

3 Vitality and the conservation of performance

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Introduction

The difference between the *live* performance and its documentation is far from being akin to that between life and death. And yet, analogies between the lives (and afterlives) of performance artworks and the *pathos* of human life populate relevant literature on performance art, its documentation, museification—or, perhaps, *mummification*, if we pay some attention to recent criticisms¹—and conservation. From the art historian and theorist Hal Foster, who calls performances acquired and displayed in the museum *zombie* artworks,² to several conservation projects aiming to bring performance artworks to life (of which I have participated in a few),³ it is warranted to say that this analogy has gained its own life. There is a reason for that: this analogy has proven itself useful in Western literature on performance art and its many instantiations. The analogy pushes for the recognition of performance artworks by what they *do*, therefore asserting their materiality in the museum as both displayable and collectable cultural and artistic manifestations. This was particularly useful for conservation, where various analogies between the profession and medicine have been used in the field since at least the 1990s, and seeing performances as breaths of life we ought to maintain and promote changed the focus from objects to action. This analogy also brought a new wealth of vocabulary that allowed for the visualization of the expectations for performance artworks entering collections, from being alive,⁴ to becoming zombies, having afterlives,⁵ or becoming remains,⁶ relics,⁷ remainders,⁸ or traces,⁹ to name a few formulations. In this chapter, however, I argue that we need to move beyond discourses around life and death and towards an understanding of the collective and vital materiality of performance art within the politics of the commons. By politics of the commons, I mean an effort to bring humans and nonhumans together in sharing knowledge and resources in an anti-capitalist promotion of solidarity and relationality.¹⁰ In this sense, I will be exploring the limits of the *live* in performance art and its conservation in relation to the place the performance artworks occupy in the ecologies of its care.

Suppose knowledges are as situated as bodies, as proposed by feminist scholar Donna Haraway in 1988.¹¹ In that case, mine is brought here by *intra-actions*, as

DOI: 10.4324/9781003309987-5

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the feminist scholar Karen Barad puts it,¹² of my research in museums and academia, as both someone engaged in and committed to the practice of research as a *project* of resistance to late capitalism and the research of practice as the *site* of that resistance. I come from various “zones of presence,” as the philosopher Gilles Deleuze calls them,¹³ namely, conservation, performance studies and new materialisms. These fields have many points of contact and gaps, tension and conflicts, which, of course, bring up ambiguities and challenges that sometimes prove hard to untangle. In exploring some modes, possibilities and limitations of liveness in performance—and, in this sense, of preserving such condition—I will be thinking with new materialisms,¹⁴ in general, and vital materialism and vitality,¹⁵ in particular. More than exploring this topic through this lens, I will argue that vitality—at least the one at the root of vital materialisms—more than being a project that operates in the materiality of the performance “object,” is a project that operates in the political, and, precisely, within the politics of difference within the commons.

The chapter is divided into four sections. The first section will focus on the challenge of liveness and its configuration in the conservation of performance art. The second section will address how liveness is configured in memory institutions such as museums,¹⁶ while also exploring the ways in which liveness is understood in conservation and the gaps that emerge in centring liveness as a conservation aim. The third section will introduce vitalism as an alternative to the idea of liveness. The fourth section will think with vitalist materialism to reconfigure *liveness* and what is conserved—that is, performance art—and conservation as practice, and even as a political project of difference and visibility within the ecologies of commons that co-constitute practices of conservation.

The issue of *liveness*

Debates around the *liveness* of performance art were at the forefront of the discussion on performance art and documentation at the end of the twentieth century.¹⁷ Positions from the performance studies scholar Peggy Phelan’s provocation that performance art becomes itself through its disappearance,¹⁸ to performance studies scholar Philip Auslander’s perspective on the inseparability of the live and the mediatized,¹⁹ to the interplay between the text and the body, or the archive and the repertoire, as performance studies scholar Diana Taylor puts it,²⁰ framed the large body of literature that emerged within the field of performance studies and associated disciplines between the end of the century and the turn of the millennium.²¹

With few exceptions, discussions around performance and its documentation mainly focused on politics of representation: if and in which circumstances performance could be represented. Phelan’s extensively repeated claim that performance “cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations *of* representations” is typically juxtaposed with perspectives that have a more conciliatory relationship with documentation and mediatization.²² Those include ones developed by Auslander,²³ who

sees performance and its documentation inhabiting contiguous spaces, or what Deleuze would call “zones of indiscernibility”²⁴ or the perspective of the art historian Amelia Jones, who calls our attention to the fragmentary nature of both documentation and the performance even itself, as distinct and, yet, unprivileged knowledge-making practices, tools and sources.²⁵ These perspectives have both a philosophical and historical drag, which explains each author’s approach to issues of disappearance or recursiveness within the overarching discussion on performance and its representation.²⁶ In this chapter, however, I hope to join the scholars and practitioners who move the debate beyond representation,²⁷ and accept that the materiality of performance exists in a continuum, made of various, concurrent and, sometimes, contradicting material manifestations. This is even more relevant given the multiple modes of live that now exist and the ones that keep emerging in our hyper-mediatized society.²⁸ As suggested by Jones,²⁹ if the event is confirmed by the viewer (or witness) in the moment of its actual (or simulated) performance, what separates the memory of witnessing the *live* event from the embodied experience of learning it through documentation, or that of activating the event through re-enactment practices? If a performance, or any artwork for that matter, is always materialized partially and “recursively disseminated” over time,³⁰ and witnessed through mediation devices, either physical or not, what indeed separates the event from the different ways in which it manifests?

The main discrepancy between *live* event and representational forms of such an event is in the possibility of enacting substantial differences between instantiations. While the encounter between a human and a photograph always produces material change,³¹ differences formed at the meeting point between audiences and performance documentation is less clear than the one produced in processes of activation also known as re-enactments.³² Re-enactments, to use the words of performance studies scholar Rebecca Schneider, allow us to engage in the process of *return*, not necessarily to go back to how things were, but to take another turn. In this reflection, Schneider discusses, too, how re-enactments engage with the idea of *liveness*, calling them “acts of survival”:

Entering, or re-enacting, an event or a set of acts (acts of art or acts of war) from a critical direction, a different temporal angle, may be (...) an act of survival, of keeping alive as passing on (in multiple senses of the phrase “to pass”). *This keeping alive is not a liveness considered always in advance of death nor in some way after death*, as Abramović might prefer in wanting to monumentalize her work to commemorate her as dead in advance, sealing her, in this way, into the archive. *Rather, it is more a constant (re)turn of, to, from, and between states in animation – an inter-(in)animation* (to quote Moten, to quote Donne again). For “survival” (...) may be a critical mode of remaining, as well as a mode of remaining critical: passing on, staying alive, in order to pass on the past as past, not, indeed, as (only) present. Never (only) present.³³

This approach to liveness is echoed by performance studies André Lepecki and gender and performance theorist Louis van den Hengel, who recognize in these “acts of survival” the agency for rehearsing the potential history of performance artworks.³⁴ Calling them “chronopolitical operations,” Lepecki suggests that re-enactments materialize not only the traces of what was but also the possibilities of what could have been.³⁵ The potential to create and sustain significant material change in artworks and their potential futures might justify the use of re-enactment to maintain or create liveness within museums. The next section will discuss the context of liveness in the museum and how it has been materially configured in the last fifteen to twenty years.

