

Becoming the Work: Body Reification Practices (Gatineau, 21–22 May 21)

Université du Québec en Outaouais (UQO), Gatineau, May 21–22, 2021

Deadline: Sep 25, 2020

Jessica Minier

BECOMING THE WORK: BODY REIFICATION PRACTICES IN EXHIBITIONS AND MUSEUMS

An activity presented by the research group "The origin and currentness of the subject's becoming object: recreating oneself at the museum and in exhibitions"

Principal investigator: Mélanie Boucher (UQO)

Co-investigators: Anne Bénichou (UQAM) and Éric Langlois (UQO)

In this pandemic period of our history, which links unprecedented physical restrictions with an unlimited access to the Internet, people appear to have maintained a singular interest in personifying the canons of art history and publishing the results of their experimentations on social media (GUNTHER 2015, LANGLOIS 2015). Museums, which had to shut their doors, also use social media to maintain acquisition modes of works that function by way of a self-recognition in a production from the past. But before this hopefully short pandemic period, museums had recently already fueled this popular fascination of imagining oneself as a work, as is borne out by their greater acceptance of allowing visitors to take pictures in their rooms (CHAUMIER, KREBS & ROUSTAN 2013) and the education and marketing activities that primarily invite them to appropriate their collections (CIÉCO). In addition to this presentism-oriented interest (HARTOG 2003) of museums and the public for the work of art and more broadly for tangible heritage, there is also the interest of artists, who since the start of the new millennium have more insistently initiated performances in museums or in making them a subject of their performances, quite often by revisiting works of ancient art (BÉNICHOU 2015, BISHOP 2012, BOUCHER 2017). While these popular and artistic identification and remake practices seem to have been amplified since five or ten years, the public visibility they enjoy plays a role in this (HEINICH 2012). The recognition of cultural and gender diversity has also had an impact on the uses tied to works of the past, which moreover contributes to considering exclusion in a critical perspective. These uses can help to reveal specificities as well as the differences that mark groups and individuals. The biggest inclusivity that museums who are sensitive to social demands seek to achieve (BARRÈRE & MAIRESSE 2015) is thus also expressed through their way of inviting audiences and artists to "take possession" of their works to make them their own.

However, these initiatives are not solely a product of our times and the bodily techniques they require have been put into practice without recourse to technology, in contexts and periods that

are sometimes far removed from our own (BOUCHER 2017, BOUCHER & CONTOGOURIS 2019, BREDEKAMP 2010, RAMOS 2014, VOUILLLOUX 2002). Already in a distant past, human beings have recognized themselves in works of art and examples of an identification with a tangible object go far back, at least to their appearance in mythological stories. Moreover, the first museum-based demonstrations of the genre can be traced back to the revolutionary context of opening the Palais du Louvre's Museum and its other indoor and outdoor sites to the public. The colonial exhibition, popularized through world fairs, as well as displays derived from popular entertainment, which these initial planetary gatherings developed (BOUCHER & PARÉ 2015, MONTPETIT 1996), also contributed to the inversion of the living and the inanimate, thus leading to a self-reification and a reification of the other. If these manifestations can still be observed today, particularly in artistic, cultural and social expressions, the technological developments that facilitate them have multiplied the possibilities of these practices and their results in addition to increasing their visibility coefficient. Stagings that are digitally captured and shared, consequently revive the historical practices, which in turn makes it possible to step back from the current context.

What can one comprehend from these bodies from past and present who exhibit themselves with or in the place of the works? And from these images and the stories that testify to them? Can their poses be linked to a desire for identification and appropriation, for conservation, or on the contrary one for vivification and critique, or mere playfulness? In what regard do they oblige us to rethink the dialectic that unites the subject with the object and which unites social groups between each other as well as singularities? This colloquium aspires to find answers to these questions by focusing on exhibitionary apparatuses developed by the artists and museums as well as those that audiences have appropriated in various eras. Taking specific and exemplary cases as a starting point, the event will seek, for example, to envisage the contribution of the tableau vivant, mirror, diorama and the zoo, reenactment, performance and choreography, analog and digital recording, selfie, mobile apps or dissemination platforms about the practices, their development and agency. In short, this colloquium sets out to revisit certain foundations of the museum and of exhibitionary practice in order to include within it an ontological reflection on the conservation and representation of the person.

We invite researchers, museum professionals and artists to submit a proposal for a presentation, performance-presentation or performance which can be conveyed live or in a pre-recorded form, as part of the colloquium that has been designed for an online dissemination.

The proposals should include:

- A title (a maximum of 150 characters, including spaces);
- An abstract (between 100 to 150 words max.);
- A short bio (between 100 to 150 words max.).

Proposals are to be sent to Jessica Minier < minj11@uqo.ca > before September 25, 2020.

Participants' in person contributions as well as the reception in an auditorium room will be determined over the fall-winter 2020-2021, in respect of social distancing measures.

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