT] was an ‘irritation’ of the act of looking – to the extent that for [EXPORT] cognition shifted from the written to the visual, this might be described as a gradual ‘alphabetization of the act of looking’.”⁴³ Again, von Braun acknowledges that vision and perception play a significant role here, but there is still a fixation on EXPORT’s “preservation” of the “view from outside.” According to von Braun, “[EXPORT’s] works appear as an attempt to see, tell and visualize the history preceding her own alienation. To put it another way: She tries to deal with her alienation by perceiving herself as a ‘stranger’, as the ‘entirely different one’ that needs to be comprehended [, read and re-read].”⁴⁴ This involves both external social conditions and internalized social inscriptions upon the female psychology. It involves taking to task “the world of technical images which turn women into the incarnation of imaginary definitions of what being a woman means.”⁴⁵ It involves staging one’s own visual disappearance to liberate the woman’s self from the “civilizational burden of the body”; from the image of woman – a controlled, *man*-made “double of the real”; from the female body as “the creation of the (male) visual apparatus, a work of art [or culture] created by male eyes.”⁴⁶ Von Braun’s argument is, to put it plainly, that EXPORT’s work functions on a spectrum – from an acknowledgment of the

⁴² Christina von Braun, “Why show something that can be seen?,” in *Split:Reality, VALIE EXPORT*, trans. Maria Clay (Vienna: Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien; Vienna & New York: Springer, c. 1997), 199.

⁴³ von Braun, “Why show something that can be seen?,” 199.

⁴⁴ von Braun, “Why show something that can be seen?,” 200.

⁴⁵ von Braun, “Why show something that can be seen?,” 200.

⁴⁶ von Braun, “Why show something that can be seen?,” 201-202. For more on the male gaze and film or visual apparatus, see: Laura Mulvey, *Visual and Other Pleasures* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989).

“act of looking” – the apparatus and its functions, to a “rejection of the act of looking,” to a “subversion of the act of looking itself,” with the latter supposedly more present in her works of the 1990s than in her earlier oeuvre.⁴⁷ She is arguing that EXPORT’s oeuvre states: “I exist only when I have taken away from your act of looking the phantasm of omnipotence; and I take it away from you by dissolving myself – your work of art – in front of your eyes, by staging my own disappearance.”⁴⁸ EXPORT’s work appropriates the “visual instruments that define the female body” and “has shown that it is possible to make use of the technical images in order to break the phantasmic ‘control’ of the act of looking” – she has “alphabetiz[ed] the act of looking”⁴⁹

I would agree that EXPORT’s “alphabetization of the act of looking” is key in understanding her work as a whole. EXPORT’s deconstruction and redefinition of the act of looking via photography, film, video, and other media is part of what I aim to address here. But, where von Braun focuses on EXPORT’s employment of the film apparatus to understand the “othering” of herself, I would argue that EXPORT’s use of the camera also has an explicit interest in understanding one’s own perception and vision, even that of the “othered.” One other component in von Braun’s essay worth noting is her acknowledgment of “the opportunity offered by the cinema of identifying oneself with somebody else’s view,” which allows “an interchangeability of gender roles, i.e. the idea that all possibilities of existence are available to the subject: activity and passiveness and hence the possibility of seeing oneself as both man and woman, as I and you, as subject and object.”⁵⁰ This concept of identification and cross-gender

⁴⁷ von Braun, “Why show something that can be seen?,” 202.

⁴⁸ von Braun, “Why show something that can be seen?,” 204.

⁴⁹ von Braun, “Why show something that can be seen?,” 204.

⁵⁰ von Braun, “Why show something that can be seen?,” 203.

identification that film and video allow the viewer, a matter well-versed in film studies, is key to better understand just exactly why EXPORT's work can be so effectively read through Merleau-Ponty, even for its feminist implications.

One other essay within this catalog that focuses on the visual or perceptual in EXPORT's work is the most fruitful for my forthcoming discussion of EXPORT's work in relation to phenomenology.⁵¹ That essay being Monika Faber's "Leap of Space. Time-Poem. Movement-Trace," in which Faber analyzes EXPORT's 1960s and 1970s conceptual photography to draw out the ways in which the artist employed the technology of such media in an expansive manner, in order to analyze and uncover "social structures...simultaneously with an analysis of visual structures."⁵² Faber addresses EXPORT's modernist predecessor László Moholy-Nagy (1895-1946) and his interest in the photographic apparatus's capabilities to "reproduce[] the purely optical image, thus showing the true optical distortions, foreshortenings etc. while our eyes formally and spatially supplement the optical appearances with our intellectual experience by associative connections to turn them into the expected image."⁵³ Although, where Moholy-Nagy

⁵¹ Kaja Silverman's "Speak, body" essay, which focuses on EXPORT's 1983 short film *Syntagma*, in this exhibition catalog also offers a worthwhile psychoanalytic discussion of "the experience which each of us has of occupying a point in space," of the disjunction of the "visual body" and "sensational body" – the "sensational body" experiences "corporeal reality" and yet always maintains its status as externalized representation. Her essay focuses more on the psychoanalytic split of the body, which is not irrelevant to my discussion here, but also not necessary, due to the scope of this paper and Silverman's focus on a 1980s film. One element to consider further here is Silverman's Merleau-Ponty-esque assessment that the "sensational body" is really the "affective-sensational body," "since sensations always generate affect, and affect always induces certain corporeal sensations." Kaja Silverman, "Speak, body," in *Split:Reality, VALIE EXPORT*, trans. Maria Clay (Vienna: Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien; Vienna & New York: Springer, c. 1997), 221.

⁵² Monika Faber, "Leap of Space. Time-Poem. Movement-Trace," in *Split:Reality, VALIE EXPORT*, trans. Maria Clay (Vienna: Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien; Vienna & New York: Springer, c. 1997), 208.

⁵³ Faber, "Leap of Space. Time-Poem. Movement-Trace," 208.

saw the camera and the singular photographic image for its objective potential, Faber argues that EXPORT was of a generation that was skeptical of the camera's limits and so moved to photo-collages as a means to more properly photograph or document "our field of vision."⁵⁴

In these photo-collage works, such as *Leiter* [*Ladder*] (fig. 4) or *Zug* [*Train*] (fig. 5), both dated 1972, EXPORT photographs and stitches together our "field of vision" image by image, vertically or horizontally respectively. "The single picture is replaced by a series of images that simulate our larger field of vision when mounted side by side, and are intended to or want to or are logically able to imitate the movement of our head and eyes."⁵⁵ In another 1972 work, *Landschaftsraum – Zeitraum* [*Landscape Space – Time Space*] (fig. 6), EXPORT places a series of photographs next to one another, though not overlapping. In this instance, "any spatial continuum is lost and the viewer has to, as it were, 'search out' the 'connecting points' between the individual pictures in order to arrive at a spatial concept in the conventional sense."⁵⁶ EXPORT also published a book in 1973 with Hermann Hendrich titled *Stadt: Visuelle Strukturen* [*City: Visual Structures*], in which she further investigated the axial experience of being in a city – in Vienna, to be specific.

These photographic experiments demonstrate, according to Faber, EXPORT's interest in not just reproducing vision, but also complicating vision and our day-to-day "visual habits." As EXPORT herself has stated:

What is important to me is to create a perceptual space of the experience of reality and to present the staging of the experience of reality by means of technological media, thus creating interventions in the space-time continuum which we call reality. As we well know, reality never presents itself as an entirety, but instead reality and the experience of

⁵⁴ Faber, "Leap of Space. Time-Poem. Movement-Trace," 209.

⁵⁵ Faber, "Leap of Space. Time-Poem. Movement-Trace," 209.

⁵⁶ Faber, "Leap of Space. Time-Poem. Movement-Trace," 209.

reality are composed of a multitude of different identities. What we call reality is really just a selection from the observer's perspective.⁵⁷

The visual perception and comprehension of time, space, and movement are integral to EXPORT's photographic works, but so is her interest in challenging, in complicating this perception and comprehension – as it is perhaps more directly experienced (even though this “direct” experience is always mediated by various social, cultural, political, etc. conditions and norms – as will be discussed later), but also as it is reproduced in and experienced via photographs.

Perhaps even more significant to my discussion of EXPORT's 1960s and 1970s oeuvre, though, is what Faber only begins to address toward the end of her essay – the cinematographic: the film apparatus and its capacity to heighten awareness of and interrogate vision and perception, as they have been understood and executed historically; *and* EXPORT's expansive intervention, which aims to renegotiate the terms or everyday modes of seeing and experiencing. I will expand upon this later. Although, for the time-being, it is important to acknowledge Faber's key contribution to understanding EXPORT's practice here. That is, EXPORT's practice, as a whole, can be understood as exposing, deconstructing and expanding upon previously established modes of representation, which operated in the early 20th century from a stance of false “neutral[ity]” or objectivity and “universal[ity]”⁵⁸ – much accounted for in EXPORT's work is her concern for language and film, and their determinations of the (especially female) body and psychology. Yet, what Faber brings to the fore is EXPORT's

⁵⁷ VALIE EXPORT quoted in Faber, “Leap of Space. Time-Poem. Movement-Trace,” 210. Original quote from VALIE EXPORT, “Mediale Anagramme, Ein Gedanken- und Bilder-Vortrag, Frühe Arbeiten,” in *White Cube/Black Box: Skulpturensammlung: Video, Installation, Film: Werkschau Valie Export und Gordon Matta-Clark*, ed. Sabine Breitwieser (Vienna: EA-Generali Foundation, 1996), 107.

⁵⁸ Faber, “Leap of Space. Time-Poem. Movement-Trace,” 212.

concern also for vision and perception, of and across time and space, in the artist's mission to address and deconstruct supposedly objective, but actually patriarchal modes of seeing, and her attempt to reconstruct new, expansive and feminist modes of seeing and experiencing. Faber states:

As Export uses them, the apparatuses serve to investigate as well as expand our senses and are used contrary to those conventions that want to tie them into the existing system – in the sense of a 'neutral' scientific innovation. The resultant (static or motion) pictures are presented contrary to the accepted rules: it is only from such new experiences which are not yet subject to the social codes defined since time immemorial that an unencumbered sign system can perhaps be imagined.⁵⁹

Although the film apparatus has been accounted for in EXPORT's work and her interest in how mass media (cinema, advertising, propaganda, etc.) communicate, reify, and control certain (pre-/re-)established social, cultural, and political norms, as well as her methodical undermining of such patriarchal linguistic or image-based sign systems and control mechanisms... Although the ways in which such media inscribe themselves upon the female body and psyche has been addressed in her oeuvre... Although the ways in which a woman must work through her inscribed psychological trauma to break through to self-determination has been addressed... Although EXPORT's practice has been well understood as being interested in investigating the potential of non-patriarchal imagery... What is less accounted for in EXPORT's practice is her maintained interest in and insistence upon the significance of the visual and sensorial experience of a patriarchal and even hostile world. Her work does not just explore the traumatic experience of the female body from an objective and separate film apparatus. That is to say, the camera is not just a medium with which to neatly communicate separate traumas, psychological, and corporeal experiences. Her work also does not just explore the complexities

⁵⁹ Faber, "Leap of Space. Time-Poem. Movement-Trace," 213.

of the camera itself or its historic uses. That is to say, photography and film are also not just media with which EXPORT can elicit a reflexive, meta-analysis of the problematic ways in which the camera has been used historically. It is all of these analyses of EXPORT's practice, and yet, the camera is also a way for EXPORT to unearth, deconstruct, and reconstruct the complicated, preexisting and simultaneously conditioned perceptual, visual, sensorial experiences of being a human in the world – of being an individual “woman” in a constructed, but also sensory-laden world. The camera, in her photography, films, and actions, even and perhaps especially of the 1960s and 1970s, becomes a tool with which EXPORT can interrogate visual and perceptual experience – of oneself, of others, of the “Other,” of our external worlds – from a feminist stance. With this in mind, I will address and employ some of the theories of Merleau-Ponty and Butler to begin to unpack the feminist phenomenology of EXPORT's earlier oeuvre.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ I am focusing on only Merleau-Ponty and Butler due to the scope of this thesis. However, this paper should really be seen as a starting point for further, potential phenomenological analyses of EXPORT's earlier and entire oeuvre.

IV. EMBODIED PERCEPTION AND ART'S SENSORILY DIDACTIC ROLE: MERLEAU-PONTY AND EXPORT

Within Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological theory – with its decidedly anti-Cartesian-divide stance and its engagement of psychology, psychoanalysis, structuralist linguistics, and Marxism toward an ontology of embodied experience, which occurs without stringent mind-body, subject-object, subjective-objective, or pre-reflective-reflective dichotomies – he addresses art and aesthetics. Perhaps most of note within his various writings on painting, literature, and other artistic media, is his understanding of the role of the artist and the phenomenologist as operating in a similar vein, both requiring “the same kind of attentiveness and wonder, the same demand for awareness, the same will to seize the meaning of the world or of history as that meaning comes into being.”⁶¹ Merleau-Ponty understands both phenomenology and (especially modern) artworks as attempting to understand the complex nature of embodied vision, and as having the capability to re-educate the ways in which we see.

Artworks particularly require that we not just see the artwork, but that we “see according to, or with it.”⁶² In his discussion of painting in his 1961 essay “Eye and Mind,” Merleau-Ponty notes that painting:

...gives visible existence to what profane vision believes to be invisible; thanks to it we do not need a “muscular sense” in order to possess the voluminosity of the world. This voracious vision, reaching beyond the “visual givens,” opens upon a texture of Being of which the discrete sensorial messages are only the punctuations or the caesurae.⁶³

⁶¹ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (New York: Humanities Press, 1974), xxi.

⁶² Maurice Merleau-Ponty, “Eye and Mind,” in *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader: Philosophy and Painting*, ed. Galen A. Johnson, trans. Michael B. Smith (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1993), 126.

⁶³ Merleau-Ponty, “Eye and Mind,” 127.

The painter's task is then to inquire what it is exactly that makes the reality they see and paint, something that is visible to them, something that has been made visible *in* them. The painter's task in depicting a mountain, for example, is:

To unveil the means, visible and not otherwise, by which it makes itself mountain before our eyes. Light, lighting, shadows, reflections, color, all these objects...are not altogether real objects; like ghosts, they have only visual existence. In fact they exist only at the threshold of profane vision; they are not ordinarily seen.⁶⁴

The painter and the painting make these "objects," these elements that work within us, not without us, visible. This, notably, is inclusive of self-portraits, which make visible the painter's body as it exists to them as both a seeing subject and seen object in the world – our vision, our bodies, and the seemingly "external" world are always intertwined and collectively informing our experiences.⁶⁵ As such, painting also involves engaging and breaking up the seemingly external forms or "skins" of objects in the world to better understand what it is that composes them for us.

Rejecting traditional representational artistic styles (as these only maintain the illusion of the everyday, keeping the modes and components of the perceptual world hidden away), Merleau-Ponty points to proto-Cubist Cézanne (though he might also have pointed to Cubists Picasso and Braque) as an exemplary artist. Merleau-Ponty turns to Cézanne, as he broke up the forms and colors of the fruit bowl, the mountain, and the Provençal houses in such a way and engaged what we understand to be space, planes, lines, color, depth, form, perspective, *positioned* vantage points, and movement so effectively that he is still, more than a century after

⁶⁴ Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind," 128.