Living in the Museum?

The first performance artwork to enter a museum collection as a live action was *Good Feelings, Good Times* (2003) by the Slovakian artist Roman Ondák (b. 1966), which was acquired by Tate London in 2005. Since then, the pace of live acquisitions has accelerated, with more than fifty artworks now being part of collections all over the world, according to a list compiled by the web platform Monoskop.³⁶ Collecting and incorporating performance artworks into art museums is no mean feat. At least for public collections, such as the Tate, collecting a work means to hold it and conserve it in perpetuity. At least three trends can be observed in relation to the growing appetite for live action from the turn of the millennium until now: the nostalgia towards artistic practices created in the 1960s that emerged in the 1990s, the advent of the “experience economy,” and the growth in number of delegated performances.³⁷

Museums and collections began to show an interest in performance during the mid-1990s. Around this same time, and even with different terminology from what we see today, there was a clear growth in discussions and narratives in relevant literature around how and when to conserve performance. The art historian Jessica Chalmers posits that this turn to performance came through a form of nostalgia, and specifically, a process of longing for and reappraisal of the performances created in the 1960s.³⁸ This act of return, to borrow the expression by Schneider,³⁹ led to a further “process of historicization” of those works. The historicization of these works came with its fair share of challenges and possibilities: if, on the one hand, it led to the canonization of these works into what is called Art History, on the other hand, it also proposed that their original stance against commodification was characteristically part of performance art as a genre. Still, as the relationship between institutions and performance art was consolidated, so was the historical and “generational” legacy of these works.⁴⁰ Museums started to commission various re-enactments of past performances,⁴¹ which, in some ways, either kick-started or condoned the acquisition of performance artworks. The growing trend that led museums to acquire these works led to recent structural changes both in museums and how they are organized,⁴² and in philosophical considerations about the object of performance and its ontologies.⁴³ These moves towards an increased

presence of performance artworks in museums are linked to what has been called the experience economy.

The term *experience economy* was coined by two economists, B. Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore, to recognize experiences and events as commodities. Within this framework, experiences delivered over a certain duration and to a specific audience in a time- and space-bounded context are part of what is exchanged between people and/or institutions.⁴⁴ From the description alone, one can see a lot of resemblance between these commodities as defined by Pine and Gilmore and performance artworks that now populate museum spaces and collections. Indeed, the importance of the experience economy in how museums are and have been rehearsing the collecting and curatorial goals of the institution is unmistakable.⁴⁵ The specific ways in which the experience economy tailors what we see in the museum are also impacted by forms of artistic practice that facilitate such experiences and one of them is the rise of delegated performances in museum collections.⁴⁶ As will become clear in the next paragraphs, this has also impacted our care strategies, specifically in the case of conservation practice.

Until recently,⁴⁷ performance artworks collected by museum collections as live actions were what Claire Bishop has called “delegated performances,” meaning that they were created to be interpreted by people other than the artist. This trend, as Bishop explains, became prominent in the 1990s, with artists hiring non-professionals (or professionals from other fields) to “undertake the job of being present and performing at a particular time and a particular place on behalf of the artist, and following his or her instructions.”⁴⁸ This is the case, for example, with Roman Ondák’s *Measuring the Universe* (2007), where a museum staff member measures the heights of visitors against a gallery wall, mapping out the cloud of sizes and their variations for a specific context and within a particular time. This action can be undertaken without the artist’s presence without jeopardizing what is usually called the “authenticity” of the artwork as it is commonly recognized.⁴⁹ That, of course, does not mean that such works are easy to conserve, to collect, or to interpret—it would be quite a stretch to say that about the choreographic works of Simone Forti or the works of Tino Sehgal, the latter of which, by the artist’s own specification, cannot be directly documented and rely on oral communication. This implies, however, that they are not dependent on a specific person to be or become *live*. Some of those artworks can also be exhibited as documentation, with documentation acting as a proxy of the *live* performance, which is collected with various display modes. Their display is not only independent from specific people, but it can also go ahead without the proposition of being *live* as in activated as a live performance. As the large majority of works collected by art collections were framed around these characteristics, so were their conservation needs. This, however, does not mean that conservation does not change the artwork as it enters a museum collection, but that conservation strategies are particularly tailored to the challenges prompted by collecting delegated performances.

The question of how and what to conserve when we are talking about performance art is as contemporary as practices of collecting.⁵⁰ The premise of

liveness brought opportunities to the conservation of delegated performances, particularly when the aim of keeping them *live* could be achieved by producing those performances in-house. The understanding of liveness as a conservation goal allowed for mapping the gaps in current processes.⁵¹ The work of developing strategies tailored to the exceptional needs of performance art was, however, built on years of expertise developed in conservation of time-based media art.⁵² Moreover, the expansion of practice was facilitated by theoretical discussions promoted in various conservation contexts, from the care of objects from Indigenous Cultures to the conservation of contemporary art.⁵³

In collecting those works, the collecting institutions often also own the means for their production, from props to instructions or other forms of knowledge and information.⁵⁴ However, the challenges to liveness come with artworks that, in themselves, propose complex forms of life of the artwork beyond the artist or the museum. Some delegated performances still rely on the artist to be activated, with others changing profusely in each activation, reframing, at each encounter, the expectations of what the artwork was and could be,⁵⁵ and a small set of them also being specifically attached to means that cannot be reproduced or instantiated within the museum. Non-delegated performance artworks, in turn, intrinsically depend on the presence of the artist or a specific person. In those cases, the means of production are not necessarily owned by the artist, a gallery, or a collection, but are, instead, diffracted,⁵⁶ distributed.⁵⁷ One could argue that all forms of artistic practice exhibit such a complex net of human and nonhuman relations. However, as frequently happens with contemporary art, some artworks demonstrate such a relational nature in ways that are hard to ignore. That is the case, for example, of *Destierro* (Displacement), an artwork created by the Cuban-born artist Tania Bruguera (b. 1968) in 1998.

