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Taking place: Parrhesiastic Theater as a model for artistic practice

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Propositions Eleni Kamma

1. Parrhesiastic practices in contemporary art serve as exercises—understood in the ancient Greek context of “askesis”—aimed at finding the courage to speak one’s mind by positioning and expressing oneself in relation to other(s) and in public.
2. Revitalizing or appropriating an old parrhesiastic practice triggers social awareness and enables the expression of political consciousness for both spectators and performers.
3. A theatrical space is a physical space in which an action takes place in common view in order to mobilize the viewer’s agency. This theatrical space is a condition for parrhesiastic practices.
4. In the transition from directed performance (in which the director assumes total authority) to delegated performance (in which professionals and amateurs are employed to act on their own initiative), a relational space opens up that is not controlled and is continuously transformed.
5. Collaborative artistic formats and dialogical attempts perform an utterance – including the pronouncing of the words and the accompanying paralinguistic and extralinguistic elements - that is not limited to the time of the work’s production, but that extends in time before and after its making.
6. By undoing dignity and seriousness, art reveals uncomfortable truths about social issues and situations and works against conventions.
7. The adoption, by the artist, of a militant vocabulary and/or stance does not necessarily imply submitting to what is commonly defined as “militant” art.
8. Parades involve a tension between the vocal and/or gestural expression of individual bodies on the one hand, and the articulation of a collective body on the other.
9. Speaking one’s mind is a transformative practice that constantly deconstructs and redrafts the limits between one’s self and the other(s).
10. The artist-as-researcher oscillates between the sovereign prerogative of the artist and the need for justification that makes systematic research public.
11. Hosting as a material practice quietly leads social, technological and cultural interactions to their re-imagination.