⁶⁵ "A human body is present when, between the see-er and the visible, between touching and touched, between one eye and the other, between hand and hand a kind of crossover occurs, when the spark of the sensing/sensible is lit, when the fire starts to burn that will not cease until some accident befalls the body, undoing what no accident would have sufficed to do..." Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind," 125.

his death, able to “show how the things become things, how the world becomes world.”⁶⁶ In his 1945 essay “Cézanne’s Doubt,” Merleau-Ponty details Cézanne’s ability to illustrate at once the “partial views one catches sight of” that “must be welded together” in an effective manner.⁶⁷ He elaborates on this simultaneous prioritization of multiple vantage points when depicting a single object:

it is Cézanne’s genius that when the over-all composition of the picture is seen globally, perspectival distortions are no longer visible in their own right but rather contribute, as they do in natural vision, to the impression of an emerging order, of an object in the act of appearing, organizing itself before our eyes.⁶⁸

Merleau-Ponty continues in a discussion of Cézanne’s use of outline, color, and shading in the artist’s pursuit of reality without loss of the sensuous:

If one outlines the shape of an apple with a continuous line, one makes an object of the shape, whereas the contour is rather the ideal limit toward which the sides of the apple recede in depth. Not to indicate any shape would be to deprive the objects of their identity. To trace just a single outline sacrifices depth... That is why Cézanne follows the swelling of the object in modulated colors and indicates *several* outlines in blue. Rebounding among these, one’s glance captures a shape that emerges from among them all, just as it does in perception... The outline should therefore be a result of the colors if the world is to be given in its true density. For the world is a mass without gaps, a system of colors across which the receding perspective, the outlines, angles, and curves are inscribed like lines of force; the spatial structure vibrates as it is formed.⁶⁹

Painting, such as that of Cézanne’s, seeks what Merleau-Ponty calls the “radiation of the visible”⁷⁰ and “the vibration of appearances” (“which is the cradle of things” and which might otherwise remain “walled up in the separate life of each consciousness,”⁷¹ inaccessible to our profane, daily vision), which “contribut[es] to the definition of our access to Being.”⁷² As he

⁶⁶ Merleau-Ponty, “Eye and Mind,” 141.

⁶⁷ Merleau-Ponty, “Cézanne’s Doubt,” 17.

⁶⁸ Merleau-Ponty, “Cézanne’s Doubt,” 14.

⁶⁹ Merleau-Ponty, “Cézanne’s Doubt,” 14-15.

⁷⁰ Merleau-Ponty, “Eye and Mind,” 142.

⁷¹ Merleau-Ponty, “Cézanne’s Doubt,” 17-18.

⁷² Merleau-Ponty, “Eye and Mind,” 132.

notes, “The artist is the one who arrests the spectacle in which most men take part without really seeing it and who makes it visible to the most ‘human’ among them.”⁷³ For Merleau-Ponty, to see is “*to have at a distance*” – and so painting’s (or other art forms’) aesthetic, impractical distance from our everyday embodied experience of being in and seeing the world, is part of what allows us to pick up on that which our “profane vision” has been missing.⁷⁴ We often take for granted the fact: that our bodies are “an intertwining of vision and movement”;⁷⁵ that one’s body “simultaneously sees and is seen. That which looks at all things can also look at itself and recognize, in what it sees, the ‘other side’ of its power of looking. It sees itself seeing; it touches itself touching; it is visible and sensitive for itself”;⁷⁶ that “Quality, light, color, depth, which are there before us, are there only because they awaken an echo in our bodies and because the body welcomes them.”⁷⁷

For Merleau-Ponty, if an artwork is able to “carry with it this indivisible whole,” this “definition of the real,” and take seriously that it must “satisfy an infinite number of conditions,” it is capable of allowing us to truly see.⁷⁸ It can allow us to see and begin to understand how we see. The art object not only resembles natural objects of perception, it can call attention to the ways in which those natural objects of perception are perceived, seen, and experienced.⁷⁹ This is all to say that, “It is not enough for a painter like Cézanne, an artist, or a philosopher, to create and express an idea; they must also awaken the experiences which will make their idea take root

⁷³ Merleau-Ponty, “Cézanne’s Doubt,” 18.

⁷⁴ Merleau-Ponty, “Eye and Mind,” 127.

⁷⁵ Merleau-Ponty, “Eye and Mind,” 124.

⁷⁶ Merleau-Ponty, “Eye and Mind,” 124.

⁷⁷ Merleau-Ponty, “Eye and Mind,” 125.

⁷⁸ Merleau-Ponty, “Cézanne’s Doubt,” 15.

⁷⁹ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, “Art and the World of Perception,” in *The World of Perception*, trans. Oliver Davis (New York & London: Routledge, 2004), 95.

in the consciousness of others. A successful work has the strange power to teach its own lesson”⁸⁰ – that is the complex and dynamic lesson of human perception and experience.

I would argue that much of EXPORT’s oeuvre and particularly her works of the 1960s and 70s fall within this legion of artworks concerned with and capable of heightening and re-educating our modes of seeing and being in the world. For instance, Merleau-Ponty’s assessment of Cézanne’s “genius” use of “perspectival distortions” – which in his full compositions “contribute, as they do in natural vision, to the impression of an emerging order, of an object in the act of appearing, organizing itself before our eyes”⁸¹ – can seamlessly be applied to the panoramic-snapshot-collage technique of much of EXPORT’s early 1970s conceptual photography (e.g. the aforementioned *Leiter* and *Zug*). However, not all of Merleau-Ponty’s assessments of painting and Cézanne can be so neatly applied to EXPORT’s work. We must then also account for the status of film within Merleau-Ponty’s address of aesthetics.

In their “Translators’ Introduction” to Merleau-Ponty’s *Sense and Non-Sense*, Hubert and Patricia Allen Dreyfus denote:

No matter what its subject, the technique of the film is pre-objective *par excellence*. Although the traditional painter may present a finished object and the novelist can break in to say exactly what he means, the essence of the motion picture is that it conveys the meaning of a scene through the rhythm (the duration and sequence) of its shots. Thus it reproduces the way meaning emerges through the organization of experience.⁸²

Although certain Minimalist sculptors might disagree that film has the most profound and effective ability to reproduce the way meaning emerges, the phenomenological capabilities of the film medium remain and necessitate closer examination within Merleau-Ponty’s writings.

⁸⁰ Merleau-Ponty, “Cézanne’s Doubt,” 19.

⁸¹ Merleau-Ponty, “Cézanne’s Doubt,” 14.

⁸² Hubert L. Dreyfus and Patricia Allen Dreyfus, “Translators’ Introduction,” in Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Sense and Non-Sense*, trans. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Patricia Allen Dreyfus (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964), xiv.

As Daniel Yacavone has laid out so well in his 2016 article “Film and Phenomenology of Art: Reappraising Merleau-Ponty on Cinema as Form, Medium, and Expression” there are fundamental differences in the ways in which Merleau-Ponty’s philosophy of phenomenology has been applied to film by film studies scholars, such as Vivian Sobchack, compared to Merleau-Ponty’s own phenomenological writings on film.⁸³ As Yacavone states:

Sobchack’s overriding focus on what are presented as fundamental visual, spatial, and affective features of all live-action films, as tied to perceptual conditions of the film *medium* and its *technology*, stands in sharp contrast to Merleau-Ponty’s emphasis on variable *artistic form, style, and expression* in cinema, together with temporality and rhythm.⁸⁴

Even with these differences, however, it will be helpful to our understanding of EXPORT’s 1960s and 1970s art practice to engage both the philosopher’s own musings on film, in concert with his other writings on art and phenomenology, and components of Sobchack’s interpretation of his philosophy as applied to film theory.

To start, one of Sobchack’s main arguments is that the formalist approach of “film-as-frame,” the realist approach of “film-as-window,” and the psychoanalytic approach of “film-as-mirror” all postulate film as a “‘static *viewed object*’ that is merely presented to viewers for their inspection,” and that film might instead be understood as a nonhuman perceptive, viewing and even moving subject.⁸⁵ According to Sobchack, film “*duplicates* the structure and activity

⁸³ See: Vivian Sobchack, *The Address of the Eye: A Phenomenology of Film Experience* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992). It is worth noting that Yacavone states that not all film theory and criticism, especially more contemporary accounts, diverge so strongly from Merleau-Ponty’s writings [Daniel Yacavone, “Film and Phenomenology of Art: Reappraising Merleau-Ponty on Cinema as Form, Medium, and Expression,” *New Literary History* 47, no. 1 (Winter 2016): 160]. Still, the divergent accounts both have something to offer when analyzing EXPORT’s work.

⁸⁴ Yacavone, “Film and Phenomenology of Art,” 160.

⁸⁵ Yacavone, “Film and Phenomenology of Art,” 164.

(although not necessarily the particular content and significance) of its spectator's vision."⁸⁶ Or as Yacavone summarizes on Sobchack's behalf, film "simulates the conditions and response mechanisms of the sensible world-at-large," and in this sense the medium's technology allows the medium to operate "as an extension of embodied human perception."⁸⁷ The camera's physicality and its having once physically inhabited/moved in, seen/sensed/perceived, and documented/reproduced/expressed the "sensible world-at-large" – with all of its people, objects, and phenomena – allows the cinematic and "cinematographically presented space" to be experienced somewhat continuously with the physical space of the viewer's everyday environment.⁸⁸ Of course, what this obscures and seems to forsake is the camera's lack of actual corporeality or embodied agency – the subject(s) behind the technology that made intentional, embodied movements, actions, and edits to present the "sensible world-at-large" in a particular way: from a particular incomplete and limited perspectival, spatiotemporal vantage point, and with a decisive aesthetic.

Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological understanding of film then rather embraces the (especially more experimental) filmmaker's role: acknowledging the medium's ability to be used in such a way that it might engage the embodied perception and experience of the "sensible world-at-large," but also emphasizing that it takes a certain filmmaker's and/or editor's capable hands to employ treatments or techniques (such as montage) to do so and to avoid certain other reproductive, mimetic, or illusionistic proclivities and pitfalls of the same inherently perceptual and perspectival technology and medium. In his 1948 radio lecture "Art and the World of Perception," Merleau-Ponty lamented the lack of "films that are works of art from start to

⁸⁶ Sobchack, *The Address of the Eye*, 136.

⁸⁷ Yacavone, "Film and Phenomenology of Art," 164.

⁸⁸ Yacavone, "Film and Phenomenology of Art," 171.

finish,” the lack of what he deemed properly “filmic” films with “overall cinematographical rhythm” developed by way of editing, montage, and so on.⁸⁹ That is to say, the camera technology and film medium do not automatically lend themselves to or guarantee such effective engagements with the phenomenological, as Sobchack seems to suggest. Yet, even though not singularly useful in all film analysis, as Yacavone makes clear, Sobchack’s move to “replac[e] a conception of cinematic experience rooted in the idea of filmmaker(s) as expressing subject(s) with that of a film itself as [a perceiving and] ‘expressing subject and object’,” will prove highly useful when unpacking the phenomenological in EXPORT’s experimental work of the 1960s and 1970s.⁹⁰

Still, Merleau-Ponty’s own writings on film, in concert with his greater philosophy of phenomenology and application of that philosophy in understanding other arts, such as painting, are just as, if not more, key here to properly lay out the phenomenological in EXPORT’s practice. Admittedly, Merleau-Ponty did not write or lecture about film nearly as much as he did painting and literature. His writings on film did, however, maintain a kinship with his writings on other visual art forms, and so it is helpful here to read the arguments of his 1945 lecture “Film and the New Psychology,” first given at l’Institute des Hautes Études Cinématographiques in Paris and later published in essay-form in his 1948 *Sens et Non-Sens*, alongside those arguments of the previously discussed “Cézanne’s Doubt,” “Art and the World of Perception,” and “Eye and Mind.”

Having attended Aron Gurwitsch’s 1930s lectures on Gestalt psychology, Merleau-Ponty was heavily influenced by this new approach to perception and consciousness. Gestalt

⁸⁹ Merleau-Ponty, “Art and the World of Perception,” 97-98.

⁹⁰ Yacavone, “Film and Phenomenology of Art,” 165.

psychology, which developed out of Germany and Austria during the earlier part of the 20th century, emphasized an individual's perception of patterns and configurations over their perception of the separate components that made up these larger compositions. Gestalt psychology favored the "whole is greater than the sum of its parts" approach to human perception and comprehension of objects and environments, analyzing the constant flux and negotiation of an individual's perception and attention between individual objects within a perceptual field and the perceptual field experienced as a whole. Merleau-Ponty then took Gestalt psychology "to support the idea that the external world as actively perceived is not a matter of building a picture up from discrete elements of sense data, as is argued or simply assumed in much of classical psychology and empiricist philosophy."⁹¹ Instead, he argued that "it is an act of recognizing implicit patterns and orders. Present outside of the mind, rather than constructed by it, these are perceived directly, via a grasp of the global interrelations amongst objects⁹² and their surface appearances."⁹³ Meaning then is "implicit in the whole of a perceptual field and is actualized via the process of pre-reflective attention to it."⁹⁴ As Merleau-Ponty puts it:

Such a perception of the whole is more natural and more primary than the perception of isolated elements...Therefore analytical perception, through which we arrive at absolute value of the separate elements, is a belated and rare attitude – that of the scientist who observes or the philosopher who reflects. The perception of forms, understood very broadly as structure, grouping, or configuration should be considered our spontaneous way of seeing.⁹⁵

⁹¹ Yacavone, "Film and Phenomenology of Art," 167.

⁹² The term objects here is inclusive of one's own body and other embodied actors in the world.

⁹³ Yacavone, "Film and Phenomenology of Art," 167.

⁹⁴ Yacavone, "Film and Phenomenology of Art," 167.

⁹⁵ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "The Film and the New Psychology," in *Sense and Non-Sense*, trans. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Patricia Allen Dreyfus (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 49.

Further on this, the “classical” understanding of our five *separate* senses, should instead be recognized as being complex, interrelated and overlapping senses, so that, Cartesian intelligence and memory aside, by only seeing and not touching an object, we are able to see that it is hard or soft, bumpy or smooth, and so on (i.e. we already know what it feels like without actually touching the object). Our “perception is therefore not a sum of visual, tactile, and audible givens,” rather, we perceive “in a total way” with our “whole being...which speaks to all [our] senses at once.”⁹⁶ As film only technically employs two of our senses – sight and sound – this “total” experience of senses can account for some of the visceral, bodily reactions that a viewer might have while watching a film.

Merleau-Ponty also comments on our perception of motion vs. being in motion, as it is always negotiated by our being situated in the interrelated world or space and looking at a fixed point in space. For instance, when I sit inside a moving vehicle and look out the window, I am aware of the movement in which I am partaking via this vehicle. If I instead focus on my book inside the vehicle, I seem to forget that I am currently in motion via the vehicle, a dissonant occurrence that often leads to my experiencing motion sickness. The camera can be understood to operate in a similar manner as a human in this instance, in that it is always depicting situated movement – of the actors or even of the camera itself. For Gestalt psychology and Merleau-Ponty this is a phenomenon that is separate from intelligence and memory:

Movement and rest distribute themselves in our surroundings not according to the hypotheses which our intelligence is pleased to construct but according to the way we settle ourselves in the world and the position our bodies assume in it...the choice of the fixed point is not made by the intelligence: the looked-at object in which I anchor myself will always seem fixed, and I cannot take this meaning away from it except by looking elsewhere.⁹⁷

⁹⁶ Merleau-Ponty, “The Film and the New Psychology,” 50.

⁹⁷ Merleau-Ponty, “The Film and the New Psychology,” 52.

For Merleau-Ponty, this phenomenon represents a pre-intelligence, pre-scientific “commerce with the world” and “presence to the world,” which is necessary to rediscover and consider as it implicates our day-to-day experience.⁹⁸

One other re-orientation that Gestalt psychology provides is a rejection of certain affective emotions – anger, love, shame, hate, etc. – as being only felt by a single individual, only occurring in that individuals’ interior reality or psyche. Rather, Gestalt psychology acknowledges these emotions as being interrelated, responsive and embodied, and as such also being those externally visible and accessible to others in “types of [embodied, comported] behavior or styles of conduct,”⁹⁹ which, in turn, inform and interact with our senses and emotions in a way that colors the full, embodied “picture” of experience (whether of film or of the perceptual world at large). Ultimately, for Merleau-Ponty, this “new,” Gestalt psychology has:

generally speaking, revealed man to us not as an understanding which constructs the world but as a being thrown into the world and attached to it by a natural bond. As a result it re-educates us in how to see this world which we touch at every point of our being, whereas classical psychology abandoned the lived world for the one which scientific intelligence succeeded in constructing.¹⁰⁰

Merleau-Ponty then applies this “new psychology” to film to better understand perception – as it is embodied or lived, as it is illustrated in film, and as it is virtually experienced when watching a film. He ultimately understands film as a tool that is both illustrative of this “re-education” of our embodied perception of the world and a “re-educational” tool in and of itself, which allows the viewer to step outside of their typical, everyday modes of perception and divorce themselves from the typical, practical, everyday structures of people, places, and things that they encounter in the world in order to better understand the ways in

⁹⁸ Merleau-Ponty, “The Film and the New Psychology,” 52.

⁹⁹ Merleau-Ponty, “The Film and the New Psychology,” 52.

