

MICRODANCES

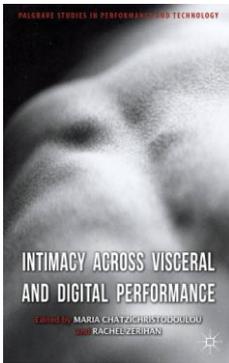
On the possibilities of post-post-porn performance

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www.reverso.org

Text for the talk at the symposium “**INTIMACY – across visceral and digital performance**” at Goldsmiths, London, December 2007 - <http://www.goldsmiths.ac.uk/intimacy/> -Goldsmiths University- - <http://www.intimateperformance.org>

It was accompanied by a **Antibodies/Microdances/Microsexes** performance by Jaime del Val and Olinto Rubio – this was the **world premiere** first public presentation of this project, on 8th December. <http://reverso.org/Antibodies-microdances.htm>



A subsequent volume on this symposium was published in Palgrave in 2012 with a **text by Erin Manning dedicated to the Antibodies/Microdances/Microsexes project by Reverso/Jaime del Val.**

The cover photo of the volume is by Jaime del Val. <https://www.palgrave.com/gp/book/9780230348868>

The text by Manning is the following:

- Manning, Erin. 2012. “Intimare”. In *Intimacy Across Visceral and Digital Performance*. Edited by Maria Chatzichristodoulou and Rachel Zerihan, 129-142. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Opennes in communication: As I speak to you now each of you is understanding something different, shifts of interpretation and open meanings and signifiers that verbal language in its presumption of universality cannot contain. In fact it is common knowledge in Studies of non-verbal communication that in every interpersonal conversation only 7% of meaning is transmitted through verbal language per se, whatever this might be in its structures of grammar, syntax and morphology, and the rest, 93% has to do with different layers of non-verbal communication, kinesthetics, paralanguage, somatics, proxemics, cronemics, etc.

I further assume that this 93% percent is not only underlying meanings of words but that it is bringing in essential layers of *potentiality* of meaning that verbal language per se cannot contain. And that these layers are not meaning-oriented, but radically open in the way they swing potentials of meaning around in infinite directions, while they are embodied in another body. This is the third condition: embodied condition, in oneself as reflexivity, in others (persons, animals, and other entities).

However what makes me viable as subject here speaking in front of you is to maintain myself within certain territories of intelligibility in language, to maintain the verbal-nonverbal fictional divide, that attempts to fracture the continuum of communicating forces that bodies are, for the sake of perpetuating the sovereignty of the logos.

However, does the traditional account of verbal language get in any way close to the specificity of this body?

How about if I attempt to amplify and explode that specificity, to speak hovering at the frontier of the speakable, of the intelligible, risking to be cast into the realm of the unspeakable, of the inviable as a subject, risking also to redesign the line between the speakable and the unspeakable, the intelligible and the unintelligible, the sovereign and the abject. What kinds of frontiers are there to explore if I want bodies to exploit, amplify, explode the infinite potentials of communicating forces where there are no signifiers and meanings any more, but these turn out to be accidents and effects in the processes of embodiment of forces?

Further, how do technologies of communication in digital culture attempt to formalise, reduce and standardise the radical openness and specificity of bodies in the whole spectrum of the non verbal. How can we transform the framework of representations that allow surveillance and control, the technologies of objectivist positivist reproduction that account for biopolitical frameworks in which bodies are reproduced as discreet entities, recognisable in their territories of the acceptable and the abject, naturalised and simulated in the invisible prison of the cartesian grid.

And finally how to redeploy these technologies, inverting, mutating their mechanisms, for the sake of the pure excess of bodies when they flow outside the boundaries of fixed representation, hovering in the frontiers of never ending morphogenesis. How to re-embody technology beyond the textual drive of disembodied click and drag, of minds that interact with or control the bodies that matter.

INTIMACY AS BIPOLITICAL TECHNOLOGY

genealogy & regulation of sexuality
space and architecture
the anatomy of the body and its forbidden territories

INTIMACY AS ALWAYS IMPLICITLY POLITICAL

legal issues: public sex regulation, touching children, homophobia, porn, death penalty....