Destierro refers to a religious tradition from the Kongo peoples of the modern Democratic Republic of the Congo, called Nkisi Nkonde.⁵⁸ The Nkisi Nkonde is a wooden figure constructed, or, in the words used by Tania Bruguera, “loaded or activated” with mnemonic devices, whether traces, relics, or body parts of a deceased individual, and metal nails that represent wishes that have been asked and granted or, again using Bruguera’s words, “complied with.”⁵⁹ The Nkisi Nkondi tradition is built on the idea of reciprocity: indeed, if someone is to ask something from Nkisi Nkondi, they must promise something in return. If a wish is granted but the promise is not kept, the spirit of the Nkisi Nkonde retaliates. This work by Bruguera brings together the religious nature of this tradition—which, according to the artist, is understood by the audiences in Cuba—and the idea of reciprocity between the people and power structures. The artist used the concept around the creation of Nkisi Nkondi objects to produce a wearable Nkisi Nkonde. She walked dressed as a Nkisi Nkonde during a performance that took place in Havana in 1998, on Fidel Castro’s birthday, echoing the promises that were made and not kept, asking for restitution, accountability, and justice. This work changes every time it is performed, having incorporated pencils in 2003 and bullets in 2005, and bringing new meanings in each interaction. As mentioned by gender and performance studies scholar José Esteban Muñoz, for

those who believe in the revolution's infallible glory, Castro almost functions as a Nkisi Nkonde, a symbolic figure in which the populace invests its hopes and desires. For those who denounce the leader, he is the fetish, the juju, the ultimate Other, also potentially represented in the performance. Again, Bruguera's performance explicates the ways in which the Cuban people, arguably inside and out of the island, participate in an economy of projection, investing desire and guilt in outside objects rather than understanding the potential transformation available through a politics of introjection.⁶⁰

By introjection, Esteban Muñoz is here referring to the act of hammering a nail and, figuratively, to the process of implanting desire into the object itself—both as a holder of wishes and promises and as a reckoning. This stance demonstrates some of the ways in which the means of production for artworks like *Destierro* cannot be owned by collecting institutions. The permeation of desire into the people that are part of the performance and of that specific situated practice, on the one hand, distributes the affective ownership of the artwork while, on the other hand, diffracting the possibilities for enacting change with *Destierro*. Another aspect that is brought by this work is its association with the political context in which it emerges. This work could be considered politically charged, also called activist, or, to use Bruguera's term, *political-timing specific*. Bruguera uses this term to denote the interstitial space between art and political resistance, which, according to the artist, can only occur at the very specific time between a political or social crisis and its resolution by mainstream power structures.⁶¹

For Bruguera, with creating (and collecting) these forms of artistic practice comes the responsibility to generate difference under the auspices of the particular political moment from which the artwork originated. In her words, form and content “are interdependent, linked to the specificity of a political moment. Any political change requires a re-evaluation of the form used to produce political art.”⁶² This also poses an obstacle to a collecting and conservation framework centered on liveness: it is not that the museum itself cannot create difference—as, indeed, happens frequently with forms of performance art that are continually iterated—but the parameters of difference, or how much difference is allowed while retaining the artwork's identity, will hardly be the same for the museum and the manifold of stakeholders that are part of actions of political-timing specific performance artworks such as *Destierro*.⁶³ The generative potential of artworks such as *Destierro* is as complex as are its affects. The possibilities for creating difference are, therefore, as expansive as the boundaries that constrain it. This is an artwork that demands that we look at conservation in terms of social responsibility and *response-ability* to understand how conservation can contribute to safeguarding the artwork while enacting social change through and with the artwork.⁶⁴

Again, going back to the issue of *liveness* in performance, the goal of conservation at least for performance artworks needs to go beyond understanding

what is needed for the artworks to remain *live*—or activated as performances in gallery spaces—or to find alternative ways for them to exist and act in museums, galleries and the other public spaces, and to reconfigure its actions to promote and realize their potential as vital matter. In light of issues such as climate change, the rising recognition of social inequalities, which are pervasive and systemic, institutions' (slow) reckoning with their colonial past and present, and the continued burgeoning of neoliberalism in the arts and humanities, conservation's apparent political neutrality, which, in fact, many conservators already recognize as being inexistent and impossible,⁶⁵ needs to be seriously rethought. A politically-committed conservation framework—i.e. one that focuses on resource and knowledge sharing—focused on generative vitality instead of sustaining life, as I will argue, could allow us to reconsider both conservation and performance artworks now and in the future.

Vitality

Vitality is a fundamental concept in feminist new materialisms. Within a materialist philosophical tradition, the term is used by philosophers such as Gilles Deleuze through Henry Bergson in *Bergsonism*,⁶⁶ Elizabeth Grosz,⁶⁷ Jane Bennett⁶⁸ and Rosi Braidotti.⁶⁹ It is also important to recognize the legacy of the philosopher Baruch Spinoza⁷⁰ and Indigenous knowledge in a discussion focused on nonhuman agency and relationality for the philosophical field of new materialisms.⁷¹ Vitality or vitalism is a notion that recognizes the growing complexity of life and its potential for sustaining and creating difference.⁷² In other words, vitalism distinguishes the intraconnectedness of beings in their visible and invisible complexity and understands what they could become and what they could have been. As the philosopher Scott Lash puts it, “the notion of life has always favoured an idea of *becoming* over one of *being*, of movement over stasis, of action over structure, of *flow* and *flux*.”⁷³

In “Vitalism Now – A Problematic,” the philosopher Monica Greco traces back the history of the definitions of vitalism.⁷⁴ This concept was adopted by various philosophers and scholars working within the field of moral philosophy and metaphysics, being discredited early on due to its spiritual undertones.⁷⁵ One of the first pioneers of vitalism (at least in England) was Anne Conway in the seventeenth century, for whom the vitalist understanding of the life of things was one of the ways of recognizing the Christian God's agency in the making of the World.⁷⁶ The domain of the discussion on vitalism shifted to philosophy of medicine and biology, to bioethics and to ideas of humanness and human becoming in the twentieth century, through the reflections of authors such as Henri Bergson, Georges Canguilhem, Gilles Deleuze, Michel Foucault or Antonio Negri, to name a few.⁷⁷