¹⁰⁰ Merleau-Ponty, “The Film and the New Psychology,” 53-54.

which these embodied perceptions and encounters occur on a more natural level. To start, he notes that “film is not a sum total of images but a temporal *gestalt*.”¹⁰¹ Over the technology of the camera, he points to the filmmaker’s acts of editing, cutting, and montage as the defining components of a film. “The meaning of a shot therefore depends on what precedes it in the movie, and this succession of scenes creates a new reality which is not merely the sum of its parts.”¹⁰² Duration of shots and “cinematographic rhythm” become the tools with which to “produce the desired impression with maximum effectiveness,” even amidst the great variety of actions and reactions that take place at any given moment in a film.¹⁰³ Additionally, as Yacavone is sure to point out, when viewed, film’s pre-focused, pre-fixed, and pre-cut shots also “reflect the inherently perspectival nature of the embodied self’s always limited perceptual ‘take,’ confined as it is to a single body and spatiotemporal vantage point.”¹⁰⁴

Audio operates in a similar manner as the visual, with the filmmaker employing duration, rhythm, and montage of noises and sounds in such a way that it “make[s] us sense the coexistence, the simultaneity of lives in the same world, the actors as they are for us and for themselves” and the cinematic world that they inhabit.¹⁰⁵ Intentional, edited montages of sights and sounds have a way of making the viewer aware of the surrounding world, beyond that which is seen or heard in any given shot, and in turn, aware of the cinematic “whole, which cannot be reduced to its component parts” – an audiovisual experience not at all unlike the viewer’s noncinematic day-to-day experiences.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰¹ Merleau-Ponty, “The Film and the New Psychology,” 54.

¹⁰² Merleau-Ponty, “The Film and the New Psychology,” 54.

¹⁰³ Roger Leenhardt quoted in Merleau-Ponty, “The Film and the New Psychology,” 54.

¹⁰⁴ Yacavone, “Film and Phenomenology of Art,” 169.

¹⁰⁵ Merleau-Ponty, “The Film and the New Psychology,” 55.

¹⁰⁶ Merleau-Ponty, “The Film and the New Psychology,” 55.

There is a decidedly calculated “union of sound and image” in film that often falls apart in overdubbed versions, for example, as a film’s distribution of silence and dialogue, integration of music, established proximity or distance of sounds, and so on are all incorporated into the complex metered audiovisual interplay of a film’s “whole.” Merleau-Ponty states: “It is not the job of words in a movie to add ideas to the images, nor is it the job of music to add sentiments. The ensemble tells us something very precise which is neither a thought nor a reminder of sentiments we have felt in our own lives.”¹⁰⁷ Misplacements of, disruptions within, or distortions of any one of these audiovisual elements or the interpolative rhythm of the complex whole, for Merleau-Ponty, can corrupt a film’s aesthetic “unity-in-multiplicity” and phenomenological efficacy.

Merleau-Ponty does acknowledge a “basic realism” of movies, and quotes film critic Roger Leenhardt’s notion that “the power of reality released on the screen is such that the least stylization will cause it to go flat.”¹⁰⁸ Although, averse to a strictly mimetic conception of film (as he is also to mimetic conceptions of painting or literature), Merleau-Ponty notes that any semblance of “realism” or “simulation of ordinary, lived experience”¹⁰⁹ that is apparent in the medium “does not mean...that the movies are fated to let us see and hear what we would see and hear if we were present at the events being related; nor should films suggest some general view of life in the manner of an edifying tale” – events, “[i]deas and facts are just the raw materials of art” and “the function of the film is not to make these facts or ideas known to us.”¹¹⁰ Instead, for Merleau-Ponty:

¹⁰⁷ Merleau-Ponty, “The Film and the New Psychology,” 56.

¹⁰⁸ Merleau-Ponty, “The Film and the New Psychology,” 57.

¹⁰⁹ Yacavone, “Film and Phenomenology of Art,” 170.

¹¹⁰ Merleau-Ponty, “The Film and the New Psychology,” 57.

The joy of art lies in its showing how something takes on meaning – not by referring to already established and acquired ideas but by the temporal or spatial arrangement of elements...[A] movie has meaning in the same way that a thing does: neither of them speaks to an isolated understanding; rather, both appeal to our power tacitly to decipher the world or men and to coexist with them. It is true that in our ordinary lives we lose sight of this aesthetic value of the tiniest perceived thing. It is also true that the perceived form is never perfect in real life, that it always has blurs, smudges, and superfluous matter, as it were. Cinematographic drama is, so to speak, finer-grained than real-life dramas: it takes place in a world that is more exact than the real world. But in the last analysis perception permits us to understand the meaning of the cinema. A movie is not thought, it is perceived...They directly present to us that special way of being in the world, of dealing with things and other people, which we can see in the sign language of gesture and gaze and which clearly defines each person we know.¹¹¹

Similar to the way in which Merleau-Ponty understands painting, such as that of Cézanne's, as having the capacity to heighten one's awareness and understanding of their modes of perception – especially due to the aesthetic object's ability to maintain enough mediated distance from practical, everyday function¹¹² and practical, everyday embodied experience, with the aesthetic encounter capable of simultaneously throwing our attention to the everyday objects represented and holding our attention on the “pictorial event” unfolding before us¹¹³ – film has the capacity to show the viewer the ways in which they see, feel, hear, touch, and experience¹¹⁴ on a day-to-day basis and in a distanced enough way that the viewer can conceive of what it is to be that body perceiving, moving, behaving, feeling, or experiencing and also become increasingly aware of all that that experience is composed of and entails. By maintaining this distance, a film (or artwork) is “able to foreground this primary, prereflective world and its conditions” and “bring to reflective attention the dynamic ways in which the human self concretely interacts with

¹¹¹ Merleau-Ponty, “The Film and the New Psychology,” 57-58.

¹¹² Of course, this does not account for art objects that are functional as well. However, as that is not of specific concern in Merleau-Ponty's aesthetic theory or EXPORT's practice, I will not be engaging that discussion here.

¹¹³ Merleau-Ponty, “Art and the World of Perception,” 96.

¹¹⁴ This is expressly inclusive of emotional and behavioral phenomena, such as pleasure, pain, grief, love, or hate.

perceptual objects in the three-dimensional world.”¹¹⁵ Film aligns well with Gestalt psychology for Merleau-Ponty then, in that it “present[s] consciousness thrown into the world, subject to the gaze of others and learning from them what it is.”¹¹⁶ For Gestalt psychology and phenomenology, there is “an attempt to make us *see* the bond between subject and world, between subject and others, rather than to *explain* it as the classical philosophies did by resorting to absolute spirit.”¹¹⁷ These “new” philosophies move to “describe[e] the mingling of consciousness with the world, its involvement in a body, and its coexistence with others.”¹¹⁸ And as Merleau-Ponty sees it, “the movies are peculiarly suited to make manifest the union of mind and body, mind and world, and the expression of one in the other.”¹¹⁹

Merleau-Ponty places much weight on the film medium’s capacity for audio and visual montage, which, especially in more experimental film, produces an art form that expressly avoids mimetic simulation or analogy, and instead allows for the viewer’s perceived, sensed experience of the whole in a way that can heighten or make acute the ways in which they also perceive, sense, and experience themselves and their surrounding world in an embodied way. By avoiding 1-1, mimetic representation and Hollywood cinematic logic or language, films such as EXPORT’s short films from the 1960s and 1970s are able to better reproduce the experience of a whole perceptual field, in a way that can effectively invoke, engage, criticize, and even shape what that embodied spatiotemporal experience actually is and means. That is, to make the next step, the film medium as it is employed by the likes of EXPORT (just as painting is employed by the likes of Cézanne), can not only make us aware of how we perceive, but also expose certain

¹¹⁵ Yacavone, “Film and Phenomenology of Art,” 175.

¹¹⁶ Merleau-Ponty, “The Film and the New Psychology,” 58.

¹¹⁷ Merleau-Ponty, “The Film and the New Psychology,” 58.

¹¹⁸ Merleau-Ponty, “The Film and the New Psychology,” 59.

¹¹⁹ Merleau-Ponty, “The Film and the New Psychology,” 58.

reflective, abstracted, normative and conditioned modes of perception that have been falsely accepted as pre-reflective or natural, actually changing the way that we perceive by way of this exposure.¹²⁰

Much of EXPORT's work of the 1960s and 1970s falls within the purview of the structuralist side of expanded cinema, focusing on breaking down the formal components of the film medium and often combining these components with materials not associated with the medium. EXPORT does this in various performances, installations, and films proper in order to better understand the ways in which the film medium functions, both generally and for the viewer. As mentioned, in these earlier expanded films, EXPORT was actively seeking the "deconstruction of a dominant reality"¹²¹ – a reality which operates under the guise of supposed objectivity and as natural given but is in fact upheld by normative modes of communication, imagery, and films. This deconstructionist push also involved a decided focus on the material and aesthetic capabilities of the film medium,¹²² as well as the ways in which we see and perceive both film and the world at large. Many of her earlier expanded films, in fact, are defined by intense aesthetic experimentation which prioritizes modes of perception.

For instance, in her 1967-68 *Abstract Film Nr. 1* (fig. 7-8) EXPORT angled first a spotlight, and later a projector, at a mirror with water streaming down it, so that it would create

¹²⁰ This is, notably for EXPORT's work, a perception that occurs prior to objective signification and reflection, meaning that even as much of EXPORT's practice of the 1960s and 1970s focused on certain significations and their conditioning of the way women were viewed and able to act in postwar Austrian society, there is also this pre-signified (or maybe even signified-adjacent) realm of corporeally perceived experience in which EXPORT's work of this period also resided and interrogated.

¹²¹ EXPORT, "Expanded Cinema: Expanded Reality," 288.

¹²² A move not totally dissimilar from early 20th century European experimental filmmakers, such as Hans Richter (1888-1976), Viking Eggeling (1880-1925), and Walter Ruttmann (1887-1941).

an abstract “film” on the adjacent wall. In this work, subtitled “light-land-water-mirror-action,”¹²³ materiality and spatiality are key concerns. On a concept sheet for the work, EXPORT noted: “in using simple media the effects of technology can be achieved. a searchlight is directed onto a mirror which various liquids are poured over. these events are projected by reflexion [*sic*] onto a screen (movie screen, nature screen).”¹²⁴ Although EXPORT does not necessarily take up the materials of film so explicitly, she is interested in understanding its apparatus, its capabilities, its extensions, and its existence without celluloid. Of note here is that EXPORT has likened this work specifically to the works of Arte Povera, Minimalism, and Land Art. Even though her focus is largely still on breaking down the structure of the film apparatus and medium, in a supposedly “anti-technological” move,¹²⁵ relating this work to these movements of her contemporaries automatically places an emphasis on the material function of the medium and its relation to the viewer. There is an emphasis placed on the sight, sound, and known touch of the streaming water, as well as the spatial throw of warm light from the projector, and that light’s interaction with different surfaces (e.g. the mirror with streaming water, an adjacent wall, or a more traditional screen). This reduction of a type of technology could then be understood as a type of

¹²³ Roswitha Mueller, *VALIE EXPORT: Fragments of the Imagination* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), 3.

¹²⁴ “VALIE EXPORT, *Abstract Film No. 1*, 1967-1968,” Art and Artists, The Museum of Modern Art, accessed June 5, 2020, https://www.moma.org/collection/works/152169?association=Installation&locale=en&page=1&parent_id=150052&sov_referrer=association. This is EXPORT’s English concept sheet for her *Abstract Film Nr. 1*.

¹²⁵ Mueller, *VALIE EXPORT*, 5. Even though she described this as an anti-technological move, EXPORT never comes close to a rejection of film as a medium in her expansive oeuvre. Even during this time, she continued to make a number of experimental films. This move away from “technology” has also been emphasized by EXPORT as a matter of accessibility, that anyone might be able to make an “expanded film,” an *Abstract Film Nr. 1*, with her set of materials and specifications. This line of thinking, although more likely based in a 1968 sentiment, still harkens back to the modernist promise of democratized artistic practice (e.g. El Lissitzky’s [1890-1941] conception of graphic design) or shared, collective work.

abstraction. But, rather than becoming less material, EXPORT's reduction is a blurring of the formal and sensuous components (e.g. duration, color, light, time) shared by nature and technology to better understand the ways in which they exist and assemble for the viewer's multi-sensory, embodied vision. The "image" or "film" typically projected in a cinematic setting has been stripped away to focus on "concrete materials"¹²⁶ and the ways in which those materials interact in film and the "sensible world-at-large." Also, by removing *Abstract Film Nr. 1* from the typical context in which a viewer might interact with a film (i.e. the cinema in the late 1960s), EXPORT's installation allows the viewer both aesthetic and practical distance to engage with the fundamental elements of the film medium in a more critical or heightened way.

The viewer can also walk around the installation and the space that it "creates" via the throw of light and sound. One can walk between the projector, the mirror, and the "screen" to experience from different perceptual and embodied positions: 1) the visual film or film seen: the visual and angled throw of light from the projector, on or from the mirror, and on or from the adjacent wall; 2) the aural film or film heard: the sound of water streaming or the projector running, as heard nearby or further away; and 3) even the haptic film or film felt: the feeling of warmth of the projected light or the contrasted felt coolness of the "unlit" areas or emanating from the streaming water. As much as this installation works to break down the components of the film apparatus in an explicitly abstract and material way, it also works to involve the viewer's *embodied* perception, heightening one's awareness and understanding of how they perceive, sense, and experience themselves and their surrounding world in an always situated and perspectival, always embodied way.

¹²⁶ VALIE EXPORT quoted in Sylvia Szely, ed., *EXPORT LEXIKON: Chronologie der Bewegten Bilder bei VALIE EXPORT* (Vienna: Sonderzahl, 2007), 140.

If we look to other expanded films and so-called “object” films from this period of the late 1960s, we can come to understand the push to heighten and deconstruct perception and vision, mostly in the context of the artist breaking down the components of the film medium and apparatus, but also in a way that is decidedly focused on the viewer’s perceptions of film and “reality.” EXPORT’s 1968 *Instant Film*, done in collaboration with Peter Weibel, might be the most obvious example from these early films. A play on instant coffee and other “instant” modes of consumption that are a part of modern life, *Instant Film* employs a sheet of transparent plastic that can easily be manipulated by the viewer (i.e. by cutting it, drawing on it, coloring it, hanging or holding it in different ways) and then looked through in order to view reality as a ready-made “film.” In this film, EXPORT and Weibel sought to activate the typically “passive” viewers of the cinema, not only giving them the means to make their own films, but also drawing their attention to the ways in which they view films. A concept sheet for this work states:

assembly is up to the viewer. he can hang the film at home on his own 4 walls – his own 4 canvases – on a different color background. he can put the film in front of an object, thus executing his own collages and superimpositions. he can make “reality” into a “film” by holding the film in front of his eyes. the visual space (=canvas format) is extended by the distance from the pair of eyes. a prepared film (with scissors, cigarette, felt-tip pens...) conveys “perspectives” or “insights” at any time. life becomes “transparent”, “manageable”. if the user draws his “worldview” on the film, he sees the world according to his pictures.¹²⁷

¹²⁷ VALIE EXPORT, “INSTANT FILM” concept sheet, reproduced in Szely, *EXPORT LEXIKON*, 133. Original German: “die montage [could also be translated as ‘montage’ or ‘editing’] ist die sache des zuschauers. er kann die folie [could also be translated as ‘plastic’] zu hause auf seine eigenen 4 wände – seine eigenen 4 leinwände – auf einen jeweils verschiedenen farbhintergrund hängen. er kann die folie vor ein objectt geben, solcherart seine eigenen collagen und superimpositions ausführen. er kann die ‘wirklichkeit’ zu einem ‘film’ machen, indem er die folie vor seine augen hält. der gesichtsraum (=leinwandformat) verlängert sich durch die entfernung vom augenpaar. eine präparierte folie (durch schere, zigarette, filzstifte..) vermittelt jederzeit ‘durc[h]blicke’ oder ‘ein = blicke’. das leben wird ‘durchschaubar’ [could also be translated as ‘clear’], ‘überschaubar’ [could also be translated as ‘easy to grasp’ or ‘easy to understand’]. zeichnet der benutzer sein ‘weltbild’ auf die folie, sieht er die welt nach seinem ‘bilde’.” N.B. EXPORT’s concept sheets and other texts often eschew German grammar rules, such as capitalizing nouns.