MICROPOLITICS OF INTIMACY IN LATECAPITALISM

radical actions: queer affect, public sex, open couples, public intimacy,

banality as the media construction of intimacy that we embody

time & duration, against standardisation, biopolitics of time and space

POSTINTIMACY: the limits of intimacy

New planets, new geographies, new maps – extraterrestrial body

If the anatomy is the destiny, if we have to deal with freedom of forms, rather than freedom of ideas, we can transform the anatomy and redesign the body through shifts of the use of technology of the camera.

Since the XV century, from the camera obscura to the photography, video and digital cameras, specific uses of the technology of the camera and the lens have produced a paradigm of objectivity in representation and have sedimented as normative, naturalised, have shaped our vision into the mediated expression of the cartesian grid.

The materiality of bodies such as we may be able to think it here and now is much related to the technology of the camera and the production of an idea of fixity as surface and form, (something different would happen if we would have based cultural meaning production in sound more than in the image, for instance), but images are not only about fixity and objectivity, images can be the dynamic vehicles for the intensive and uncontainable body of forces, beyond the cartesian grid of recognisable patterns and forms.

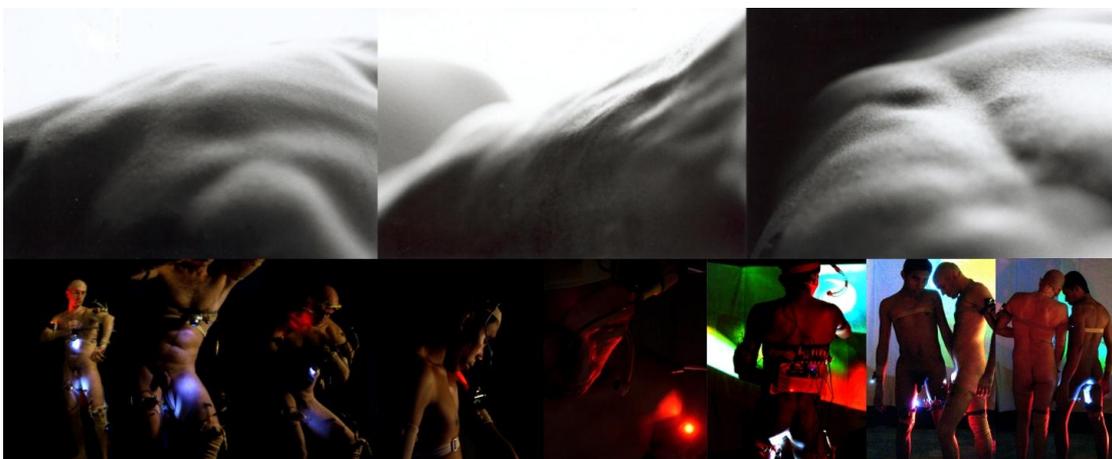
Microdances is a photography, video and performance-installation project that uses mostly wireless micro surveillance cameras on the naked body to explore micro scales of movement and visual representations that hover on the edge of the abstract, of the unintelligible.

The project started around 2002 as a photography project, of close-ups of the body, later around 2004 as a video project, and around 2005 evolved as an interactive performance and installation, or metaformance project.

These are photographs from the early series of the project, and some images of the performance.



The proximity of the cameras, placed all over the body, with no distinctions of discursive or normative boundaries, offers a landscape view that is both intimate because of the proximity and absorbing because of the scale. There is often a confusion to our eye, used to cartesian reproductions of known forms, so that it is not clear what part of the body you see, or what it is doing.



The micro evolutions of movement, in minimalist chains are indeed choreographies, or eventual syllables for potential languages, that sediment in so far as certain *uncertain* repetitions take place.

You move *not* through the usual proprioceptive feedback, but through the image that you see as you improvise and perceive initially as something other, as another body, formless and uncertain, until you reconnect to it, you become that other body in its open formlessness, and the paths of improvisation and *écriture* open up in new directions that are not to be discovered through the traditional normalised set of proprioceptive feedbacks. The use of more than one camera at a time generates an awareness of multiple counterpoints of micromovements of the body.