Vitalism was reframed in the twenty-first century, not only in the life sciences, but also in the social and human sciences. One of the main reasons for this reframing of vitalism within the social and human sciences (and feminist epistemologies in particular) has to do with the object of analysis that was

proposed within vitalism. In her analysis of vitalism now, Greco proposes a shift from considering vitalism as an onto-epistemological problem to one concerning an *ethical* and *political* problem.⁷⁸ The framing of life as an ontological and epistemological (and not necessarily political or ethical) problem comes with its own set of criticisms. For one, vitalism as an approach typically conceives processes of becoming as being inseparable from all matter,⁷⁹ which is in opposition to understandings of becoming as a purely ontological measure within disciplines such as biology or medicine. If humans, animals, insects, microbiomes and plants engage in processes of becoming throughout their life, this life is also characterized by *pathos*, or the end of life and, by association, that process of becoming. As stated by Greco, who develops this analysis through the work of the bioethicist and philosopher of science Thomas Osborne,⁸⁰

A vitalism premised on the recognition of this pathic dimension would characterize life not simply as affirmatively “vital” but as permanently engaged in a relationship with the possibility of its negation – death, disease, sub-normativity, error.⁸¹

This premise of vitalism, however, as proposed by Greco, does not need to be constricted by disciplinary domains. Indeed, even when considering vitalism outside the biological domain, it is possible to extend its scope to the understanding of life as a vibrant, vital relationality that exists across organic and inorganic matter.⁸² Indeed, in proposing vitality and life as a complex relational endeavor, and a diverse body of self-organizing matter—one that relates oxygen atoms with the pulsing breath of biological life, or, in turn, one that relates human behavior with nature, leading to changes in the percentage of the set of atoms in the atmosphere—it is possible to acknowledge the inherent interactions between ways of being and becoming in the world at any given moment.⁸³ Vitality, in this sense, resists binaries like life and death, and expands the idea of life beyond the human. Moreover, in centering relationality, vitalism proposes a range of life and becoming beyond the normativity defined by traditional conceptions of what is human—that of a Western, white, middle-to upper-class, cisgender, heterosexual, able-bodied, English-speaking, male human—and living—that of organic, biological, matter.⁸⁴ In other words, vitalism allows us to reflect that the life of some humans has been granted more value than the life of other humans, while also promoting a wider understanding of the state of living beyond common assumptions between what is animated and what is not. Some of such vitality can escape the most observant researcher or equipment, as the networks of complexity generate, in themselves, multi-dimensional activities that are hard to understand and harder to describe from a single perspective or situated practice.⁸⁵ To the agency and generative activity of non-living things—such as artworks—Jane Bennett calls “thing-power,” as an acknowledgement “toward the strange ability of ordinary, man-made items to exceed their status as objects and to manifest traces of independence or aliveness, constituting the outside of our own experience.”⁸⁶ In this

sense, vitalism clarifies how life and knowledge constitute each other,⁸⁷ and how humans and nonhumans coexist through their beings, possible becomings, and, therefore, alternative realities and narratives.

Vitalism brings up various questions and possibilities for artworks, museums, conservators and audiences, among the many agents that participate in the vital becoming of the World. First, in considering artworks—such as *Destierro – active matter*,⁸⁸ we need to assume that their vital becoming depends on (1) their own (albeit limited) agency, (2) the situatedness of knowledge-making activities and (3) their capacity of becoming different. I have elsewhere explored nonhuman agency of time-based media and performance artworks, the situatedness of knowledge in the conservation of performance art, and the possibilities of difference.⁸⁹ Here, however, I am concerned with the ethical impacts of the shift from an idea of liveness to one of vitality in the conservation of performance. How does conservation practice—one that looks at *liveness* in the context of display and within the economy of experience—participate in expanding or restricting the agency of artworks, and how does such involvement respond to the aims of conservation in the sphere of vitality? Looking at the other side, that of procedures and practices and man-made things with power, I ask how—in making that complexity and entanglement visible—one can start questioning the ways in which they are inherently co-constituted.

Towards difference in collective imagination

The previous sections have highlighted how current models of conservation of performance art in museums assume that the museum is to own the means of their production. We have seen how that model is optimistic, if not unsustainable. Vitalism refuses or, at least, diffracts the ownership of the means of production of performance artworks—from creation to the actual materialization of each manifestation. If the power of things as self-organizing matter, in itself, escapes institutional control, what to say about the agential network that defines and promotes difference in artworks and their potential futures? This last section will look at how vitalist materialism reconfigures the expectations around ownership and material stability of performance artworks.

At its core, as proposed by Greco,⁹⁰ vitalism is as much about an onto-epistemological discussion about the world as it is about a politico-ethical project that recognizes the intradependencies of knowledge and being. Indeed, vitalism makes visible the ecologies of the commons that constitute the world as we know it and, in its process, identifies inherent forms of difference and differing in those constitutions. Evidently, the ecologies of commons are changing as much as everything else, including those of performance artworks such as the ones I am discussing in this chapter. The artwork *Time*, by David Lamelas, had a very different set-up in 1970, when it was first instantiated, than the one that it has now, with its last iteration integrating a live video feed transmitted online.⁹¹ The artwork *Destierro* had a very different ecology of practice when it was first instantiated on the streets of Havana in

comparison to now, when it has been written about and its props exhibited in many venues. We can see how *Destierro* mobilizes more members of society in ways that are not exactly uncommon when we think about symbolic interactions between people and artworks, but can be somewhat different from what we are accustomed to. The people that followed Bruguera in the 1998 performance in *Destierro* are people who engage with this moment in time, this elusive and yet tactile materiality, this practice that is so specific to a certain community and to a certain affectivity, in ways that are hard or even impossible to recreate in a museum environment. Could *Destierro* continue to grow and acquire these meanings and affects within a museum collection? How could conservation attend to the emotional needs of a live, performative and consequential metaphor?

A vitalist turn to collectivity asserts that two of the main convictions surrounding the conservation of performance might not always be right. First of all, conserving performances is more about recognizing and fostering intra-dependency instead of promoting their independence by trying to own the means of their production. And the calls for yielding control in collecting and conservation processes are not only an ethical imperative, but are, indeed, an inevitability as one cannot control what is not theirs. I am arguing here for a distributed ethics of conservation as one that serves a collective imagination and promotes the operation of performance through its difference and differing practices. In this sense, in the realization of conservation as a collective practice, the museum would work as a node of a network that is ever-expanding. This, ultimately, would have to lead to a revision of current ownership models, that are based on the museum owning the title of the work as well as its means of production—not only of artworks but of the knowledge needed to foster their vitality, and the one produced by their own vibrant matter.⁹² And, in constructing care as a collective responsibility and vitality as an ethical imperative, it would be possible to start to reconfigure the institution as a co-owned, diffractive, rhizomatic space that it could be, effectively changing the optics of conservation to a politics of care *with* the artworks and their existence within the commons.