Certainly this work aligns well with expanded cinema's moves toward deconstructing the film apparatus and film viewing experience and removing the divisions that separate art from life. But, of note in the discussion here, *Instant Film* also has an explicit interest in highlighting and elucidating the ways in which the viewer, and humans in general, perceive the world. By encouraging some level of mediated distance, implementing one step of removal from actual, day-to-day perception and experience in the world, and by implicating the viewer in the "filmmaking" process, EXPORT and Weibel call attention to and hold the viewer responsible for the ways in which they look, perceive, and experience a film or the world more generally.

Another film from this period that served similar filmic and sensorially didactic functions is EXPORT's and Weibel's 1969 *Das Magische Auge* [*The Magic Eye*] (fig. 9). In this film, the screen was again made of plastic and now prepared with light sensors, so that whenever shadows befell the screen or a viewer walked or made a motion in front of the screen, the sensors would be activated and light would be seen and certain sounds would be heard.¹²⁸ It is notable too that EXPORT referred to another of her related expanded films from the late 1960s as a "Lehrfilm" or "learning film,"¹²⁹ in clear reference to Bertolt Brecht's theatrical "Lehrstücke" ["learning pieces" or "learning plays"] of the 1920s and 1930s. EXPORT's expanded films of this period, often done in collaboration with Weibel, sought to remove the distance between the film and the filmgoer. But, this was not just done to more directly intertwine life and art or to pull the viewers out of their passive states. This was also done in such a way that these works sought to educate the filmgoers about their embodied and situated modes of perception, when watching a film or

¹²⁸ Romana Karla Schuler, *Seeing Motion: A History of Visual Perception in Art and Science* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), 228.

¹²⁹ Mueller, *VALIE EXPORT*, 11; Szely, *EXPORT LEXIKON*, 131. This was in reference to her 1968 *Auf + Ab + An + Zu* [*Up + Down + On + Off*].

participating in the “sensible world-at-large.” These educational films could then return the filmgoers to pre-conditioned, pre-objective modes of seeing and being, and render them capable of recognizing, avoiding, and operating outside of or against the often harmful, conditioned modes of seeing and being in film and the “sensible world-at-large.”

Around the time of her early expanded films, such as *Abstract Film Nr. 1* and *Das Magische Auge*, and her conceptual photography, such as *Zug* and *Leiter*, EXPORT was also making more straight-forward or traditional in medium, though still very experimental, films. These experimental films of the late 1960s and early 1970s demonstrate a sustained interest in and examination of the complex perceptual experiences of both film and the “sensible world-at-large” – placing much more of an emphasis in these films on actual filmic perception and the medium’s inherent ability to seemingly replicate embodied, human perception. For instance, her 1970 16mm color film *Fragmente: Burgenland* [*Fragments: Burgenland*] (fig. 10-12), which documents the creation of sculptor and architect Walter Pichler’s *Sitzgruben* [*Seating Pits*] installation (fig. 13)¹³⁰ and the nearby abandoned quarries and vineyards of Breitenbrunn and the surrounding Austrian state of Burgenland, cuts together shots of Pichler working on the plots, up-close and from distant, almost aerial shots that take into account the surrounding landscape. The two-minute short film lapses time, showing Pichler at work, the project site, and the surrounding greenery and white rock of the landscape in the bright light and vibrant blues and greens of day, as well as in the darker, more faded light and colors of dusk. The intercut scenery evokes the perceived impressions of landscapes, much in the way that one experiences and remembers them more directly for themselves, in person. Yet, the contracted time that elapses in the film, as shown in the progress of the worker and the change of the sun’s position and quality

¹³⁰ This installation is titled “Sitzgruppen” in Szely, *EXPORT LEXIKON*, 124.

of light, allows the viewer to more readily assess the complexities of the perception and experience of the elapsing of time – whether in nature, at work, in film, or in general. The viewer becomes aware of the relative, contracted or expansive, and multi-sensory ways in which they experience time in space, and in which their time is often structured for them to experience by external forces.

Another 16mm film from this period, EXPORT's 1973 *Bewegte Bilder über sich bewegende Personen* [*Moving Pictures about Moving People*] (fig. 14-15), which expands upon an earlier 1970 16mm film titled *movement movie = bewegte Bilder über sich bewegende Körper* [*movement movie = Moving Pictures about Moving Bodies*], shows EXPORT running across a soccer field. EXPORT is shown running toward and away from the camera, and across the depicted horizon line for about six minutes. Significantly though, the film is shot and edited in such a way that EXPORT's body is at times blurred and multiplied – either via double exposure or superimposition. In one frame, for example, three partial versions of EXPORT's body in motion appear atop one another, most likely via multiple exposure. This layering of partial, almost translucent, versions of EXPORT's running body across the screen recalls and slows down the disjointed and multi-perspectival ways in which one sees, experiences, and recollects: objects in motion across space (often in relation to a more fixed or stationary landscape) and over time; and oneself in motion across space and over time.

Another 16mm film, EXPORT's 1971-72 *Interrupted Line* (fig. 16-17), similarly addresses motion across time and space. However, instead of focusing on the human body in motion, EXPORT focuses on the artist's conception of the line as a formal element capable of moving and illustrating or documenting movement across time and space. The road is invoked as the line in this film by EXPORT's positioning the camera in the backseat of a moving car.

Angled just so, the camera has captured an “interrupted” or disjointed line – with the road or line coming at the camera when looking out the front windshield and simultaneously receding behind the camera when looking at it in the rear-view mirror. The road or line is only interrupted or disjointed then by the moving car that the viewer, by way of the camera, occupies.

EXPORT’s explanation of this work relies on a metaphor of the car as film, in that when a film is viewed it is capable of operating outside of “normal” or everyday flows of time and space.¹³¹ While this may be true and this is part of what allows film to be such an effective phenomenological medium, the perceptual capabilities of film *and* the camera that both Merleau-Ponty and Sobchack have drawn out, are just as much at play here. In this work and in much of EXPORT’s film and video works of the 1970s, there is a pronounced focus on the experience of surrounding visuals, sounds, and the “sensible world-at-large” as being a *corporeal* experience, fixed or located in time and space – with one’s perception and experience of the world being something that is always embodied, and which multiplies out from and interacts with that body’s specific, fixed and durational, spatiotemporal perspective.¹³² As Merleau-Ponty and Sobchack express, the camera and film are capable of capturing and echoing this complex embodied experience and by way of aesthetic distance and means are able to return the viewers to pre-conditioned, pre-objective modes of seeing and being, or as EXPORT puts it, “render our amputated sense of perception capable of perception again.”¹³³ Merleau-Ponty points out that

¹³¹ EXPORT quoted in Szely, *EXPORT LEXIKON*, 123.

¹³² Much of her video work, from the 1970s on, such as her 1973 *Interrupted Movement*, employs closed-circuit video and televisions to examine this further in live performances and viewer-engaging installations. Indeed, there are countless ways of examining this through line in EXPORT’s greater oeuvre. However, due to scope, I will be excluding these video installations here, mostly focusing instead on her early expanded films and 16mm films, with a couple of exceptions.

¹³³ EXPORT, “Expanded Cinema: Expanded Reality,” 289.

just because the camera and film medium hold within them this potential to heighten awareness of or re-educate the viewer's modes of perception does not mean that all films will always do this or always do this so effectively. EXPORT's work, however, does engage these phenomenological concerns effectively, and I would argue that her practice is just as much defined by these concerns and tendencies as by other certain linguistic, deconstructionist, or psychoanalytic tendencies.

EXPORT's interest in filmic and embodied perception and experience shows up nowhere more emphatically than in her 1973-74 *Raumsehen und Raumhören* [*Space Seeing and Space Hearing*] (fig. 18-20) and her 1973 *Adjungierte Dislokationen I* [*Adjunct Dislocations I*] (fig. 21-23), the earliest work from her *Adjungierte Dislokationen* [*Adjunct Dislocations*] series.¹³⁴ In *Raumsehen und Raumhören*, a video-performance work produced with Wink van Kempen, Henk Elenga, and Frederic Kappelhof, and for which Christian Michelis created the accompanying oscillatory synthesizer track, EXPORT sought to present an "elementary demonstration" of "sound and body movements in space."¹³⁵ The work, which shows EXPORT standing still in an empty room surrounded by white walls reminiscent of an empty art gallery, was filmed using multiple cameras positioned from various angles and set to film various depths of field. These specifically angled and distanced shots, which range from close-ups of EXPORT's eyes and hair to long shots of the entire space, were then edited together in at least two of the work's six sections, so that any two different shots of EXPORT standing in the space or even of just the space itself are shown simultaneously side-by-side, before the work cuts to another two similarly

¹³⁴ The official translated English title is listed here. However, "adjungiert" could also be translated as "adjoint" and "Dislokationen" could also be translated as "displacements."

¹³⁵ EXPORT quoted in Szely, *EXPORT LEXIKON*, 111. Original German: "das vorliegende tape versucht eine elementare demonstration dieses areals der ton- und körperbewegungen im raum zu geben."

or differently angled and distanced shots of EXPORT in the space. In one of these spliced sections, we see two separate, but complete shots placed side-by-side. In another later spliced section, the two shots displayed side-by-side are incomplete and mismatched, showing, for instance, a close-up of the left half of EXPORT's face alongside the right half of EXPORT's face as shot from farther away.

Notably, EXPORT herself never appears to move in the space during each of the work's sections. She does appear in the center of the room, as opposed to the back of the room, in one of the sections. However, she is not shown actually moving. She remains still in one fixed space and position. It is the varyingly positioned cameras and video editing that are able to echo the complexities of the viewer's embodied perception – moving EXPORT around the screen only by showing her from different angles and distances in which the embodied cameras and viewers (by way of the cameras) are situated. The split-screen editing also replicates the often fragmented,¹³⁶ and yet whole, experience of seeing and perceiving, giving, like Cézanne's paintings do, “the impression of an emerging order, of an object in the act of appearing, organizing itself before our eyes.”¹³⁷

Just as Merleau-Ponty does not conceive of our senses as operating in isolated or separate ways, but rather as an interconnected sensing framework or whole, EXPORT has included “*Raumhören*”¹³⁸ in this work's title and has incorporated non-diegetic sound into this video work, so that sound is inextricably linked to any visual changes that occur in the video. With each of the differently positioned shots and their different depths of field, showing EXPORT

¹³⁶ One might recall an optometrist's visit during which covering one eye or the other seems to move the eye exam chart around on the wall, from left to right, depending upon which eye is open or closed.

¹³⁷ Merleau-Ponty, “Cézanne's Doubt,” 14.

¹³⁸ My emphasis.

closer to or farther away from the cameras and from different angles, there is an accompanying synthesizer track to match, which changes in tempo and sometimes pitch as the work's visuals change, as the video's shots are shown separately, side-by-side, and in different combinations. The soundtrack has a syncopated and pulsing quality to it, which one can imagine bouncing off the walls of the space in which the work was shot. The changing tempos and tones also heighten one's awareness of the ways in which sight and sound, for instance, interact to create a perceptual whole.

EXPORT's "elementary demonstration" here is actually one that breaks down the complicated, embodied and spatiotemporally dictated ways in which we see, hear, and perceive, and in which we make sense of that which we see, hear, and perceive, often before any conscious judgment about that which we are seeing, hearing, or perceiving can be made. This work too, more than any of EXPORT's other experimental film or video works of the late 1960s and early 1970s, employs visual and aural space, time, duration, and rhythm so effectively that it evokes Merleau-Ponty's emphasis on the properly "filmic" film as a cinematographically rhythmic and durational audiovisual whole or "temporal *gestalt*,"¹³⁹ capable of heightening or making acute the ways in which we see, hear, perceive, sense, and experience the world in a fragmented and yet patterned, whole, and sensible way.

In *Adjungierte Dislokationen I*, EXPORT mounted one Super 8mm camera on her chest and another on her back, while a separate 16mm camera (operated by Hendrich) filmed EXPORT and her corporeal film rig moving around and walking from Vienna's city center to the city's edge, documenting her body's and the camera's movements from the urban to the increasingly natural environments. All three of the camera's shots were then projected alongside

¹³⁹ Merleau-Ponty, "The Film and the New Psychology," 54.

one another when this film was screened, showing EXPORT's successive movements around the urban- and landscapes from both the body's points of view and an external observer's point of view simultaneously. On a concept sheet for this work, EXPORT notes:

Not only is something shown, the process of showing is also shown. Not only is something depicted, the process of depiction is also depicted. A sense of space that only film can create is conveyed: at the same time one can see oneself in the center of the room from the back and from up front, from [above and] below and from the outside. Not only are the surroundings explored by means of film, the exploration of the surroundings by means of the body are also shown by means of film (which is only possible in film and not literature, etc.) In this way, the surroundings also appear as a body, as an extension of the body, as an environmental body. Film combines opposite parts of the room, creating the spatial continuum of the body that cannot be immediately perceived.¹⁴⁰

This work and EXPORT's explanation of the work immediately recall Sobchack's move that the camera is capable of operating in a similar manner as the perceiving body, that the camera can be understood as both a sensing subject and sensible object, and as "as an extension of embodied human perception,"¹⁴¹ "*duplicat[ing and extending]* the structure and activity...of its spectator's vision."¹⁴² EXPORT's work not only provides the viewer with a frontal point-of-view shot of her walk through Vienna as a viewer might see for themselves when walking through Vienna, she also provides the viewer with a dorsal point-of-view shot and an external

¹⁴⁰ VALIE EXPORT quoted in "VALIE EXPORT, Adjungierte Dislokationen, 1973," VALIE EXPORT, Collection, Generali Foundation, accessed June 5, 2020, <http://foundation.generali.at/en/collection/artist/export-valie.html#work=463&artist=35>. VALIE EXPORT, "Adjungierte Dislokationen" concept sheet, reproduced in Szely, *EXPORT LEXIKON*, 115. Original German: "es wird nicht nur etwas gezeigt, sondern auch das zeigen aufgezeigt. es wird nicht nur etwas dargestellt, sondern auch die darstellung dargestellt. es wird ein raumgefühl erzeugt, wie es nur der film erzeugen kann: gleichzeitig von hinten und vorne, oben und unten und sich von außen im mittelpunkt eines raumes sehen. es wird daher nicht nur auf filmische weise die umge[b]ung erkundet, sondern filmisch die erkundigung der umgebung durch den körper demonstriert (was eben nur im film und nicht literarisch etc möglich ist) und damit tritt auch die umgebung als körper auf, als eine ausweitung des körpers, als umgebungskörper. der film verbindet entgegen[g]esetzte raumteile miteinander, die, das für die wahrnehmung unmerkliche RAUM – KONTINUUM des körpers bilden."

¹⁴¹ Yacavone, "Film and Phenomenology of Art," 164.

¹⁴² Sobchack, *The Address of the Eye*, 136.

observer's point-of-view shot of her movement. These filmic coordinates are then combined to locate the perceiving body in space and time in a way that is much more reflective of our actual complex experiences of being perceiving bodies in space and time. Although we see what is in front of us in a perspectival way, determined and limited by our body's positioning of our eyes, we also are always subconsciously or consciously aware of that which occurs in the peripheral world around us. We might see what is ahead of us, but we also hear (and by extension "see") the sounds and movement around us. We feel our surroundings and our bodies positioned in those surroundings in a much more complex way than we are always aware of. The three different points of view in this film also echo the naturally fragmented, and yet interconnected and whole or sewn-together way of seeing, experiencing oneself, and being in the world.

Significant too, even if the camera is used as a tool to echo or expand our complex ways of perceiving and being in the world, both here in *Adjungierte Dislokationen I* and in *Raumsehen und Raumhören*, EXPORT still chooses to show *her* body, to locate (or rather dislocate) her perceiving and perceived body as it is situated and moving in various private or public spaces and across time. This is exactly where we can begin to identify the feminist aspects of her phenomenological work coming to the fore. EXPORT uses the camera, film, and video to not only educate the viewer's modes of perception, but to also draw attention to the complex ways in which gender and other identifiers dictate the ways in which one perceives and is perceived across private and public time and space – a move that will be discussed in the following section.