These micromovements seem quite essential in character, they may be the kinds of micromovements that we as bodies are unconsciously doing all the time, yet suddenly they acquire a completely new scale of meaning and potential. Since we cannot ascribe precise meanings to the movements they relate often to palpitating organs and proximities such as they are at times perceived and embodied in the formless flow of sex. Every organ could be a sexual organ that palpates, and yet the impossibility to fully recognise it as sexual organ breaks down the lines that define the territory of sex as such, and with it of pornography, in fact it erases the territorialisations of the body and every movement is a potential organ of an intensive body that *resists organicity, therefore truly a body without organs*.

This implies a different move from the one implied in post-pornography, as the movement initiated by Annie Sprinkle in the early 90s, with the *Post-porn Modernist Show*, and later with other artists we may explicitly or implicitly relate to the term, where there is no actual questioning of the concreteness of bodies and their intelligibility but rather a displacement of their concrete actions outside the excluded domain of the pornographic industry and its uniformed representations. In post-porn there is an opening up from the domain of uniformed abjection of pornography as



biopolitical mechanism of control of bodies and of the agency of the subject producing it, into the domain of a broader range of representations of sexuality as resistance to the biopolitical mechanism that are however always part of the theatre of representation, that are still always representing concrete bodies doing concrete actions, possibly in new ways and situations, yet the body concrete, its surface and materiality are still present.

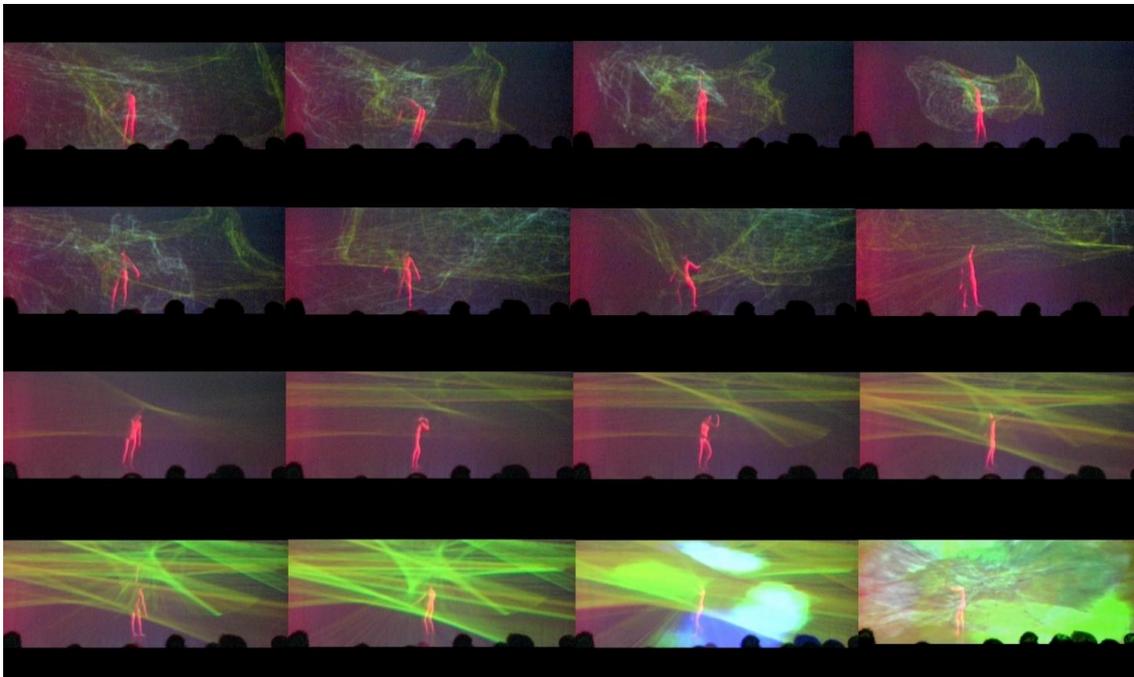
What language does this microdancing metabody speak? What in other circumstances could be categorised as an interracial queer sexual intercourse between bodies becomes something other, not quite possible to categorise and yet this overflow of the body fragments in their open potentials for embodiment beyond meaning becomes thus a flow in which *everything is body, gender is nowhere, everything is sex*: not in terms of materiality but of embodiment processes, of open relational forces.