A politics of care *with* artworks and their ecologies of practice promotes not only a vitalist understanding of artworks as self-organizing matter, but also conservation as a care activity in, for, and of the world. Only in caring *with*, and not *for* or *about*,⁹³ artworks and their human and nonhuman ecosystem can we start mobilizing collectively (and intra-dependently) to effectively foster the change we want to see in our institutions. Caring with artworks and each (human and non-human) other could imply, among other things, building capacity to bring people from different backgrounds and lived experiences to develop novel models for decision-making, while also seriously engaging with openness and transparency in collecting, management and conservation processes; intentionally engaging in reciprocal exchanges that are not only meaningful for the museums, but that are also crucial to maintain the vital forces of the ecologies of practice that grow with the performances that are acquired by museums; accepting that uncertainty is inevitable, and that ambiguity is at the core of the (undefined) nature of many performance artworks; recognizing the conservation labor and its distributive

nature, what Nancy Fraser calls misrecognition and resource maldistribution;⁹⁴ promoting possibilities for difference, and making of the institution what Haraway calls “a shared feminist ‘homespace,’ where minds, bodies and feelings are welcome and embodied knowledge(s) can be progressed.”⁹⁵ This last approach, I argue, is essential to at least try to develop a sustainable distribution of knowledge about the work.

As I have argued elsewhere,⁹⁶ these aspects combined engage in a process that the feminist and new materialist scholar Rosi Braidotti called “affirmative ethics.” Affirmative ethics is a process that allows us to identify negative patterns through what Braidotti calls “radical relationality.” This radical relationality is seen first by understanding those negative patterns as part of an amalgamation of processes, structures and agents, and affirming their relational nature through an intrinsic commitment to change. However, this change is rooted in accountability—or what one can be accountable for—changing the realm of possibility by promoting collaboration, compassion and radical acts of solidarity and recognition. As stated by Braidotti,

affirmative ethics consists not in denying negativity, but in reworking it outside the dialectical oppositions; (...) it is not about the avoidance of pain, but rather a different way of reworking it; (...) [It] aspires to an adequate understanding of the conditions of our relational dependency on the negative, (...) in the active transformation of the negative in something else. Ethics is not just the application of moral protocols, norms and values, but rather the force that contributes to conditions of affirmative becoming.⁹⁷

In general, affirmative ethics allows us to think about what could have been and to understand what we need to change to make it happen. It demands vulnerability and openness to a compassionate critique. To use Braidotti’s words once again, vulnerability “as the power of exposure is defined as an ethical and political means to come to terms with—rather than disavow—the untenable, painful and unacceptable aspects and disasters of posthuman times.”⁹⁸ This, of course, demands a vulnerability that can be hard to champion in institutions, but perhaps that is indeed the *pathos* that comes with accepting and fostering the ambivalence of the mission of conserving performance as a project of vitalist, affirmative, politically-committed and ethical care of performance artworks.

Acknowledgements

I’ve developed this reflection in conversation with the participants and organizers of the Colloquium *Performance: The Ethics and the Politics of Care* (May 2021), and I would like to acknowledge their impact on the text I am rehearsing here. Before that, I also explored some of these issues in the context of the series *Topics in Time-based Media Art Conservation*. I would also like to acknowledge that my thinking, particularly on sections one and two, started during my PhD (supervised

by Dr Rita Macedo) and was part of my PhD dissertation. These reflections continued when I was working as a researcher and practitioner in the Andrew W. Mellon project *Reshaping the Collectible: When Artworks Live in the Museum at Tate* (led by Prof Pip Laurenson), and now as a Lecturer in the Department of History of Art at University College London (2020–) and as a researcher at IHC — NOVA FCSH / IN2PAST. Finally, I would like to thank everyone I thought-with throughout this path, including Hanna Hölling, Rebecca Gordon, Brian Castriota and Farideh Fekrsanati.

This research was funded by FCT, the Portuguese national funding agency for science, research and technology through the projects UIDB/04209/2020, UIDP/04209/2020 and 2020/04286/CEECIND.

Notes

- 1 Hal Foster, *Bad New Days: Art, Criticism, Emergency* (London and New York: Verso, 2017). See also the project *Living Collections Catalogue*, produced by the Walker Art Center through the Getty Foundation's Online Scholarly Catalogue Initiative, which published its first volume in 2014. The vocabulary around life and living is present across the various chapters of Gabriella Giannachi and Jonah Westerman eds., *Histories of Performance Documentation: Museum, Artistic, and Scholarly Practices* (London and New York: Routledge, 2018).
- 2 Foster, *Bad New Days*.
- 3 "Documentation and Conservation of Performance—Project," Tate, accessed March 31, 2021, www.tate.org.uk/about-us/projects/documentation-conservation-performance, and "Reshaping the Collectible: When Artworks Live in the Museum," Tate, accessed March 31, 2021, www.tate.org.uk/research/reshaping-the-collectible.
- 4 "Conserving Tony Conrad," accessed October 2, 2021, www.tate.org.uk/art/artists/tony-conrad-25422/conserving-tony-conrad.
- 5 Several authors, artists, curators, and conservators use this term. See, for example, the conference *The Manifold (after) lives of Performance*, held in November 2010 as a co-Production of de Appel arts centre in Amsterdam and STUK Kunstcentrum in Leuven, or the curatorial programme *Afterlives: The Persistence of Performance*, curated and convened by Adrian Heathfield and André Lepecki for the MoMA, in New York, in September 2015. See Hanna Hölling, "On the Afterlife of Performance—The Manifold Afterlife of Performance, November 13–15, 2009," Review of the conference *The Manifold (After) Lives of Performance*, (Part 1) (Amsterdam and Leuven: De Appel Arts Centre and STUK Kunstcentrum, 2009), Hanna Hölling, "On the Afterlife of Performance," Review of the conference *The Manifold (After) Lives of Performance*, November 12–13, 2010 (Part 2) (Amsterdam and Leuven: De Appel Arts Centre and STUK Kunstcentrum, 2011), or Anja Foerschner and Rachel Rivenc. "Documenting Carolee Schneemann's Performance Works," *Getty Research Journal* 10 (February 1, 2018): 167–89.
- 6 See, for example, Rebecca Schneider, *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment* (Abingdon, Oxon, and New York: Routledge, 2011).
- 7 Various texts in Teresa Calonge, ed., *Live Forever: Collecting Live Art* (London: Koenig Books, 2014).
- 8 Susanne Foellmer, "Series and Relics: On the Presence of Reminders in Performance's Museum," in *Art and Dance in Dialogue*, ed. Sarah Whatley, Imogen Racz, Katerina Paramana, and Marie-Louise Crawley (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2020), 147–62.
- 9 See, for example, Foerschner and Rivenc, "Documenting."