Much of Merleau-Ponty's writings on film date to the 1940s, and as such lack regard for other "clearly phenomenologically relevant features of films, including framings, camera movements, in-frame movement, lighting, staging, and various aspects of performance and the

(re)presentation of faces and bodies on screen, as all of these are perceived.”¹⁴³ Merleau-Ponty’s conception of a “good film” is also limited so that such a film must only satisfy the requirement of being capable of re-turning the viewer to pre-objective, pre-reflective modes of perception. Yet, this paper is not meant to hold up his views on art or film as the end-all, be-all. Rather, it is by employing his theories that we might be able to better understand one, albeit foundational, aspect of EXPORT’s practice that contributes to its overall efficacy as an explicitly feminist art practice. Suffice it to say, employing Merleau-Ponty’s theories when analyzing EXPORT’s artworks of the 1960s and 70s can and should be understood as an addition to the larger conversation of scholarship on her work. Her work can and does both engage the phenomenological and the semiotic, the phenomenological and the psychoanalytic. However, in addressing her art as being fundamentally interested in unveiling, engaging, undermining, and/or altering dominant, patriarchal modes of being in the world, scholars often point to the deconstructionist or psychoanalytic tendencies of her feminism. I am arguing then that the phenomenological be accounted for in a similar vein.

In her photographic and filmic (expanded or otherwise) studies of perception and experience, EXPORT employs certain phenomenologically oriented tactics and her work takes on certain phenomenologically oriented expressions that to some degree, yes, illustrate the ways in which our natural (or rather innately human) embodied perception of the world occurs; however, these tactics and expressions in her work also end up unveiling, engaging, undermining, and/or altering the seemingly or assumed natural, but actually conditioned, dominant, patriarchal modes of perceiving and Being in the world. With this in mind, we will need to go somewhat beyond Merleau-Ponty’s theories to account for the feminist efficacy of her

¹⁴³ Yacavone, “Film and Phenomenology of Art,” 179-180.

work. But, this first step that aligns with Merleau-Ponty's theories, this interest in and pursuit of the non-mimetic illustration of our basic, shared, embodied perception of the world is a significant foundation with which we might start to engage the phenomenological in EXPORT's work. And even so, her second move to elucidate and deconstruct the supposedly objective and neutral, but in actuality very subjective and normative, ways of seeing and Being in the world still finds resonance in Merleau-Ponty's aesthetic theory. For, at the end of the day, EXPORT is still trying to both make visible and remove the illusory and barrier-like elements that keep our "natural" perception and Being as something that is abstracted from and inaccessible to us via socially, politically, and culturally informed everyday realities. Still, it will be helpful to turn to Butler in the following section to properly account for this second, more explicitly feminist move.

V. CONDITIONED AND PERFORMATIVE EMBODIED ACTIONS: BUTLER AND EXPORT

Although Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological theory understands one's immediate experience of the world as one that is always subjectively embodied, situated, mediated, and informed, it is helpful to turn to one of Butler's early essays on the matter of phenomenology and gender to more readily understand the conditioned and performative side of that experience, and the feminist aims and implications of EXPORT's practice. In her 1988 "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory,"¹⁴⁴ Butler states:

When Simone de Beauvoir claims, "one is not born, but rather, *becomes* a woman," she is appropriating and reinterpreting this doctrine of constituting acts from the phenomenological tradition. In this sense, gender is in no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts proceede [*sic*]; rather, it is an identity tenuously constituted in time – an identity instituted through a *stylized repetition of acts*. Further, gender is instituted through the stylization of the body and, hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and enactments of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self.¹⁴⁵

According to Butler, "[f]or both Beauvoir and Merleau-Ponty, the body is understood to be an active process of embodying certain cultural and historical possibilities [as opposed to certain 'natural' givens], a complicated process of appropriation which any phenomenological theory of embodiment needs to describe."¹⁴⁶ Butler postures herself in some opposition to this model that takes "the gendered self to be prior to its acts" and primarily historically and/or culturally dictated, however, turning instead to John Searle's "speech acts" and J. L. Austin's "performative utterances," moral philosophy's "action theory," and even cues phenomenology's

¹⁴⁴ Due to scope of this paper, I am only addressing Butler's 1988 essay here. However, it should be noted that many of her arguments made within this essay are expanded upon at length in her 1990 publication *Gender Trouble*.

¹⁴⁵ Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," *Theatre Journal* 40, no. 4 (December 1988): 519.

¹⁴⁶ Butler, "Performative Acts," 520-521.

various explanations for “the mundane way in which social agents *constitute* social reality through language, gesture, and all manner of symbolic social sign” – all to necessitate “an expansion of the conventional view of acts to mean both that which constitutes meaning and that through which meaning is performed or enacted.”¹⁴⁷ Butler pushes us to “understand constituting acts not only as constituting the identity of the actor, but as constituting that identity as a compelling illusion, an object of *belief*.”¹⁴⁸

Significantly, these belief-constituting acts are always embodied, always corporeal: “As an intentionally organized materiality, the body is always an embodying *of* possibilities both conditioned and circumscribed by historical convention. In other words, the body *is* a historical situation, as Beauvoir has claimed, and is a manner of doing, dramatizing, and *reproducing* a historical situation.”¹⁴⁹ Butler’s essay illustrates that what we term “gender identity” is “a *performative* accomplishment compelled by social sanction and taboo” and that within gender’s performative nature “resides the possibility of contesting its reified status.”¹⁵⁰ Butler clarifies:

if gender is instituted through acts which are internally discontinuous, then the *appearance of substance* is precisely that, a constructed identity, a performative accomplishment which the mundane social audience, including the actors themselves, come to believe and to perform in the mode of belief. If the ground of gender identity is the stylized repetition of acts through time, and not seemingly seamless identity, then the possibilities of gender transformation are to be found in the arbitrary relation between such acts, in the possibility of a different sort of repeating, in the breaking or subversive repetition of that style.¹⁵¹

Key here for the discussion of EXPORT’s work is the notion that gender is not a naturally defined given nor is it, as Butler makes clear, *just* a historically, socially conditioned

¹⁴⁷ Butler, “Performative Acts,” 519-521.

¹⁴⁸ Butler, “Performative Acts,” 520.

¹⁴⁹ Butler, “Performative Acts,” 521.

¹⁵⁰ Butler, “Performative Acts,” 520 (my emphasis).

¹⁵¹ Butler, “Performative Acts,” 520.

construct “passively scripted on the body.”¹⁵² What it meant to be a “woman” in 1960s and 1970s Austria, for instance, was not *just* conditioned by historical circumstance, cultural or linguistic edicts, or legal code. Rather, these gender constructs were and are continuously established and enforced via individual and collective *embodied* experiences and performative acts. Significant here is the acknowledgment of an individual’s embodied agency, an individual’s capacity to *enact*, however limited it may be given society’s constraints. To quote Butler more fully on this, “Gender is not passively scripted on the body, and neither is it determined by nature, language, the symbolic, or the overwhelming history of patriarchy. Gender is what is put on, invariably, under constraint, daily and incessantly, with anxiety and pleasure...”¹⁵³ She continues:

As a public action and performative act, gender is not a radical choice or project that reflects a merely individual choice, but neither is it imposed or inscribed upon the individual, as some post-structuralist displacements of the subject would contend. The body is not passively scripted with cultural codes, as if it were a lifeless recipient of wholly pre-given cultural relations. But neither do embodied selves pre-exist the cultural conventions which essentially signify bodies.¹⁵⁴

Butler is sympathetic to the notion that embodied, performative gender acts lying outside of the socially, culturally, politically, economically (and so on) defined and imposed norms are met with varying degrees of alienation and punishment, punishment which – in addition to our early-in-life gender-binary indoctrination – contributes to the illusion of a total lack of embodied

¹⁵² Butler, “Performative Acts,” 531.

¹⁵³ Butler, “Performative Acts,” 531.

¹⁵⁴ Butler, “Performative Acts,” 526.

agency.¹⁵⁵ As Butler notes, “gender is a performance with clearly punitive consequences.”¹⁵⁶ Although, of perhaps the utmost significance here for my analysis of EXPORT’s work is Butler’s proposition that subversive enactments of and breaks from rigid gender norms are not only possible (which would not be the case if the concept of gender continued to be defined as a “natural or linguistic given”¹⁵⁷ or even confined to a purely historical, disembodied occurrence), always experienced and enacted corporeally, but also that these subversions hold the potential to break down normative constraints, and instead enact broader, more expansive and agentic notions of subjecthood. This is not to say that gender is a voluntary act – gender always operates within various regulatory compulsions external to the individual and internalized by the individual from a very young age. However, individual and collective, enacted and embodied breaks from these compulsions are possible, divergent gender constitutions and the “transformation of social relations” and “hegemonic social conditions” are possible, as “social contexts and conventions” allow.¹⁵⁸ Gender performances “render[primarily politically motivated] social laws explicit,”¹⁵⁹ and individuals, such as EXPORT, can and do move to make visible, deconstruct, and undermine the normative performative acts and social laws via alternative, subversive, performative, and embodied acts.

¹⁵⁵ That is, in addition to gender’s function as “a construction that regularly conceals its genesis. The tacit collective agreement to perform, produce, and sustain discrete and polar genders as cultural fictions is obscured by the credibility of its own production. The authors of gender become entranced by their own fictions whereby the construction compels one’s belief in its necessity and naturalness.” Butler, “Performative Acts,” 522.

¹⁵⁶ Butler, “Performative Acts,” 522.

¹⁵⁷ Butler, “Performative Acts,” 531.

¹⁵⁸ Butler, “Performative Acts,” 525.

¹⁵⁹ Butler, “Performative Acts,” 526.

Beyond the above, Butler's breakdown of the collective, public, and temporal, durational character of gender is of course of significance to an artist whose work was often performed or executed in public spaces and often included a temporal or durational element. For instance:

The act that gender is, the act that embodied agents *are* inasmuch as they dramatically and actively embody and, indeed, *wear* certain cultural significations, is clearly not one's act alone. Surely, there are nuanced and individual ways of *doing* one's gender, but *that* one does it, and that one does it *in accord with* certain sanctions and proscriptions, is clearly not a fully individual matter.¹⁶⁰

Butler continues that the individual experience and doing of gender are still at play here in a significant way, but that the collectivity of gender predates even an individual's existence in the world, even as it requires the individual "in order to be actualized and reproduced as reality once again."¹⁶¹ Butler incorporates anthropologist Victor Turner's concept of ritual social drama here, noting that "social action requires a performance which is *repeated*. This repetition is at once a reenactment and re-experiencing of a set of meanings already socially established; it is the mundane and ritualized form of their legitimation."¹⁶² In this sense, the collective, pre-scripted, and prescriptive nature of gender cannot be so easily dismissed. "Just as a script may be enacted in various ways, and just as the play requires both text and interpretation, so the gendered body acts its part in a culturally restricted corporeal space and enacts interpretations within the confines of already existing directives."¹⁶³ In this sense, the performance of the constitutive acts of gender is collective in nature *and* has a "temporal duration."¹⁶⁴ The temporal and durational occur of course in the singular performances, in the singular constituting acts that play out at specific moments in time and over a specific period of time. However, the temporal and

¹⁶⁰ Butler, "Performative Acts," 525.

¹⁶¹ Butler, "Performative Acts," 526.

¹⁶² Butler, "Performative Acts," 526.

¹⁶³ Butler, "Performative Acts," 526.

¹⁶⁴ Butler, "Performative Acts," 525.

durational are also part and parcel of the seemingly history-spanning – at the very least centuries-spanning – collective performance of gender.

Butler is also sure to emphasize the publicness of gender, that gender is a “public action and performative act.”¹⁶⁵ For instance, Butler states:

In terms of an explicitly feminist account of gender as performative, it seems clear to me that an account of gender as ritualized, *public* performance must be combined with an analysis of the political sanctions and taboos under which that performance may and may not occur within the *public* sphere free of punitive consequence.¹⁶⁶

But tied up within the publicness of gender performance is a necessary acknowledgment of varying public spaces in which that performance takes place. Butler brings this up within her essay to acknowledge certain limits of the theatre analogy, acknowledging that “gender performances in non-theatrical contexts are governed by more clearly punitive and regulatory social conventions” than those in the theatre.¹⁶⁷ However, what she begins to tease out will still be helpful in considering the various spaces and contexts within which EXPORT staged her actions.

Butler starts with more traditional theatre:

In the theatre, one can say, ‘this is just an act,’ and de-realize the act, make acting into something quite distinct from what is real. Because of this distinction, one can maintain one’s sense of reality in the face of this temporary challenge to our existing ontological assumptions about gender arrangements; the various conventions which announce that ‘this is only a play’ allows strict lines to be drawn between the performance and life. On the street or in the bus, the act becomes dangerous...there is no presumption that the act is distinct from a reality...¹⁶⁸

Theatre operates outside of everyday social realities and can offer, as Merleau-Ponty proclaims of art, an aesthetic distance from everyday realities capable of heightening our awareness of what

¹⁶⁵ Butler, “Performative Acts,” 526.

¹⁶⁶ Butler, “Performative Acts,” 526 (my emphasis).

¹⁶⁷ Butler, “Performative Acts,” 527.

¹⁶⁸ Butler, “Performative Acts,” 527.

is being presented and how it operates. Certain subversive gender acts which might be understood as threatening to social contracts and fabrics when performed in an everyday public arena, are also deemed acceptable when performed within a theatrical or aesthetically distanced context. These subversive acts are permissible in theatre, as it creates a division between performance or art and life, it operates on an external logic and does not necessitate an immediate grappling with the subversive acts' implications for everyday life. The act and its threat to the preexisting "script" for gender and certain social conditions do not need to be so readily dealt with when performed in a theatre.

Butler continues:

Clearly, there is theatre which attempts to contest or, indeed, break down those conventions that demarcate the imaginary from the real...Yet in those cases one confronts the same phenomenon, namely, that the act is not contrasted with the real, but *constitutes* a reality that is in some sense new, a modality of gender that cannot be readily assimilated into the pre-existing categories that regulate gender reality.¹⁶⁹

Of course, to a certain extent, this is largely the case. However, in the case of the Viennese Actionists and EXPORT, in the nascent days of public performance art, their subversive actions were very often met with hostile, or at the very least bewildered, public reactions. That is to say, that EXPORT's 1960s subversive gendered actions in explicitly public spaces were not always treated from the comfortable distance of a logic external to that of the everyday social fabric, resulting in a heightened sense of immediacy and vulnerability to the punitive retribution more consistent in the cases of subversive gender performances done outside of theatrical contexts, enacted within the confines of everyday life. This is not at all to argue that EXPORT's unsanctioned, theatre-, cinema-, or gallery-external, public actions were in some way more readily digestible by the public and had direct political effect in those moments. As the public's

¹⁶⁹ Butler, "Performative Acts," 527.

responses make clear, they were not more digestible because of their non-theatrical context. However, in the forthcoming discussion of EXPORT's more explicitly *public* works, it will be helpful to keep in mind the ways in which her actions dip in and out of logic internal and external to the theatre, gallery, or cinema, and internal and external to everyday society, and the role that the collective viewers play within the public spaces over time.

In closing her essay, Butler fights against gender expression and essentialism.¹⁷⁰ For Butler, both of these tendencies within the feminist movement land us in a continuation of the preexisting situation, where "gender is made to comply with a model of truth and falsity which not only contradicts its own performative fluidity, but serves a social policy of gender regulation and control."¹⁷¹ And so, Butler pushes again her "critical genealogy of gender," reliant on "a phenomenological set of presuppositions," most importantly the "expanded conception of an 'act' which is both socially shared and historically constituted, and which is performative..."¹⁷² In closing, she adds that this genealogy need also be accompanied by:

a politics of performative gender acts...which both redescribes existing gender identities and offers a prescriptive view about the kind of gender reality there ought to be. The redescription needs to expose the reifications that tacitly serve as substantial gender cores or identities, and to elucidate both the act and the strategy of disavowal which at once constitute and conceal gender as we live it.¹⁷³

Which is where we can pick up an analysis of EXPORT's work of the 1960s and 70s, and all of her phenomenological and embodied performances, actions, films, photographs, and other artworks that actively sought out subversive and phenomenological means to expose the

¹⁷⁰ Butler also argues that the upholding of discrete, binary sexes and genders results in "compulsory heterosexuality." However, as that is not the key point of Butler's essay or EXPORT's oeuvre, I will not be engaging that line of thought here.

¹⁷¹ Butler, "Performative Acts," 528.

¹⁷² Butler, "Performative Acts," 530.