What is at stake in this process is of the highest importance since it means negotiating the frontiers of the legal, of viable subjectivity, what in some countries means avoiding the death penalty, like for instance in Iran, or Sudan, or Arabia. And in other cases prison, like for that sake in Britain, where touch is strictly regulated, like pornography is. What kind of political redefinitions

of viable subjects and bodies can we do if we operate in the frontier of the intelligible? Can the intimate interface challenge the frontiers of viable subjectivity?

The surveillance cameras are oriented towards intimate transactions and parts of the body, however they fail to reproduce the framework of representation in which they are intelligible and thus cannot be subjected to control.

In fact the image of the cameras is analysed in a software to extract parameters of movement that serve to interact with the expanded audiovisual environment, that consists of the processed voice, the processed image of the cameras and virtual three dimensional structures or architectures, organs of a virtual body that is however not simulating any preconceived reality, and are therefore as real as the real microdancing body. (Here we will be showing a reduced version without video processing and 3D)



The data of analysis of movement, as discreet and reduced formalisations of that uncertain body without organs, serve the purpose of generating an environment in which the fixity of the body and its intelligibility is further explored into the realm of dissolution, rather than concreteness. The discreet formalisation of the body through surveillance cameras is thus at the service of dissolution and amorphousness, of further opening the lines of intelligibility into the unspeakable. The bodies of surveillance collapse into the realm of the amorphous.

They are also at the service of further exploiting the lines of embodiment since the body is not only confronting a new realm of proprioceptive feedback through the movement that occurs through the feedback of the image of the camera, but now further layers of feedback are being developed that also inform and transform proprioceptive feedback.

Microdances is a priori a poetic space for the flow of the amorphous, the ideas presented here are not the background on which the work is based but have grown with it, are a parallel

dimension, and surely other interpretations are possible, take them however as points of arrival and feedback.

Thus Microdances is perhaps about the situated, located, intensive body, which is also a diffuse body in its distributed locality of relational forces. It is about reembodying technology and negotiating the territories of the body that account for viable subjectivity, it is about a therapeutic exploration of unlimited sensations, and vehicles of expression that don't imply a reception of meaning.

Microdances is a metaformance, it lies beyond the performatic and the performative in so far as it is situated beyond the framework and theatre of representation, simulation and parody.

It is about intimate interfaces that attempt to break apart the very lines that make intimacy possible, that make it possible to maintain the public-private divide and of the intimate versus the public.

It is about an intensive body that tries to defy the hiperreal body of media representations, the standard bodies of the total screen.

It is a terrain for the renegotiation of gender far beyond the binary oppositions, and of sex as anatomical substrate for gender. A landscape for redesigning the maps and normative territories of bodies in an open field of possibilities and emergence.

It is a laboratory for new choreographies of being, new temporalities and consciousness, for meta- trans- sub- anti- counter- post- ultra- micro-choreographies.

It is improvisation and sedimentation, potential language, practice and technique, theory and therapy.

Its branches and future lines are many: in opening the scale further down, to the cellular, in opening to other kinds of bodies, the metadances, metabodies of reality, in exploring deeper the improvisations and sedimentation process, and potentialities for open language without meaning, and for the technology.

It is open to experiment with robotics, sculptures, or sextoys, to street interventions, to internet and refigurations of bodymaps, to telematics and virtual architecture, to further camera, microphone and sensor based systems with more bodies of different kinds involved in different kinds of actions, metadances, frontiers zones and situatedness.

The politics of the amorphous is the promise for the renegotiation of boundaries through operating on the boundaries of bodies themselves. The promise of *antibodies* of intensities that defy the fixity of material bodies and naturalised subjectivities. I propose that it is in the potential of these experimentations rather than in academic textual practices that new terrains for both politics and thinking are to be explored, risking oneself in the frontier of the speakable.

The question remains open whether we are to remain in the field of symbolic acts of resistance or how we can make out of these practices viable political action in a broader field in our context of standardisation and assimilation in digital culture and late-capitalism, of implicit power and censorship, where the substrate/subtext/subimage of corporeality, language, technology and its political economy need to be radically redesigned.