- 10 For more on the commons see Rebecca Hollender, "A Politics of the Commons or Commoning the Political? Distinct Possibilities for Post-Capitalist Transformation," *Spectra* 5, no. 1 (April 14, 2016).
- 11 Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective," *Feminist Studies: FS* 14, no. 3 (1988): 575.
- 12 Karen Barad, "Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 28, no. 3 (2003): 801–31, and Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007). I developed the idea of intra-actions in conservation theory and practice during my PhD project (2013–2018). This notion has been deeply influential in my thinking since then. In the meantime I collaborated with Brian Castriota, thinking-with Barad's agential realism in relation to the fragment as it figures into conservation discourses; Castriota has since also extended ideas from agential realism to conservation practices, particularly around documentation. See Hélia Marçal, "Towards a Relational Ontology of Conservation," in *ICOM-CC 19th Triennial Conference Preprints, Beijing, 17–21 May 2021*, ed. Janet Bridgland (Paris: International Council of Museums, 2021), 8; Brian Castriota and Hélia Marçal, "Always Already Fragment: Integrity, Deferral, and Possibility in the Conservation of Cultural Heritage," in *Das Fragment im digitalen Zeitalter. Möglichkeiten und Grenzen neuer Techniken in der Restaurierung*, ed. Ursula Schädler-Saub and Angela Weyer (Berlin: Hendrick Baßler Verlag, 2021), 63–78. See also Brian Castriota, "The Enfolding Object of Conservation: Artwork Identity, Authenticity, and Documentation," in *Conservation of Contemporary Art: Bridging the Gap Between Theory and Practice*, ed. Renée van de Vall and Vivian van Saaze (Cham: Springer, forthcoming), pp. tbc, and Castriota and Walsh (Chapter 7) in this volume.
- 13 Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).
- 14 New materialisms is an interdisciplinary area of philosophical thought that looks at the interactions among humans and nonhumans. The scholars cited in this chapter (Haraway, Barad, Braidotti) are part of feminist new materialisms scholarship, developing theory around ethics, politics and metaphysics.
- 15 In this chapter, vitality and vitalism will be used interchangeably.
- 16 For "memory institutions," see Elizabeth Stainforth, "From Museum to Memory Institution: The Politics of European Culture Online," *Museum and Society* 14, no. 2 (June 2017): 323–37.
- 17 See, e.g., Matthew Reason, *Documentation, Disappearance and the Representation of Live Performance* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), and Beth Capper and Rebecca Schneider, "Performance and Reproduction: Introduction," *TDR/The Drama Review* 62, no. 1 (2018): 8–13.
- 18 See, for example, Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993).
- 19 Philip Auslander, *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008).
- 20 Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003).
- 21 The field of Performance Studies was developed at the intersection of various disciplines, including (but not limited to, nor in any particular order) art history, linguistics, anthropology, and theater. The field has been concerned with issues of performance and performativity. In this case, it has been particularly focused on the performance of everyday life through what is called the "performative turn." Among other things, this performative turn analyzes behaviors, narratives, structures and infrastructures, objects and movements as performance. In 2003, Diana Taylor wrote that the field emerged in the 1970s as "a product of the social and disciplinary upheavals of the late 1960s that rocked academe," seeking to specifically "bridge the

- disciplinary divide between anthropology and theater by looking at social dramas, liminality, and enactment as a way out of structuralist notions of normativity.” See Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*.
- 22 Phelan, *Unmarked*, 146.
- 23 Philip Auslander, *Liveness*; and Philip Auslander, *Reactivations: Essays on Performance and Its Documentation* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2018).
- 24 With “zones of discernibility,” Deleuze is referring to areas of “an extreme proximity, an absolute contiguity.” These areas of extreme proximity relay the inseparability of concepts, discourse, or matter at large. See Gilles Deleuze, “Bartleby; Or, the Formula,” in *Essays Critical and Clinical* (London: Verso, 1998), 68–90, 78.
- 25 Amelia Jones, “‘Presence’ in Absentia,” *Art Journal* 56, no. 4 (December 1, 1997): 11–18.
- 26 Peggy Phelan’s proposals are well discussed in the fields of Performance, Cultural, and Literary Studies. Herbert Molderings, among other authors, has also analyzed this dichotomy. In a criticism of the sometimes sharp duality that we witness in Performance Studies discourses, Philip Auslander recognizes this same tendency in Theater Studies. Herbert Molderings, “Life Is No Performance: Performance by Jochen Gerz,” in *The Art of Performance: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Gregory Battcock and Robert Nickas (New York: E. P. Dutton, Inc., 1986), 166–180; and Philip Auslander, “Against Ontology: Making Distinctions between the Live and the Mediatized,” *Performance Research*, 2, no. 3 (1997): 50–55.
- 27 Scholars include André Lepecki, Rebecca Schneider, Diana Taylor and Louis van de Hengel, among others.
- 28 See, e.g., Catherine Wood, “Live,” in *Terms of Performance* (2016), <http://intermsofperformance.site/keywords/live/catherine-wood>; on hyper-mediatization see Nick Couldry and Andreas Hepp, *The Mediated Construction of Reality* (Oxford: Polity Press, 2016).
- 29 Jones, “‘Presence’ in Absentia.”
- 30 Adrian Heathfield, “Then Again,” in *Perform, Repeat, Record: Live Art in History*, ed. Amelia Jones and Adrian Heathfield (Bristol and Chicago: Intellect Books and the University of Chicago Press, 2012), 27–35. On recursion, see also Christopher Bedford, “The Viral Ontology of Performance,” in *Perform, Repeat, Record*, 77–88.
- 31 Barad, *Meeting the Universe*.
- 32 *Re-enactment* is a widely contested term, and its use can vary across disciplines and practices. Other terms—such as activations, instantiations, iteration, return, re-doing, re-performance, re-materialization—are also in use. Activations, for example, has been used by Tate to discuss the ways in which performances are displayed (or, indeed, activated in the gallery). Due to the very particular standing *re-enactment* has in feminist epistemological approaches to performance (and, especially, in new materialistic research), the term will be used in this chapter, except when another term is specifically used by a cited author. See Schneider, *Performing Remains*; André Lepecki, *Singularities: Dance in the Age of Performance* (New York and London: Routledge, 2016); Louis van den Hengel, “Archives of Affect: Performance, Reenactment, and the Becoming of Memory,” in *Materializing Memory in Art and Popular Culture*, ed. László Munteán, Liedeke Plate, and Anneke Smelik (London and New York: Routledge, 2017), 125–142.
- 33 Schneider, *Performing Remains*, 7. Emphasis added in italics.
- 34 See van den Hengel, “Archives of Affect,” and Lepecki, *Singularities*. In using the expression *potential history*, I am trying to foster resonances between these approaches and those of Ariella Aisha Azoulay, *Potential History: Unlearning Imperialism* (London: Verso, 2019). On the same topic, see Hélia Marçal, “Becoming Difference: On the Ethics of Conserving the In-Between,” *Studies in Conservation*, 67(1–2): 30–37.
- 35 Lepecki, *Singularities*, 21.
- 36 “Performance Art,” accessed October 2, 2021, https://monoskop.org/Performance_art. Please note that this list is not exhaustive.