¹⁷³ Butler, "Performative Acts," 530.

embodied and performative nature of gender, as well as the various ways in which it is individually and collectively, privately and publicly conditioned, enacted, and controlled, “produced, reproduced, and maintained within the field of bodies.”¹⁷⁴

There are countless works in EXPORT’s 1960s-70s oeuvre with which we could begin to apply Butler’s performative gender theory. Although, it might be helpful to first start with some of her conceptual photography. In her *Körperkonfigurationen* [*Body Configurations*] series, first begun in 1972 and continued through the early 1980s, EXPORT’s body (or occasionally the body of another woman) is shown physically conforming to the impressive prewar Viennese architecture and infrastructure – loaded, as it is in the postwar period, with various political, social, cultural, and historical meanings. One such photograph features EXPORT folded over a staircase, near a structure’s Doric columns (fig. 24); another features EXPORT wrapping her arms around the corner of a building (fig. 25); and another features her lying with her back facing the curb, arms and legs outstretched, so that her body almost perfectly conforms to the curve of the curb (fig. 26). Although her gestures do not conform to the gestures or uses that the architecture and infrastructure might prescribe from an urban planning standpoint, EXPORT still mimics the surrounding forms, internalizing and embodying these forms in her various, seemingly pliable (in both senses of the word) postures.

EXPORT and scholarship on EXPORT have more often than not described these works as psychologically externalized postures and expressions, representative of a woman’s internal state of mind, or as a woman’s attempt to blend in with the architecture as a means of escaping or going unnoticed in the hostile public sphere. I would argue that these works also seek to examine: the situated-ness of a woman’s body in public, as it is socially, culturally, politically,

¹⁷⁴ Butler, “Performative Acts,” 525.

historically, and economically determined and mediated; and the relationship between architecture and public infrastructure and the ways in which these structures shape, affect and/or control the individual, gendered body in public spaces. These postures are not those that we naturally take up when walking down the street or turning the corner in public. Nor are they those that we take up in social settings (e.g. a woman expected to cross her legs, a man expected to leave his legs uncrossed, any person expected to stand up straight). However, by way of their unfamiliarity and their still being enacted by a human body with which we can identify, they call attention to the ways that various public, physical and institutional structures contribute to and determine the ways in which we unconsciously, corporeally embody and experience spaces, especially public spaces, and the ways in which a performative gender is tied up in those experiences. Also by way of her unconventional postures and positions, EXPORT seems to present alternative movements, alternative performative acts, that subvert social, cultural, historical, and political norms, constraints, and expectations.

EXPORT also made a series of these *Körperkonfigurationen* photographs in landscape settings outside of Vienna, in and among dunes for instance (fig. 27). These photographs, while certainly embedded in the history of Land Art, and which more readily recall Ana Mendieta's oeuvre, also employ unconventional postures, undermining embodied gender as something that is a "natural given." These works too play with embodied experiences of space and time, and when considered alongside her architectural *Körperkonfigurationen*, these landscape-based *Körperkonfigurationen* and their subversive postures, whether consciously or not, push against feminism's and general society's dual tendencies of approaching gender as something that is culturally defined and/or a natural given. Gender, in these photographs, is something that is

embodied and enacted, and can be embodied and enacted in a way divergent from normative expectations.

We can then return to EXPORT's 1973 *Adjungierte Dislokationen I* [*Adjunct Dislocations I*], as it was executed in clear conversation with this *Körperkonfigurationen* series. In *Adjungierte Dislokationen I*, EXPORT not only shows herself walking in and around the city of Vienna and the nature available at the city's edge, engaging with the structures and landscape and showing that engagement from the body's frontal and dorsal perspectives and a third, external observer's perspective, she also shows her body making a range of somewhat bizarre or unconventional movements and positions in these environments (fig. 28-29). The emphasis that EXPORT herself placed on these various movements and positions, similar to those in the *Körperkonfigurationen*, is further evident in her "Bewegungsablauf" ["Movement Sequence"] chart that she created for the film (fig. 30). Her wearable two-camera rig then introduces in this film an element that the *Körperkonfigurationen* stills could not capture so easily – the perceiving and embodied perspective of these enacted and subversive movements and postures. Much in the way that the filmic coordinates of this work are able to didactically locate the perceiving body in space and time in a way that is much more reflective of the viewer's actual complex experiences of being perceiving bodies in space and time, this work is also able to – via identification and cross-gender identification which places the viewer in an empathetic and receptive position relative to the *actor* – didactically subvert the often unconscious or subconscious gendered expectations of the viewer. EXPORT's movements upend the viewer's conditioned and self-enacted conceptions of embodied gender, leaving space for the viewer to consider the daily performativity of gender and the ways in which it might be otherwise performed.

Another series by EXPORT that draws attention to the conditioned *and* enacted performativity of gender is her 1970s *Körperstellung: Nachstellung* [*Body-Posture: Re-enactment*] photographic series (fig. 31-32). In this series, she plays with the art historical tradition of painting after another artist's work. However, instead of painting after her artistic predecessors,¹⁷⁵ EXPORT photographed women alone against a white backdrop, standing, sitting or kneeling in the recognizable postures of women, often of the Madonna, as painted or sculpted by Old Masters, such as Cranach, Botticelli, and Michelangelo.¹⁷⁶ As Postl described in her article on EXPORT and Butler, these images are meant as parody. Yet, they also sincerely heighten one's awareness of various (art) historically, socially, and culturally conditioned and mediated gender expectations and *prescriptions*, and emphasize the very embodied performativity of gender.

Another earlier photographic series that functions in a similar way is EXPORT's 1968 *Identitätstransfer* [*Identity Transfer*] series (fig. 33), in which EXPORT dressed in drag and embodied late 1960s hyper-masculinity. For these performative portraits, EXPORT donned a short, curly wig; tight or flared trousers; various tops, including what appears to be a leather jacket; and heavy gold jewelry. In one of the portraits, she wears a pair of sunglasses. In others, she has put on heavy makeup. In all of the portraits, she positions herself frontally and aggressively, legs spread wide apart and hands at her hips or in her pockets. The photos are performative and emphatically embodied, and although not an overt response to the hyper-masculine and misogynist attitudes of her contemporaries, the Viennese Actionists, one cannot

¹⁷⁵ Although she did produce some drawings in this series.

¹⁷⁶ She also incorporated these stills of the women into photo-collages. However, for brevity's sake, I am excluding these from the conversation here.

help but imagine her defiant stance as being at least partially informed by what she encountered in that artistic scene of the late 1960s.

Many of EXPORT's body-material actions of the early 1970s, such as her 1971 *Eros/ion* (fig. 34), 1973 *Kausalgie* [*Causalgia*] (fig. 35), and 1973 *Asemie* (fig. 36), reference themes of psychic and physical sickness, pathology, cuts, and pain, especially in relation to the social, cultural, and political control of a woman's body and the need to confront that internal and external pain in order to achieve self-determination, freeing oneself from those modes of control via often painful processes. In her 1973 *Hyperbulie* [*Hyperbulia*] action (fig. 37), filmed by Hendrich, a nude EXPORT attempts to crawl and move through a series of electrical wires. These pain-inducing electrical wires, which prompt EXPORT's muffled cries of pain throughout the performance, not only call to mind the enclosures used for farm animals, as Roswitha Mueller has pointed out,¹⁷⁷ they also echo the punitive and painful responses that taboo or alternative performative gender acts elicit from the public. These normative conditions, both individual and collectively enacted, result in a temporal, durational, and physically, spatially and almost topographically conditioned constraining of the gendered body – a fact further emphasized by the start of the filmed performance, in which EXPORT stands to the side of the electrical framework and the camera spends about a minute tracing the spatial boundaries of the wire. And yet, as Butler has elaborated, and as EXPORT demonstrates in her *Hyperbulie* action, one can force through performative and embodied movements and acts that operate outside of or against these constraints. Even if there is painful and exhausting resistance at first or again later,

¹⁷⁷ Mueller, *VALIE EXPORT*, 41.

one can move with exaggerated effort to enact an embodied “politics of performative gender acts.”¹⁷⁸

Although there are countless other works to consider here in relation to Butler’s essay, we can close by examining two of EXPORT’s more publicly performed works, works first performed outside of the context of the studio, gallery, or cinema, even if exhibited or screened there at a later date. Her 1974 *Body Politics* (fig. 38-40), filmed by Weibel, presents a montage of brief clips of EXPORT and a male counterpart, Hendrich, performing a series of actions on a pair of escalators in what appears to be a central Viennese tram station. Each of the clips is preceded by and cut with intertitles that provide the corresponding word to each of their actions. EXPORT and Hendrich hold and/or are tied to one end of a rope and move up and down the escalators in various combinations (against one another, with one another, toward one another, for one another, and so on). The woman and man navigate their (public) relationship with some agency, as they can move up and down the escalators. Yet they are still guided by the escalators’ propelling (or in certain instances, resistant) forces external to each of them; and they are still connected by the rope. When they move against one another, they are each able to stand still and go with their respective escalators’ paths. Yet the rope becomes taut; the connection between them is tested and a greater physical distance is created between them – a distance, a space that is delineated by the length of the rope. Even when they move with one another and the rope is no longer the issue, one actor is still forced to move against their own escalator’s trajectory. Only when they are side-by-side, standing on one escalator, toward the end, does the exercise become effortless and the relationship, now defined by a closeness or cooperation, become compatible.

¹⁷⁸ Butler, “Performative Acts,” 530.

We might be tempted here to consider this work an illustration of Butler's notion of compulsory heterosexuality. However, that consideration would be more representative of Butler's aims than EXPORT's. EXPORT is firmly rooted in her second-wave feminist moment and is interested more in "mapping" out the "ways of intersex communication," as they exist in our conditioned society. As EXPORT has said of the work, "The politics of behavior that our society imposes on man and woman can be physically demonstrated."¹⁷⁹ And even as there is an explicit focus in this work on the role of language in determining these behaviors, with the video's intertitles, the behavior is embodied and performative. And though the rope provides society's imposed tensions or conditions, EXPORT and Hendrich individually and together enact their bodily movements that affect their relationship.

Notable too here is the fact that their embodied, performative, and gendered movements are enacted in public, with passersby looking on. Their individual, perhaps even private, actions are implicated in the collective, public setting. Although, these are not new, subversive acts being performed here, per se. These are repeated, socially ingrained acts that EXPORT is seeking to "map." These "repeated" acts are what Butler has deemed a "reenactment and re-experiencing of a set of meanings already socially established; it is the mundane and ritualized form of their legitimation."¹⁸⁰ One's performative, embodied gender acts are always suspect to the gaze and pushback of others. Likewise, one's performative, embodied gender acts can either subvert or continue to reaffirm or reify the preexisting social, cultural, and political gender constitutions and norms by which others feel they must abide. Here, EXPORT subverts these

¹⁷⁹ EXPORT quoted in Szely, *EXPORT LEXIKON*, 110. Original German: "Die Wege der zwischengeschlechtlichen Kommunikation sind in unserer Gesellschaft vorgezeichnet. Die Politik des Verhaltens, wie sie unsere Gesellschaft Mann und Frau auferlegt, kann körperlich demonstriert werden."

¹⁸⁰ Butler, "Performative Acts," 526.

norms slightly by calling attention to them in a public way. Yet, the work is ultimately more documentary and didactic than subversive. Further, the actions are performed with a rope, which calls attention to the actions in a necessary way, but also, even in 1970s Vienna, this rope would have been prop enough, especially alongside the camera, to place EXPORT's and Hendrich's actions in a liminal and non-threatening category for any unsuspecting viewers.

EXPORT's 1968 *Aus der Mappe der Hundigkeit* [*From the Portfolio of Doggedness*] (fig. 41-42), on the other hand, operated in a much more subversive and threatening way in public. In this performance, EXPORT walked Weibel on a leash and on all fours through Vienna's bustling city center. Both EXPORT and Weibel dressed mockingly in their public or Sunday "best," with EXPORT sporting a fur coat and Weibel wearing a suit and tie. This action was explicitly for the public, and for the conservative postwar Austrian public. The often shocked and disgusted expressions of the onlookers, as seen in the documentary photographs, say it all. And although they do not benefit from an overt aesthetic distance which might serve to enlighten their viewers, pushing them to think critically about what they are seeing or have seen, EXPORT and Weibel come closer here to Butler's subversive "politics of performative gender acts...which both redescribes existing gender identities and offers a prescriptive view about the kind of gender reality there ought to be."¹⁸¹ The "portfolio" of the work's title and the resulting documentary photographs also recalls Butler's assertion "that the body becomes its gender through a series of acts which are renewed, revised, and consolidated through time."¹⁸² In this spatial, durational, embodied, and performative public action, EXPORT and Weibel "expose the

¹⁸¹ Butler, "Performative Acts," 530.

¹⁸² Butler, "Performative Acts," 523.

reifications that tacitly serve as substantial gender cores or identities, and...elucidate both the act and the strategy of disavowal which at once constitute and conceal gender as we live it.”¹⁸³

Butler of course published some of her most notable works surrounding gender in the late 1980s and 1990s. The main essay I employ here was not published until 1988, well after EXPORT’s works of the 1960s and 1970s. However, in many ways EXPORT’s works of the 1960s and 1970s begin to premeditate the writings of Butler and others. Of course EXPORT is firmly embedded in second-wave feminism, and as such, most of her focus is on the conditions of being a woman, a status which she would have seen in the 1960s and 1970s as being rooted in an individual’s sex, a notion Butler is firmly against. She is certainly not premeditating queer theory as we know it today.¹⁸⁴ However, while many who have written on EXPORT’s early works in the past have focused on the psychoanalytic, deconstructionist, and linguistic tendencies, as they concern the categories of film or “woman,” what I am arguing here is that there is significant room to also read these works as deconstructing various spatial, temporal, material, and corporeal concerns – always in a gendered and embodied way – breaking down the ways in which one perceives and is perceived, the ways in which one experiences and is part of a collective experience, the ways in which one performs and is part of a collective performance. That is to say, EXPORT’s works of the 1960s and 1970s, while most certainly pushing to identify and disentangle the psychological and codified conditions of being a woman, and working through socially imposed traumas on the path toward self-determination, also demonstrate a *maintained* interest in exposing and breaking down the ways in which the state of being a “woman” is a complex perceptual, visually, aurally, kinetically and behaviorally

¹⁸³ Butler, “Performative Acts,” 530.

¹⁸⁴ Nor does EXPORT’s 1960s-70s work or feminism even remotely begin to account for race.

experienced, and performed phenomenon. By looking to the likes of de Beauvoir, Merleau-Ponty, or Butler, this side of EXPORT's oeuvre easily comes to the fore. Her works can clearly be read to be interrogative of the perceptual, embodied, and performative components of a gendered experience.

VI. CONCLUSION

To close, we might reconsider one of EXPORT's most iconic "expanded film" actions – her *Tapp und Tastkino* [*Tap and Touch Cinema*] (fig. 43-45), first performed in 1968.¹⁸⁵ In *Tapp und Tastkino*, EXPORT encased her upper body in a constructed miniature "theater" (a box with a small opening and curtain in front), while her collaborator Peter Weibel announced the performance and invited people to enter the "cinema" with their hands and "view" (i.e. touch) a real woman, instead of those so formulaically and voyeuristically constructed in the cinema. The participants were positioned to maintain eye contact with the very body that they were "viewing" (or touching), while simultaneously being viewed by a gathering crowd of people.

This work is often read as a deconstruction of the film medium and its materials, employing the body as both the screen and the image projected onto that screen. It is also understood as a subversion of the film apparatus and traditional cinema, and an activation of the average passive cinema-goer, pushing for accountability in the ways in which one views films and other visual or linguistic imagery. The work has similarly been read as a feminist push to interrogate the male gaze (of the filmmaker and of the audience): by translating a visual medium into a haptic one – a move that calls attention to the often violent act of looking; by the objectified woman returning the viewer's gaze, transferring both the "viewed" woman and the "viewer" into a dual, subject-object role, a move that upends the traditional viewer-viewed (subject-object) dynamic of the cinema; and by "screening" the "film" in a well-lit public setting, as opposed to the private dark of the cinema, leaving the "viewer" vulnerable to the collective

¹⁸⁵ This work was first performed at *Junger Film '68* in Vienna. For a full account of the various performances of this "expanded film," see: Szely, *EXPORT LEXIKON*, 137-139; Mechtild Widrich, *Performative Monuments: The Rematerialisation of Public Art* (Manchester & New York: Manchester University Press, 2014).

gaze of the public. The work has also been presented as feminist and psychoanalytic in its taking on: cinema's role in the codification and social inscription of women's bodies and gender roles;¹⁸⁶ the resulting psychology of those codifications; and the psychological phenomenon of looking and being looked at.