- 37 Jessica Chalmers, "Marina Abramović and the Re-performance of Authenticity," *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism* 22, no. 2 (2008): 23–40.
- 38 Chalmers, "Marina Abramović."
- 39 Schneider, *Performing Remains*.
- 40 See Chalmers, "Marina Abramović," 34. In the chronology written by the art historian Amelia Jones in 2012, it is possible to identify events that directly contributed towards the rhizomatic confluence of the relationship between performance art and the museum, namely (and among others): the staging of the first official Fluxus event (by George Maciunas), which was held at the AG Gallery (New York, 1961), the display of Robert Morris' re-enacted and then recorded works at the Guggenheim Museum in 1993 or the pioneering exhibition *Outside the Frame/Performance and the Object: A Survey History of Performance Art in the USA since the 1950s*, held at the Cleveland Center for Contemporary Art in 1994. This last event was groundbreaking in the scope and breadth of the various documents and live performance events it activated. These, however, are just a selection of a much more expanded chronology. For more on this, see Amelia Jones, "Timeline of Ideas: Live Art in (Art) History, A Primarily European-US-based Trajectory of Debates and Exhibitions Relating to Performance Documentation and Re-enactments," in *Perform, Repeat, Record: Live Art in History*, ed. Amelia Jones and Adrian Heathfield (Bristol and Chicago: Intellect Books and the University of Chicago Press, 2012), 425–434.
- 41 Jones, "Timeline of Ideas."
- 42 There are several examples of changes to the structure of museums. Tate, for example, has developed the expertise of staff in time-based media conservation teams. The Museum of Modern Art, New York (MoMA) renamed its Department of Media as Department of Media and Performance Art. See Louise Lawson, Acacia Finbow, and Héliia Marçal, "Developing a Strategy for the Conservation of Performance-Based Artworks at Tate," *Journal of the Institute of Conservation* 42, no. 2 (May 2019): 114–34.
- 43 Cf. Calonje, *Live Forever*, and Pip Laurenson and Vivian van Saaze, "Collecting Performance-Based Art: New Challenges and Shifting Perspectives," in *Performativity in the Gallery: Staging Interactive Encounters*, ed. Outi Remes, Laura MacCulloch, and Marika Leino (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2014), 27–41.
- 44 B. Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore, "Welcome to the Experience Economy," *Harvard Business Review* 76, no. 4 (1998): 97–105.
- 45 See, e.g., Claire Bishop, "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics," *October* 110 (2004): 51–79; for a recent article with quotes from curators see Scott Reyburn, "Snap and Go: The Pros and Cons of the Art Experience Economy," *The Art Newspaper*, September 2, 2019. www.theartnewspaper.com/2019/12/02/snap-and-go-the-pros-and-cons-of-the-art-experience-economy.
- 46 Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (London; New York: Verso Books, 2012).
- 47 See Heliia Marçal, "Ecologies of Memory in the Conservation of 'Ten Years Alive on the Infinite Plain,'" *Tate Research*, published as part of the research project *Reshaping the Collectible: When Artworks Live in the Museum*, 2022. See also Heliia Marçal, "A Word about Performance Art," in *Conservation of Time-Based Media*, ed. Deena Engel and Joanna Philips (London: Routledge, 2022).
- 48 Bishop, *Artificial Hells*, 91.
- 49 For an expanded understanding of authenticity see Vivian van Saaze, "Key Concepts and Developments in Conservation Theory and Practice," in *Installation Art and the Museum: Presentation and Conservation of Changing Artworks* (Amsterdam University Press, 2013), 35–60; and Brian Castriota, "Object Trouble: Constructing and Performing Artwork Identity in the Museum," *ArtMatters: International Journal for Technical Art History*, Special Issue no. 1 (September 2021): 12–22.

- 50 On this topic, see John Rockwell, “REVERBERATIONS; Preserve Performance Art? Can You Preserve the Wind?” *New York Times*, April 30, 2004. www.nytimes.com/2004/04/30/movies/reverberations-preserve-performance-art-can-you-preserve-the-wind.html.
- 51 Lawson, Finbow, and Marçal, “Developing a Strategy.”
- 52 Hélia Marçal, “Contemporary Art Conservation,” *Tate Research*, published as part of the research project *Reshaping the Collectible: When Artworks Live in the Museum*, 2019.
- 53 van Saaze, *Installation Art*; Lawson, Finbow, and Marçal, “Developing a Strategy;” Marçal, “Contemporary Art Conservation.”
- 54 This is not to say that the cultural and economic capital leads to the *de facto* creation of certain forms of performance art and not others. One could argue that sometimes what is collected is no more than the cultural capital of collecting itself. See McKenzie Wark, “My Collectible Ass,” *e-flux journal*, no. 85 (2017).
- 55 See, for example, the description of the activation of *Time* (1970) by David Lamelas in Louise Lawson and Hélia Marçal, “Unfolding Interactions in the Preservation of Performance Art at Tate,” in *ICOM-CC 19th Triennial Conference Preprints, Beijing, 17–21 May 2021*, ed. Janet Bridgland (Paris: International Council of Museums, 2021), 8.
- 56 Barad, *Meeting the Universe*.
- 57 Cf. Laurensen and van Saaze, “Collecting Performance-Based” and Marçal, “Ecologies of Memory.”
- 58 The spelling used—Nkisi Nkonde—follows José Esteban Muñoz’s in “Performing Greater Cuba: Tania Bruguera and the Burden of Guilt,” in *The Sense of Brown*, ed. Joshua Chambers-Letson and Tavia Nyong’o (Duke University Press, 2020), 86–99. Nkisi Nkondi is used for plural.
- 59 “Displacement – Tania Bruguera,” accessed October 2, 2021, www.taniabruquera.com/cms/104-0-Displacement.htm.
- 60 See Esteban Muñoz, “Performing Greater Cuba,” 97.
- 61 Tania Bruguera, “Notes on Political Timing Specificity,” *Artforum* 57, no. 9 (2019): 205.
- 62 Bruguera, “Notes on Political.”
- 63 It is not that museums have not collected artworks that are performative or activist for that matter. Indeed, we’ve seen artworks from artists such as Tania Bruguera herself being collected by museums worldwide. And the conservation field has been prompted by artworks such as *Tatlin’s Whisper #5* (2008) and *Tatlin’s Whisper #6 (Havana Version)* (2009) (also by Bruguera) to revisit procedures and theoretical models to see how the museum and other collecting institutions can keep those artworks while allowing them to thrive. That was, for example, one of the focuses of the projects *Reshaping the Collectible: When Artworks Live in the museum*, and *Documentation and Conservation of Performance*, based at the Tate. For a discussion on the practices at the Guggenheim Museum, which currently owns *Tatlin’s Whisper #6*, see Joanna Phillips and Lauren Hinkson, “New Practices of Collecting and Conserving Live Performance Art at the Guggenheim Museum,” *VDR-Journal Beiträge zum Erhalt von Kunst und Kulturgut* 1 (2018): 124–132.
- 64 The idea of response-ability rehearsed here comes directly from Barad’s writing, namely Karen Barad, “Quantum Entanglements and Hauntological Relations of Inheritance: Discontinuities, Spacetime Enfolding, and Justice-to-come,” *Derrida Today* 3, no. 2 (2010): 240–268. See also Castriota and Walsh in this volume.
- 65 The notion of neutrality in conservation has been contested in several articles, including Hélia Marçal, “Conservation in an Era of Participation,” *Journal of the Institute of Conservation* 40, no. 2 (May 4, 2017): 97–104; Hélia Marçal, “Situated Knowledges and Materiality in the Conservation of Performance Art,” *ArtMatters: International Journal for Technical Art History*, Special Issue no. 1 (September 2021): 55–62; Jane Henderson, “Beyond Lifetimes: Who Do We Exclude When We

- Keep Things for the Future?,” *Journal of the Institute of Conservation* 43, no. 3 (2020): 195–212.
- 66 Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism* (New York: Zone Books, 1988).
- 67 Elizabeth Grosz, *The Nick of Time: Politics, Evolution, and the Untimely* (Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2004).
- 68 Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010).
- 69 Rosi Braidotti, *The Posthuman* (Cambridge; Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2013).
- 70 Benedictus de Spinoza and E. M. Curley, *Ethics* (London: Penguin Books, 1996); and Benedictus de Spinoza, Samuel Shirley, Steven Barbone, Lee Rice, and Jacob Adler, *The Letters* (Indianapolis, Ind: Hackett Pub. Co, 1995).
- 71 See, for example, Lauren Tynan, “What Is Relationality? Indigenous Knowledges, Practices and Responsibilities with Kin,” *Cultural Geographies* 28, no. 4 (October 2021): 597–610.
- 72 Cf. Moira Gatens, “Feminism as ‘Password’: Re-Thinking the ‘Possible’ with Spinoza and Deleuze,” *Hypatia* 15, no. 2 (2000): 59–75.
- 73 Scott Lash, “Life (Vitalism),” *Theory, Culture & Society* 23, no. 2–3 (2006): 323–29, 323, emphasis in the original.
- 74 Monica Greco, “Vitalism Now – A Problematic,” *Theory, Culture & Society* 38, no. 2 (2021): 47–69.
- 75 Greco, “Vitalism Now.”
- 76 Laura Alexander, “Anne Conway’s Vitalism: A Physico-Theological Philosophy,” *ANQ: A Quarterly Journal of Short Articles, Notes and Reviews*, 32, no. 2 (2019): 93–96.
- 77 Greco, “Vitalism Now,” and Lash “Life.”
- 78 Greco, “Vitalism Now.”
- 79 Also called *mattering*, in a Baradian terminology. Barad, *Meeting the Universe*.
- 80 Thomas Osborne, “Vitalism as pathos,” *Biosemiotics* 9, no. 2 (2016): 185–205.
- 81 Greco, “Vitalism Now,” 50.
- 82 Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*.
- 83 Barad, *Meeting the Universe*. See also Hélia Marçal, “Towards a Relational.” In making this point, Greco compares Newtonian physics with theories of complexity, drawing specifically on Prigogine and Stengers, and also with writings by Alfred Whitehead. Ilya Prigogine and Isabelle Stengers, *Order out of Chaos: Man’s New Dialogue with Nature* (London, England: Flamingo, 1985); Alfred North Whitehead, *The Concept of Nature: The Tarner Lectures Delivered in Trinity College November 1919* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964).
- 84 Braidotti, *The Posthuman*.
- 85 Haraway, “Situated Knowledges.”
- 86 Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, xvi.
- 87 Barad, *Meeting the Universe*.
- 88 Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*.
- 89 Marçal, “Towards a Relational,” “Situated Knowledges” and “Becoming Difference,” respectively.
- 90 Greco, “Vitalism Now.”
- 91 Lawson and Marçal, “Unfolding Interactions.”
- 92 See also Castriota and Walsh in this volume (Chapter 7).
- 93 The Care Collective, *The Care Manifesto: The Politics of Interdependence* (London: Verso Books, 2020).
- 94 Nancy Fraser, “Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy,” *Social Text*, no. 25/26 (1990): 56.
- 95 Haraway, “Situated Knowledges.”
- 96 I have explored this approach as part of my participation in the project Reshaping the Collectible: When Artworks Live in the Museum. See Marçal, “Contemporary Art Conservation,” and “Ecologies of Memory.” Furthermore, I have also explored the

- topic of affirmative ethics in Farideh Fekrsanati and Hélia Marçal, “Affirming Change in Participatory Practice of Cultural Conservation,” in *Participatory Practices in Art and Cultural Heritage – Learning Through and from Collaboration*, ed. Christoph Rausch, Ruth Benschop Emilie Sitzia, and Vivian van Saaze (Springer Nature: Cham, Switzerland, 2022), 127–141, and Hélia Marçal and Rebecca Gordon, “Affirming Future (s): Towards a Posthumanist Conservation in Practice,” in *Posthumanism in Practice*, ed. Christine Daigle and Matthew Hayley (London: Bloomsbury Press, 2023), 165–178.
- 97 Braidotti, *Posthuman Knowledge*, 167.
- 98 Braidotti, *Posthuman Knowledge*, 169.

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