However, we can now also consider *Tapp und Tastkino* for all of its phenomenologically feminist interests, subversions, and sensorial didacticism. As mentioned, this work pushes the viewer's ocular vision into a haptic "vision," not only amplifying for the viewer the interwoven, multi-sensory experience of perception that Merleau-Ponty describes, but also actively implicating and divulging the viewer's embodied modes of vision and perception. The "viewer" in this work, actually with their hands inside the cinema, facing EXPORT, and surrounded by a crowd of other people, would undoubtedly also become aware of their body as both a perceiving subject and a perceived object in the sensuous world at large. And even if it cannot be considered explicitly within Merleau-Ponty's writings on film, as its form reaches far beyond that which he wrote, this "film" still incorporates space, time, and duration in a way that is inextricably linked to and informs the viewer's embodied perception and experience of the work, much in the way that space, time, and duration play out in non-filmic perceptual experiences.

We can also consider *Tapp und Tastkino* as it relates to Butler's theories of performative and embodied gender acts. For instance, time, private and public space, and individual and collective acts all take precedence in this highly performative and gender-focused work. This work deconstructs and subverts the reified conception of a "woman," as it is traditionally

¹⁸⁶ As Mueller has described in her monograph on the artist, "From the beginning, the body in Export's work was conceived as the bearer of signs, signals, and information...the body is the site of cultural determinations, the place where the law of society is engraved into the individual." Mueller, *VALIE EXPORT*, 31.

conditioned in film and as film traditionally conditions its viewers, and flips the historically conditioned and conditioning script of seemingly reified gender constitutions into those that are also malleable by way of performative and embodied gender acts. The viewers are given *some* agency here, an option to enact or approach gender differently, able as they are to determine their (albeit still conditioned) individual performative actions that contribute to the conditioning of the other viewers in the public space – even if they are still subject to public retribution if they dare perform outside of socially sanctioned gender norms (or even sexuality norms, as EXPORT has accounted for at least in this work). Lastly, this work dipped in and out of liminal, non-threatening logic depending on when, where, by whom, and for whom it was performed.¹⁸⁷

In EXPORT's practice-spanning dedication to interrogating perception and representation of reality¹⁸⁸ and implicating the viewers in the process, she takes to task: visual and linguistic imagery and their pervasive reification of a patriarchal world, as well as the complex psychological experience of internalizing this conditioned and conditioning imagery on a daily basis. Yet, she also, as I have demonstrated here, takes to task the very ways in which we see and perceive in a patriarchal and sensory-laden world, emphasizing the spatiotemporally fixed, perspectival, and embodied aspects of that perception and experience. And she takes to task the ways in which our daily performative and embodied activity continues to reify socially, politically, culturally, historically, and economically conditioned and constrained gender

¹⁸⁷ For instance, a 1971 Cologne performance of this work in which another woman, Erika Mies, “starred” and EXPORT took on the role of announcer was met with much public resistance and anger.

¹⁸⁸ “Sociological models are reinforced in the cinema. Yet film, photography and the phonograph are not mechanical replications, but extensions and expansions of our structures of time and space, of our experiential structures, of our interpersonal communication – they are expansions of our reality and our independent consciousness...As Gene Youngblood writes in his [1970] book on expanded cinema: ‘Today when one speaks of cinema, one implies a metamorphosis in human perception...’” EXPORT, “Expanded Cinema: Expanded Reality,” 296-297.

constitutions, in an individual *and* collective manner – a phenomenon which must be exposed and subverted, individually and collectively. These latter phenomenological commitments,¹⁸⁹ just as foundational as her semiotic and psychoanalytic commitments in her interrogation of perception and representation of perception of reality, are also just as much a part of what makes EXPORT's practice one that is experimental, subversive, and didactic, feminist and deconstructionist, and still worth encountering today.

¹⁸⁹ Which necessitate much further examination. This paper should truly only be understood as the beginnings of accounting for the phenomenological throughout her oeuvre.

VII. FIGURES



Fig. 1 VALIE EXPORT, *VALIE EXPORT – SMART EXPORT*, 1967. Appropriated cigarette pack. Courtesy Museum of Modern Art, New York.

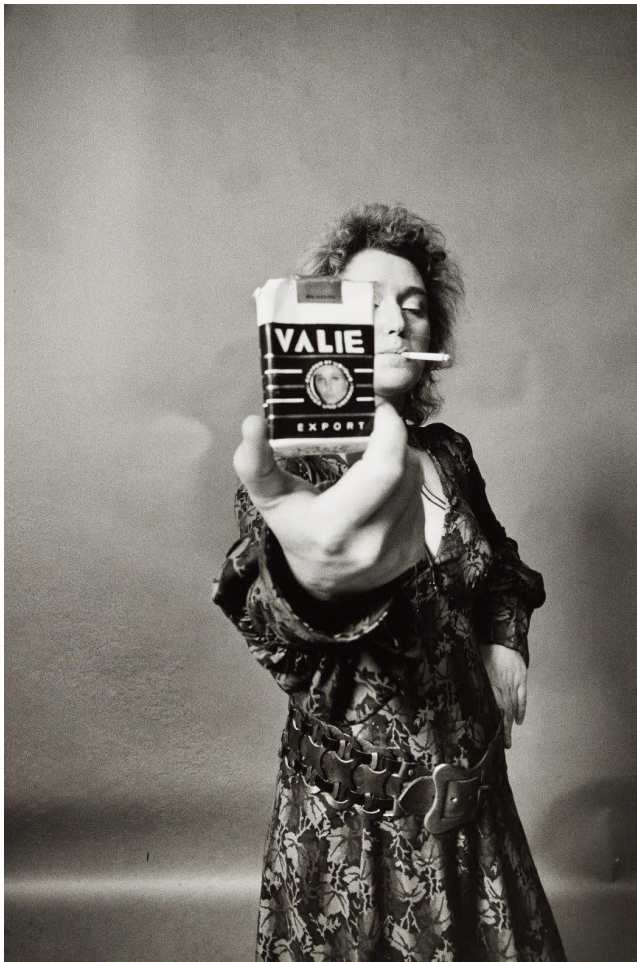


Fig. 2 VALIE EXPORT, *VALIE EXPORT – SMART EXPORT*, 1970. Gelatin silver print. Courtesy Richard Saltoun Gallery, London.



Fig. 3 Hermann Nitsch, *Ohne Titel* [Untitled], 1962. Oil on canvas. Courtesy The Artist.

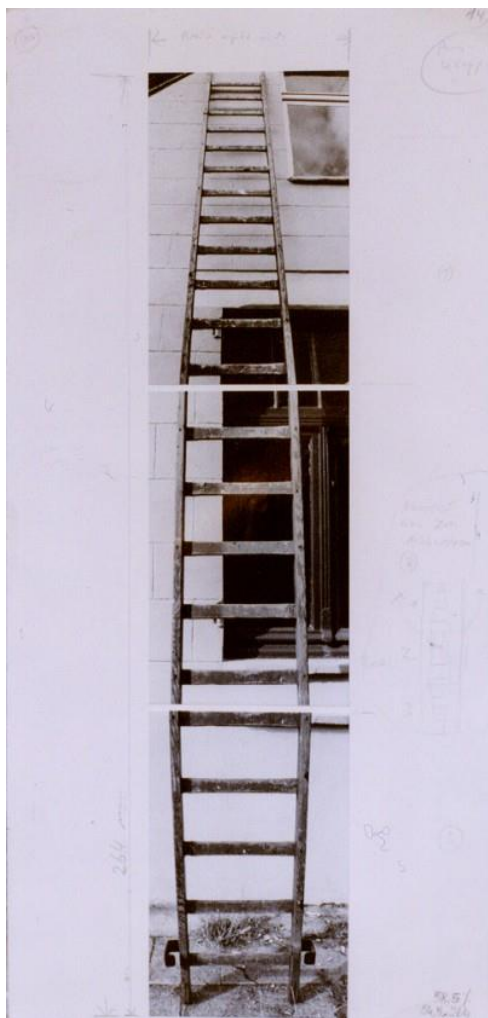


Fig. 4 VALIE EXPORT, *Leiter* [Ladder], 1972. Photo-collage. Courtesy The Artist.



Fig. 5 VALIE EXPORT, *Zug* [Train], 1972. Photo-collage. Courtesy Charim Galerie, Vienna.



Fig. 6 VALIE EXPORT, *Landschaftsraum – Zeitraum* [Landscape Space – Time Space], 1972. Photo-collage. Courtesy The Artist.



Fig. 7 VALIE EXPORT, *Abstract Film Nr. 1*, 1967-68. Gelatin silver print. Courtesy Museum of Modern Art, New York.



Fig. 8 VALIE EXPORT, *Abstract Film Nr. 1*, 1967-68. Mirror, projector, aluminum basin, hoses, water pumps, and water. Courtesy Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien – mumok, Vienna.



Fig. 9 VALIE EXPORT and Peter Weibel, *Das Magische Auge* [*The Magic Eye*], 1969. Expanded Film-Action. Courtesy Romana Karla Schuler, *Seeing Motion: A History of Visual Perception in Art and Science* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016).



Fig. 10 VALIE EXPORT, Still from *Fragmente: Burgenland* [*Fragments: Burgenland*], 1970. 16mm color film. Courtesy Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien – mumok, Vienna.



Fig. 11 VALIE EXPORT, Still from *Fragmente: Burgenland* [*Fragments: Burgenland*], 1970. 16mm color film. Courtesy Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien – mumok, Vienna.



Fig. 12 VALIE EXPORT, Still from *Fragmente: Burgenland* [*Fragments: Burgenland*], 1970. 16mm color film. Courtesy Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien – mumok, Vienna.

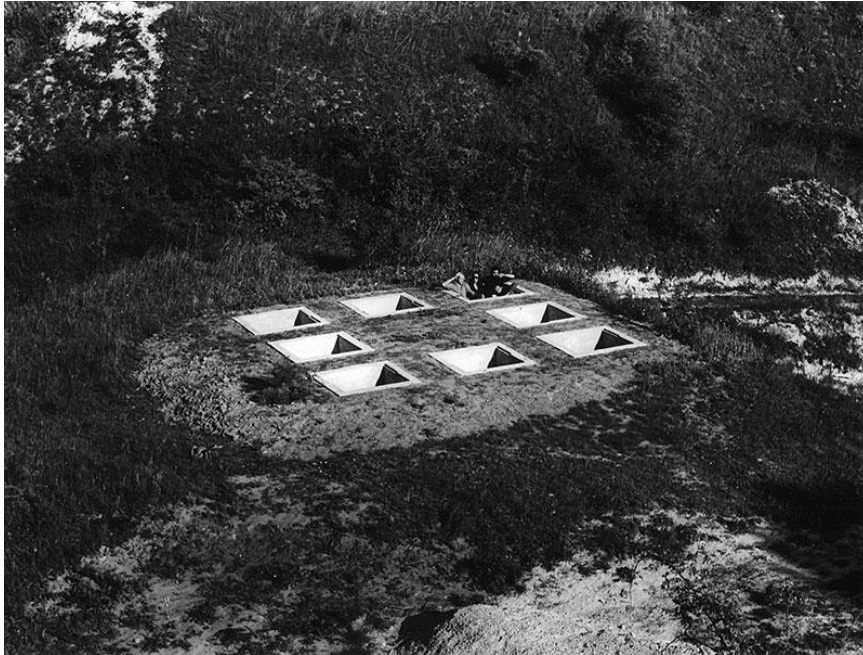


Fig. 13 Walter Pichler, *Sitzgruben* [Seating Pits], c. 1970. Concrete installation. Courtesy The Artist.



Fig. 14 VALIE EXPORT, Still from *Bewegte Bilder über sich bewegende Personen* [Moving Pictures about Moving People], 1973. 16mm film. Courtesy Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien – mumok, Vienna.



Fig. 15 VALIE EXPORT, Still from *Bewegte Bilder über sich bewegende Personen* [*Moving Pictures about Moving People*], 1973. 16mm film. Courtesy Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien – mumok, Vienna.



Fig. 16 VALIE EXPORT, Still from *Interrupted Line*, 1971-72. 16mm film. Courtesy Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien – mumok, Vienna.



Fig. 17 VALIE EXPORT, Still from *Interrupted Line*, 1971-72. 16mm film. Courtesy Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien – mumok, Vienna.



Fig. 18 VALIE EXPORT, Multiple stills from *Raumsehen und Raumhören* [*Space Seeing and Space Hearing*], 1973-74. Video with sound. Collaborators: Wink van Kempfen, Henk Elenga, Frederic Kappelhof, and Christian Michelis. Courtesy Museum of Modern Art, New York.



Fig. 19 VALIE EXPORT, Production photo from *Raumsehen und Raumhören* [*Space Seeing and Space Hearing*], 1973-74. Video with sound. Collaborators: Wink van Kempen, Henk Elenga, Frederic Kappelhof, and Christian Michelis. Courtesy Medien Kunst Netz.

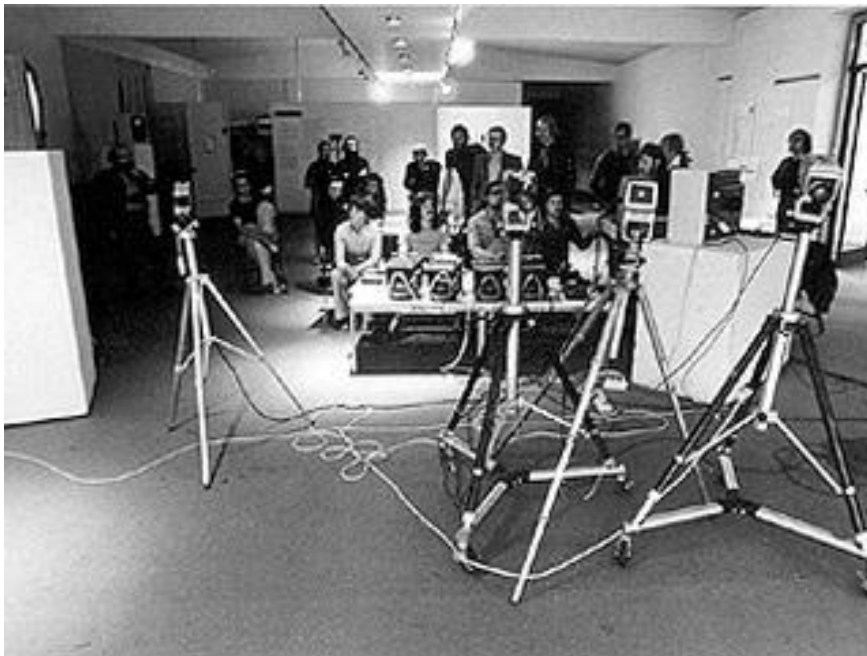


Fig. 20 VALIE EXPORT, Production photo from *Raumsehen und Raumhören* [*Space Seeing and Space Hearing*], 1973-74. Video with sound. Collaborators: Wink van Kempen, Henk Elenga, Frederic Kappelhof, and Christian Michelis. Courtesy Medien Kunst Netz.



Fig. 21 VALIE EXPORT, Still from *Adjungierte Dislokationen I* [*Adjunct Dislocations I*], 1973. Super 8mm and 16mm film. Collaborator: Hermann Hendrich. Courtesy Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco.



Fig. 22 VALIE EXPORT, Still from *Adjungierte Dislokationen I* [*Adjunct Dislocations I*], 1973. Super 8mm and 16mm film. Collaborator: Hermann Hendrich. Courtesy The Artist.



Fig. 23 VALIE EXPORT, Still from *Adjungierte Dislokationen I* [*Adjunct Dislocations I*], 1973. Super 8mm and 16mm film. Collaborator: Hermann Hendrich. Courtesy The Artist.

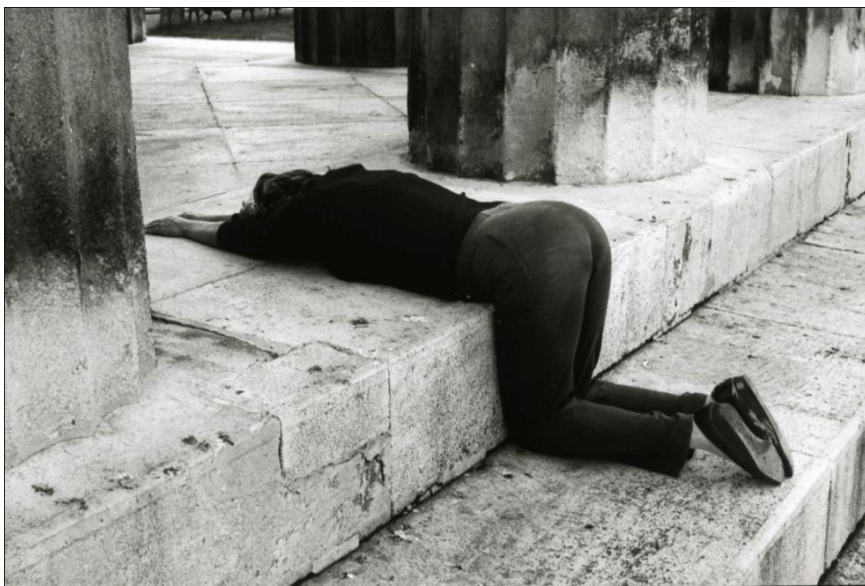


Fig. 24 VALIE EXPORT, *Theseustempel, Stufen* [*Theseus Temple, Steps*] from the *Körperkonfigurationen* [*Body Configurations*] series, 1982. Gelatin silver print. Courtesy The Artist.

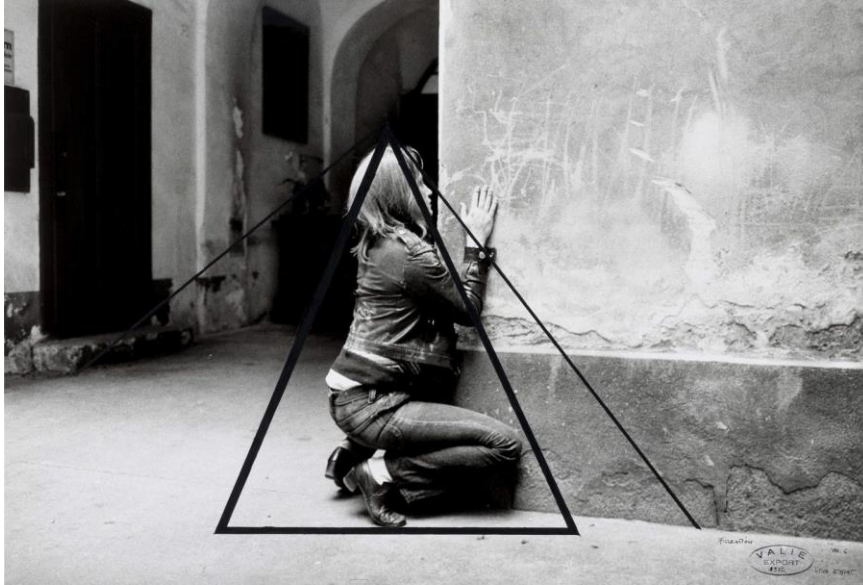


Fig. 25 VALIE EXPORT, *Figuration, Variation C* from the *Körperkonfigurationen* [*Body Configurations*] series, 1972. Gelatin silver print with ink. Courtesy Museum of Modern Art, New York.



Fig. 26 VALIE EXPORT, *Einkreisung* [*Encirclement*] from the *Körperkonfigurationen* [*Body Configurations*] series, 1976. Gelatin silver print with red ink. Courtesy Museum of Modern Art, New York.



Fig. 27 VALIE EXPORT, *Trapez* [*Trapezoid*] from the *Körperkonfigurationen* [*Body Configurations*] series, 1974. Gelatin silver print with ink. Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London.



Fig. 28 VALIE EXPORT, Still from *Adjungierte Dislokationen I* [*Adjunct Dislocations I*], 1973. Super 8mm and 16mm film. Collaborator: Hermann Hendrich. Courtesy sixpackfilm, Vienna.



Fig. 29 VALIE EXPORT, Still from *Adjungierte Dislokationen I* [*Adjunct Dislocations I*], 1973. Super 8mm and 16mm film. Collaborator: Hermann Hendrich. Courtesy sixpackfilm, Vienna.

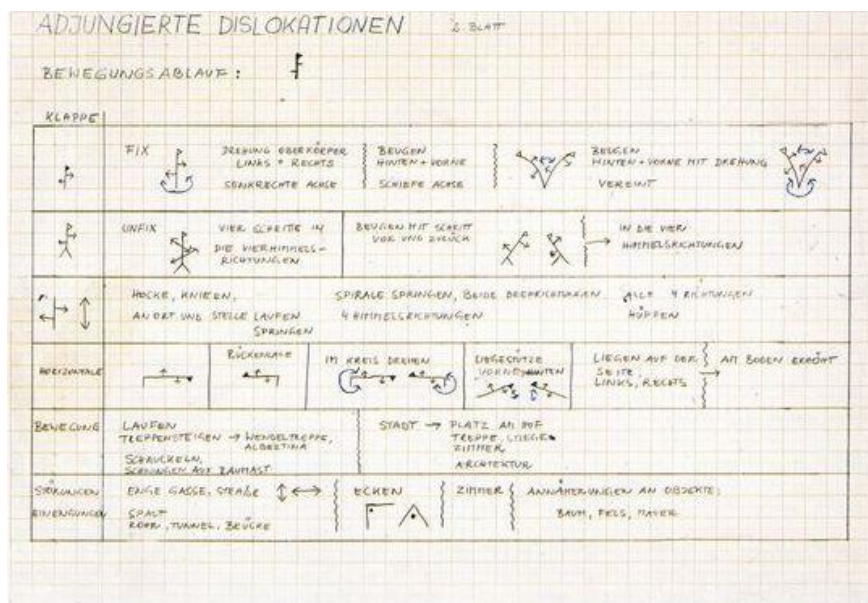


Fig. 30 VALIE EXPORT, “Bewegungsablauf” [“Movement Sequence”] chart for *Adjungierte Dislokationen I* [*Adjunct Dislocations I*], 1973. Courtesy Generali Foundation, Vienna.



Fig. 31 VALIE EXPORT, *Kondition* [Condition] from the *Körperstellung: Nachstellung* [Body-Posture: Re-enactment] series, 1976. Black-and-white photograph. Courtesy The Artist.



Fig. 32 VALIE EXPORT, *Erwartung* [Anticipation] from the *Körperstellung: Nachstellung* [Body-Posture: Re-enactment] series, 1976. Black-and-white photograph. Courtesy The Artist.



Fig. 33 VALIE EXPORT, *Identitätstransfer 1* [*Identity Transfer 1*], 1968. Gelatin silver print. Courtesy Museum of Modern Art, New York.

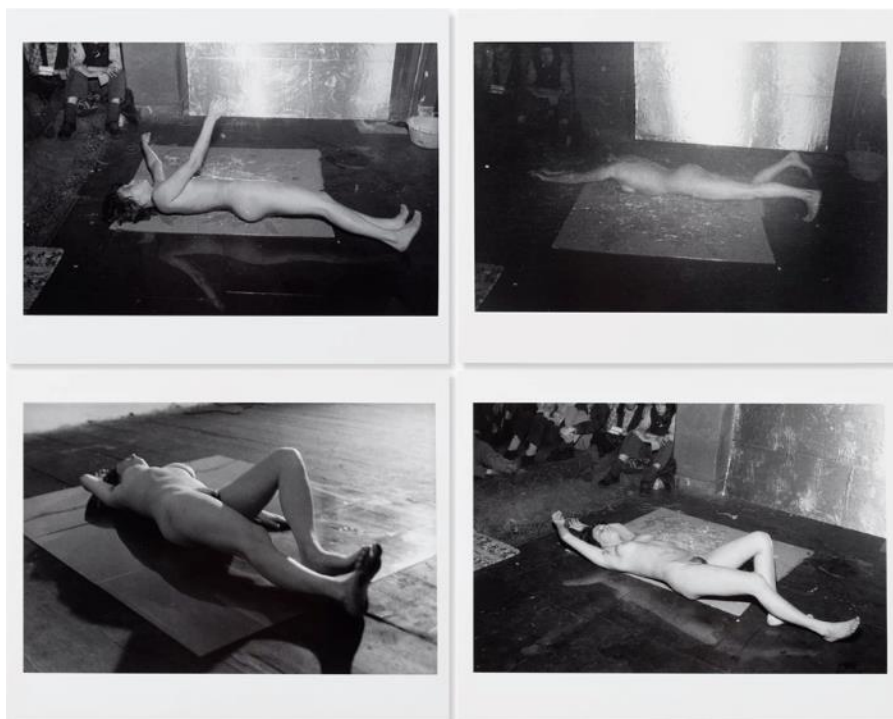


Fig. 34 VALIE EXPORT, Stills from *Eros/ion*, 1971. Body-Material Action. Courtesy Richard Saltoun Gallery, London.



Fig. 35 VALIE EXPORT, Still from *Kausalgie* [*Causalgia*], 1973. Body-Material Action. Courtesy The Artist.



Fig. 36 VALIE EXPORT, Still from *Asemie*, 1973. Body-Material Action. Courtesy The Artist.

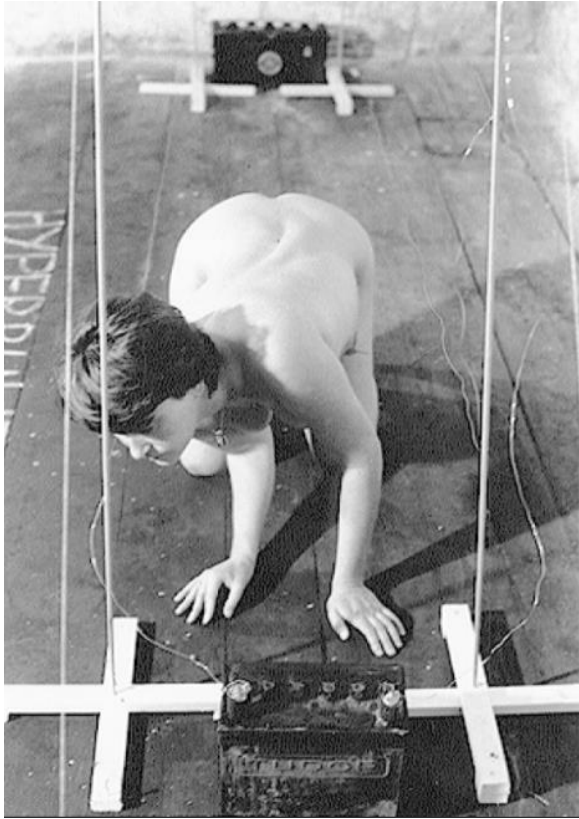


Fig. 37 VALIE EXPORT, Still from *Hyperbulie* [*Hyperbulia*], 1973. Body Action. Courtesy The Artist.



Fig. 38 VALIE EXPORT, Still from *Body Politics*, 1974. Video. Collaborators: Peter Weibel and Hermann Hendrich. Courtesy sixpackfilm, Vienna.

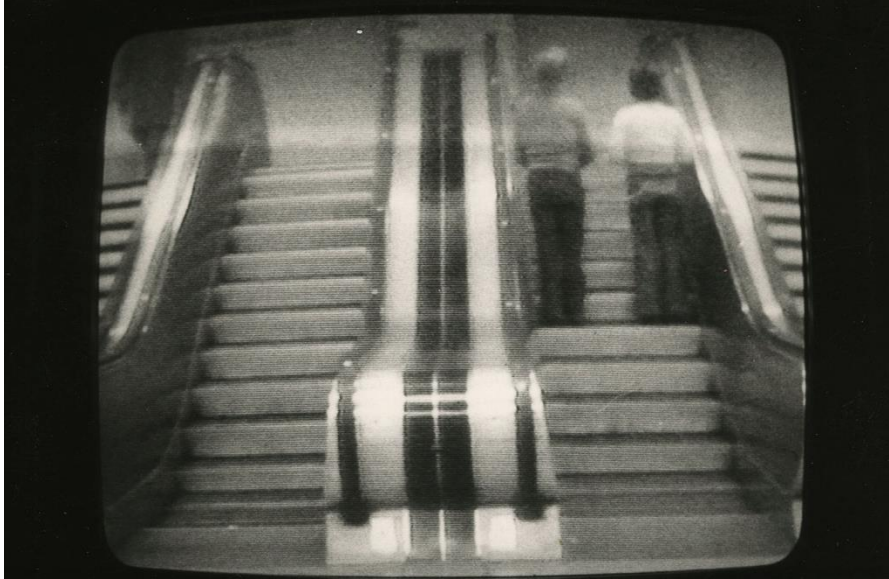


Fig. 39 VALIE EXPORT, Still from *Body Politics*, 1974. Video. Collaborators: Peter Weibel and Hermann Hendrich. Courtesy sixpackfilm, Vienna.



Fig. 40 VALIE EXPORT, Still from *Body Politics*, 1974. Video. Collaborators: Peter Weibel and Hermann Hendrich. Courtesy Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien – mumok, Vienna.



Fig. 41 VALIE EXPORT and Peter Weibel, Still from *Aus der Mappe der Hundigkeit* [*From the Portfolio of Doggedness*], 1968. Action. Courtesy Generali Foundation, Vienna.



Fig. 42 VALIE EXPORT and Peter Weibel, Still from *Aus der Mappe der Hundigkeit* [*From the Portfolio of Doggedness*], 1968. Action. Courtesy The Artist.



Fig. 43 VALIE EXPORT, Still from *Tapp und Tastkino* [*Tap and Touch Cinema*], First performed in 1968. Expanded Film-Action. Performed with various collaborators in different locations in the 1960s and 1970s. Courtesy The Artist.

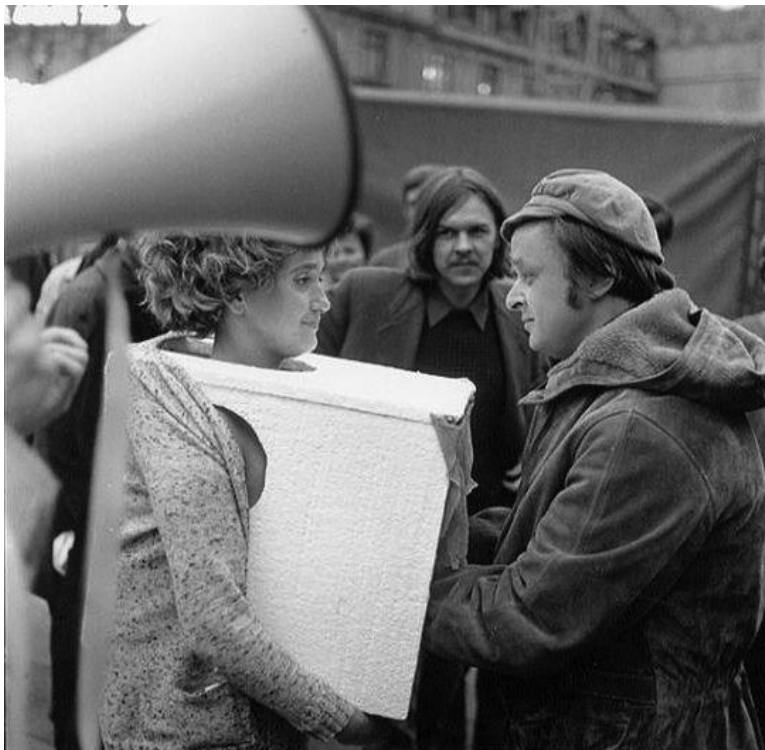


Fig. 44 VALIE EXPORT, Still from *Tapp und Tastkino* [*Tap and Touch Cinema*], First performed in 1968. Expanded Film-Action. Performed with various collaborators in different locations in the 1960s and 1970s. Courtesy Museum of Modern Art, New York.



Fig. 45 VALIE EXPORT, Still from *Tapp und Tastkino* [*Tap and Touch Cinema*], First performed in 1968. Expanded Film-Action. Performed with various collaborators in different locations in the 1960s and 1970s. Courtesy Generali Foundation, Vienna.

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